

The Irish War of Independence (1919–1921) in County Galway: Local Histories, Memories & Post-Conflict Heritage Initiatives

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I hereby declare that this is my own work

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Abstract

The Government of Ireland's Decade of Centenaries programme has aroused much interest of late in the revolutionary events that preceded the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922. This thesis explores local histories, memories and heritages of the Irish War of Independence (or Anglo-Irish War) in County Galway.

In the process of compiling local histories, information is furnished about the people and places affected by the conflict. Lasting from 21 January 1919–11 July 1921, this was a guerrilla war fought by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) against the forces of the British Government. By utilising a broad range of sources, including witness statements, pension files, newspapers and literature, this study investigates key events, such as the Ballyturin and Merlin Park ambushes, the killing of combatants and the impact of reprisals on civilians. New insights are provided about the controversial deaths of individuals such as Louis D'Arcy, Fr Michael Griffin, brothers Pat and Harry Loughnane, Eileen Quinn, and Michael Walsh. These deaths commanded considerable national and international attention.

The thesis proceeds by asking how, why and in what ways has memory of the conflict transmitted in County Galway by means of anniversary commemorations and built/cultural heritages? Initially, the focus centres on recovering the lost memories of the women of the revolutionary period, whose contributions and experiences were ignored and forgotten for many years. This section also shows how traumatic legacies of the conflict prompted a series of intergenerational remembrances. Over the course of century, these included the anniversary commemorations of Michael Walsh, the Loughnane brothers, Fr Griffin, and Eileen Quinn. Whilst a more cautious approach to memorialisation unfolded during the Northern Ireland Troubles, opportunities for remembrance still presented in County Galway, albeit through the death of a veteran or a close relative. From the late 1990s onward, the success of the Peace Process led to a revival of interest in the revolutionary period. Notable here was the reinterment of Galway-born Volunteer Thomas Whelan and nine others, including Kevin Barry, who were exhumed from graves in Mountjoy Prison and given a full state funeral in Glasnevin Cemetery in 2001. Buoyed on by the centenary anniversary of the Easter Rising in 2016, there was major public interest in the centenary of the War of Independence in 2019–2021. Whilst restrictions imposed in response to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic led to the cancellation of many public events, local communities were still able to mark the centenary through online platforms.

This thesis ends by outlining post-conflict heritage initiatives that have been developed by the ATU Heritage Research Group, in partnership with Galway County Council. The first of these is the *Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory*, which includes listings for historic sites, artefacts and manuscripts, memorials, and memorabilia. A second legacy initiative is *The Loughnane Brothers Heritage Trail: Explore Historic Sites & Memorials of Ireland's War of Independence*. This will be disseminated to the public in two formats in December 2022, namely an ArcGIS ESRI StoryMap and a 79-page bilingual guide book. Both versions furnish details about eleven sites related to the capture, killing and memorialisation of Pat and Harry Loughnane. By striving to

illuminate connections between the past and present, it is hoped to leave behind a worthwhile cultural legacy for current and future generations.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Introduction

It is often the case that a smaller number of specific events of a conflict affect a nation and its peoples to such an extent that they come to represent the wider conflict that had taken place. These events are then remembered and memorialised and in fact elevated into representative events of the wider conflict and become a key focus of memory. A case in mind is an incident that took place in the south of County Galway during the War of Independence or Anglo-Irish War, which lasted from 1919–1921. On the outskirts of Shanaglish village, close to their family home and farm, repose the remains of two brothers, Pat and Harry Loughnane. At 2:00 pm on Tuesday, 7 December 1920, Fr John Nagle and the Loughnane family led the funeral procession from St. Anne's Church to the New Cemetery in Shanaglish, where their remains were laid to rest. The grave plot had been dug earlier by a group of IRA Volunteers, many of whom were on the run from the British Crown forces. After the coffins were lowered into their grave, volleys were fired, and an oration was delivered to mourners. Photographs taken by Tomás Ó hEidhín's in 1920 of the badly mutilated remains of the Loughnane brothers in open coffins are amongst the most enduring tangible memories of the War of Independence.¹ The pictures garnered significant international attention and turned the brothers into what Guy Beiner denotes as a 'republican model of martyrdom'.² In the years that followed, memory of the brothers was perpetuated by a range of commemorative initiatives and practices, such as the unveiling of a Celtic cross at their grave in 1932. The brothers' deaths are but one example of the brutality endured by local communities during one of the most harrowing phases of the War of Independence.

This study of the War of Independence focuses on this and many other incidents, such as the killings of Eileen Quinn and Fr Michael Griffin on 1 and 14 November 1920. This month witnessed a considerable escalation in the levels of violence on both sides of the conflict, with killings often followed by reprisals. Ireland's War of Independence

¹ Photojournalists in conflict zones have chronicled some of the worst atrocities in the modern world, which later became immediately recognisable images. Examples include the iconic photo of the nine-year-old Vietnamese girl, Phan Thi Kim Phuc, screaming in pain following a Napalm bombing (photographed by Nick Ut in 1972) and Fr Edward Daly waving his handkerchief as a white flag in Derry/Londonderry on Bloody Sunday (photographed by Fulvio Grimaldi in 1972). As noted by Sebastian Junger, 'Foreword' in Lauren Walsh *Conversations on Conflict Photography* (London: Routledge, 2019) x, 'the discovery and transmission of the truth is a sacred task. This can take many forms, but the photographic image, housed in a proper context, is one of the most unimpeachable'.

² Guy Beiner, 'Between Trauma and Triumphalism: The Easter Rising, the Somme, and the Crux of Deep Memory in Modern Ireland' in *Journal of British Studies* Vol. 46, No. 2 (April 2007) 375

lasted until the middle of the following year. After a truce came into effect on 11 July 1921, political negotiations led to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty the following December. This resulted in the legal enactment of the 26-county Irish Free State in December 1922, which became a self-governing dominion in the Commonwealth. Given that one hundred years have passed since the outbreak of the War of Independence, the time now seems ripe to illuminate how this formative event has impacted upon the emergence of modern Ireland. With a geographical focus on County Galway, this study offers a multiplicity of insights into the impacts that the conflict had upon the local experiences, identities, and senses of place of individuals and communities in the west of Ireland, both immediately and in the long term.

Aims and Objectives

'Heritage', according to UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 'is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations.'³ Using multidisciplinary perspectives from heritage studies and its wide-ranging focus on relationships between past, present, and future, the aims of this study are:

- *To furnish new local histories of the War of Independence in County Galway, from 1919–1921;*
- *To analyse how, why, and in what ways memories of this conflict have transmitted, from 1919–2021;*
- *To use practice-based approaches to generate an original set of heritage initiatives for the general public, thus leaving behind a creative legacy for current and future generations.*

Therefore, in the chapters that follow, a key concern is to link incidents that occurred during the War of Independence in County Galway to remembrances that evolved from the conflict, and in some instances, were sustained to the present day. Another is to define the relevance of these memories in the present, with the creation of a heritage inventory and trail. Tangible heritage, as understood in this study, is the physical legacy produced, maintained and transmitted intergenerationally in a society.

³ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/about/> Accessed 29 September 2021

It includes historic sites, artefacts, manuscripts, memorabilia, and memorials.

As mentioned above, *the first aim of this study is to furnish new local histories of the War of Independence in County Galway, from 1919–1921*, identifying and detailing key events which impacted upon the local population. In doing so, one of the objectives is to determine the facts surrounding not only the more familiar incidents or acts of terror, but equally, lesser-known events that potentially contributed to more significant actions. Some areas or communities experienced more action than others, especially from Spring 1920 when the Crown introduced the more aggressive Black and Tans. Another objective is to shed light on the experiences of the women of Galway during the conflict, a narrative that until recently has been marginalised or absent. Essentially, this has been due to an absence of dates or names when pinpointing their roles, or an inadequate reporting of the violence perpetrated by, or against them. Subsequently, their actions inevitably do not fit easily into the traditional chronological style of a historical narrative. The historical omission and lack of recognition toward the agency of women has not been solely an Irish phenomenon, but a global occurrence. In *Women, Resistance and Revolution*, Sheila Rowbotham has examined the experiences of women engaged in radical movements or revolutions from various regions around the world between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries.⁴ Apart from being transnational in character, namely China, Russia, Cuba, France, Algeria and Britain, the common theme that Rowbotham discovered was, ‘as women became involved in groups and organizations wanting to overthrow the existing system, many aspects of their own oppression came to the surface’.⁵ Also, as shown later on, once the War of Independence ended, women were expected to resume domesticity and a more traditional function in society. Medina Haeri, who has examined more recent conflicts, asserts that the ‘absence of women from decision-making bodies means that their wartime experiences are rarely credited, and their social gains rarely endure into the post-conflict phase.’⁶ This is easily demonstrated in the Irish case where only sparse official evidence is found to demonstrate their involvement. Therefore, to unearth their histories, this study sets about the task of gleaning information from archives,

⁴ Sheila Rowbotham, *Women, Resistance and Revolution: A History of Women and Revolution in the Modern World* (USA: Vintage Books, 1973)

⁵ Rowbotham, *Women, Resistance and Revolution*: 176

⁶ Medina Haeri and Nadine Puechguirbal, ‘From helplessness to agency: examining the plurality of women’s experiences in armed conflict’ in *International Review of the Red Cross*, 92 (Published online by Cambridge University Press: 12 April 2010)

local historical publications, pension applications and other sources. An effort is also made to investigate why the Galway Volunteers, who had mobilised in large numbers during Easter Week 1916, found it difficult to engage in the early stages of the War of Independence. Participation was disproportional across not only the locality but country, amidst differing obstacles and availability of resources, such as arms or transport. The result was contrasting experiences and levels of involvement in some cases preventing them reaching their full potential as the War of Independence continued. This study also explores the lasting trauma felt by communities that led to the intergenerational legacy of remembrance that remains today. This is achieved by illuminating the experiences of those involved in and affected by the conflict, by combining fieldwork with the rich vein of evidence in recently released archives, such as the Military Service Pensions Collection and the Brigade Activity Reports. Many of these records provide specific details or information on, tactics used, resources available and challenges facing those who partook in the conflict.

The second aim of this study is to analyse for the first time, how, why, and in what ways memories of this conflict have persisted over the course of the last century. As anticipated, this implies that memories were selective and not all incidents, ambushes or deaths were remembered collectively. However, it must be remembered that individuals may well have been privately remembered by families and loved ones. The fallibility and selective nature of personal memory albeit in judicial processes, is well articulated by Mark Howe and Lauren Knott and has parallels to this conflict. Their assertion is that ‘memory does not provide a veridical representation of events as experienced. Rather, what gets encoded into memory is determined by what a person attends to, what they already have stored in memory, their expectations, needs and emotional state’.⁷ Therefore, the concept of ‘memory’ as understood here in the context of collective, public and social memory, is associated with cultural heritage and the ideals of nation-building. This study also investigates who is providing the discourse on commemorative events which took place. Do public remembrances suggest that there is an interrelationship between history and memory? To establish this further, it is important to explore the notion that civic commemorations are often exploited and politicised to influence those that attend such events. Therefore, questions are

⁷ Mark L. Howe and Lauren M. Knott, ‘The fallibility of memory in judicial processes: Lessons from the past and their modern consequences’ in *Memory* Vol. 23, No. 5, (2015) 633

warranted, as Heather Laird affirmed, about how such events are ‘typically narrated, what version of it is most widely accepted, what or who tends to be left out in accounts of the event, whose past it is most associated with, and whose or which interests its commemoration serves’.⁸ The objectives associated with this second aim are to highlight, using specific examples, how memorialisation has found expression in such tangible and intangible forms of heritage in the form of anniversary commemorations, artefacts, cultural identities, historic sites, memorials, and memorabilia. By focusing on specific commemorations, such as the anniversaries of the killing of the Loughnane brothers and Fr Michael Griffin, a distinct perspective relating to the politics of remembrance can be established. Of note is how these violent killings were processed by their local communities, through their outpouring of grief and in addition how, over decades, their sense of sorrow and outrage has persisted through intergenerational collective memories. A further pattern emerged whilst researching death notices of Galway veterans in contemporary newspaper columns. The inclusion of rank or company within the announcement indicates a specific desire to be remembered or recognised as having participated in this conflict. The importance of elevating the status of the memory of the dead, which at times could arguably have been considered excessive or even hagiographic, was generally the last opportunity to record a person’s contribution or rank for public acknowledgement. The death notices were significant in reinforcing a version of an event or memory which would generally not be contested publicly and therefore would remain on the public record *ad infinitum*. Alternatively, in some cases their involvement was unknown to the wider family until mourners bearing medals attended funeral services and spoke of their actions. Nonetheless, outside annual civic commemorations, especially those centred around Eastertime, remembrances were conducted, even if only on an *ad hoc* basis as with funerals.

The *third aim of this study is to use practice-based approaches to generate an original set of heritage initiatives for the general public, thus leaving behind a creative legacy for current and future generations*. The cataloguing of heritages in one combined inventory, provides a clear, coherent and valuable resource which generates a practical social significance or value. The theory of social value is complex when applied to heritage,

⁸ Heather Laid, *Commemoration* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2018) 9

with many potential considerations such as, economic, social or political. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, Siân Jones’s definition is employed in relation to the value of heritage as a communal

attachment to place that embodies meanings and values that are important to a community or communities. The concept encompasses the ways in which the historic environment provides a basis for identity, distinctiveness, belonging and social interaction. It also accommodates forms of memory, oral history, symbolism and cultural practice associated with the historic environment.⁹

The objectives relating to the third aim are to develop a series of post-conflict heritage initiatives, under the auspices of a partnership between the ATU Heritage Research Group and Galway County Council. The first of these is the *Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory*, which includes comprehensive listings for historic sites, artefacts and manuscripts, memorials, and memorabilia.¹⁰ A second legacy initiative is *The Loughnane Brothers Heritage Trail: Explore Historic Sites & Memorials of Ireland’s War of Independence*. This will be made available to the public in two formats on 12 December 2022, namely an ArcGIS ESRI StoryMap and a 82-page bilingual guide book in printed and e-book formats.¹¹ Both versions of the trail will contain details about eleven sites related to the capture, killing and memorialisation of Pat and Harry Loughnane. In addition to historic sites such as the spot where the remains of the brothers were found, this trail will include sites of memory such as Celtic crosses, a community hall and a remembrance park.

Content and Structure

In terms of content, this thesis explores and analyses a complex and multifaceted aspect of Irish history, memory and heritage – stimulated by the revival of interest in the Irish revolutionary era, the release of new archival materials and the running of the government of Ireland’s so-called ‘Decade of Centenaries’. Following the success of the centenary commemoration of the 1916 Rising in 2016, the time seemed ripe to

⁹ It is envisaged that a streamlined version of this heritage inventory, which forms the basis of the principal content of Chapter 9, will be made available to the general public at Galway County Council’s Decade of Commemorations 2013–2023 website, www.galwaydecadeofcommemoration.org/

¹⁰ Mark L. Howe and Lauren M. Knott, ‘The fallibility of memory in judicial processes: Lessons from the past and their modern consequences’ in *Memory* Vol. 23, No. 5, (2015) 633

¹¹ See Eilish Kavanagh and Mark McCarthy, *The Loughnane Brothers Heritage Trail: Explore Historic Sites & Memorials of Ireland’s War of Independence* (Galway County Council and ATU Heritage Research Group, Galway, Forthcoming 2022). At the time of writing, the StoryMap is available to view at: www.storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5f9f8b8cc7de43349cd59f5f0d993579

commence a study of the local histories, memories and heritages of the War of Independence in County Galway. The study area for this research is County Galway, which is the second largest county in Ireland with an area of 6,148 square kilometres. It has a coastline that is 689 kilometres in extent with many offshore islands and which borders five other counties. Galway county witnessed a significant number of incidents between 1919–1921, and although it does not fully reflect the trauma or anxiety endured by the people as a whole, those areas which have been documented as being the most notably affected include Ardrahan, Ballinasloe, Ballyturin, Beagh, Clifden, Galway Town, Gort, Loughrea, Kinvara, Mountbellew, Portumna, Tuam and Woodford.

In terms of structure, this study is divided into ten chapters to allow for a full exploration of the local histories, memories and heritages of the War of Independence in County Galway. This introductory chapter is followed by **Chapter 2**, a literature review that takes a tripartite approach to reviewing works of relevance. The analysis of these related works reveals interconnected themes and overlapping concepts. This inevitably happens when history is assessed through the heritage lens. For example, by exploring the historiography of this conflict, nationalist, revisionist and post-revisionist writings have tended to produce a lively yet dominating narrative discourse over the last century. These historical debates, though significant and intriguing, have neglected or overshadowed others, such as, women's histories or the impact of restrictive social parameters imposed by the Irish Catholic church. It therefore raises the question, how is this reflected in the writing of local histories of the War of Independence in County Galway, particularly when recording the histories of local communities? Of significance here are those publications that have focused on thematic areas such as Sinn Féin, republican courts, or those that have provided a more comprehensive insight into the RIC and Black and Tans. The use of propaganda and the influence of Catholic clerics is also discussed.

Similarly, as the discipline of memory studies continues to grow in an Irish context, a wider use of definitions and implications surrounding concepts such as cultural/national identity, sense of place, transgenerational memory and contested memories is evident. The Irish government has thus far successfully navigated the changing dynamics of the Decade of Centenaries, including a proposed commemoration for the RIC, which caused widespread debate. However, these

events ‘underscore the urge to re-enact and politicize the past, fostering grand narratives about the emergence of Ireland as a postcolonial nation’.¹² This prompts several questions, such as who does it serve to remember past events of conflict? How, why and by whom are memorials/commemorations developed? Do they serve ‘to enhance a sense of national identity’?¹³ Likewise, some aspects of this conflict are venerated and revered above others that were forgotten, or disregarded. Does the literature reflect this trend? Another consideration of note is the idea that sites of memory such as memorials or plaques create legacies which foster intergenerational memory and provided a sense of place for those interacting with them today.

Likewise, when investigating the discourse on heritage-making, it is important to ask who is participating in the practice of heritage and what is its value to post-conflict societies? In addition, what is involved in producing a project that stimulates the impulse of crowdsourcing, a heritage practice that is a mutually beneficial engagement? By utilising relevant secondary sources covering the areas of history/local history, memory studies and heritage studies, new perspectives on the War of Independence of County Galway are postulated. By researching the history, cultural memory, identity and community in this context, it also defines the value of heritage, social memory, and the relevance of heritage not only in the past but also in the present and future. This is especially true for the diaspora: their contribution to tourism is interconnected, even if only by an identity forged in heritage.

Chapter 3 focuses on methods and sources. It discusses the process of qualitative historical research and the sources and methods that have been utilised. These included an extensive desk top search, comprehensive archival research (in local and national collections), map-reading, participant observation (at commemorative events), fieldwork (including visits to key historic sites & memorials) and active communication with relevant historical and local societies. In addition, the practice-based heritage outputs associated with this research are discussed further.

In **Chapters 4, 5 and 6**, consideration is given to the historical background and the local histories of key incidents associated with County Galway’s War of

¹² Corporaal, Margu rite, Christopher Cusack and Ruud van den Beuken, ‘Introduction’ in *Irish Studies and the Dynamics of Memory: Transitions and Transformations* edited by Corporaal, Margu rite, Christopher Cusack and Ruud van den Beuken (Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2017) 2

¹³ Margu rite, Cusack and van den Beuken, ‘Introduction’ in *Irish Studies and the Dynamics of Memory*: 2

Independence, from 1919–1921. Specifically, Chapter 4 explores how this conflict did not commence in isolation and provides a wider perspective and historical background context. For instance, what bearing did those returning 1916 Rising veterans, fresh from their revolutionary imprisonment, have on the challenges they faced within the demands of Irish nationalism? In particular, how did they adopt and administer the political campaign of Sinn Féin, seize opportunities to build rapport within their local communities, and ultimately win an electoral mandate from the people in the 1918 General Election? Still, alongside the political strategies, Volunteers nationally were readying themselves for a more belligerent struggle. In Chapter 5 the narrative continues by chronicling the various local histories associated with the War of Independence, during the period from 21 January 1919–20 March 1920. When exploring how the Volunteers in County Galway responded to the notable ambush in Soloheadbeg and the meeting of the First Dáil, a more complex deliberation is required. Despite continued and focused efforts to procure arms, they proved less than successful in their endeavours. This in turn became a major factor in all planned raids. The detailed recounting of events also leads the author to consider if the most effective contribution and impact the Volunteers made was developing support for the political campaign, which ultimately resulted in the establishment of the first Dáil in defiance of the British government. Communities in Galway could never have imagined what would befall them. The significance of this emerges in Chapter 6, which explores local histories of the conflict from 21 March 1921–11 July 1921. This chapter looks at how throughout much of County Galway, republican activity was somewhat slow to develop, yet the effects of agrarian agitation that had raged for years, was still being felt throughout the county. Consequently, a high priority for the British government was to send reinforcements to a diminishing RIC in order to subdue and defeat these insurgents. The direct result of this was an increase in guerrilla warfare which was not only characteristic of this period but instrumental in the outcome. The subsequent ‘terror’ inflicted on civilians, as stated by Anne Dolan, also left contemporary traces in descriptions of those taken in the night, ‘in the screams and struggles of wives and elderly fathers and squealing children.’¹⁴ These physical and psychological injuries were endured by ordinary citizens whilst trying to go about their everyday lives. Few will

¹⁴ Anne Dolan ‘The shadow of a great fear: Terror and Revolutionary Ireland’ in *Terror in Ireland 1916–1923* edited by David Fitzpatrick (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2012) 28.

ever understand or account for the human costs of the conflict, ‘whether in the form of deaths, personal injuries, destruction of property, or wreckage of lives.’¹⁵ Altogether, Chapters 4–6 seek to provide a detailed narrative of the War of Independence in County Galway and showcase the impact of specific events which would become hallmarks of the conflict and emblems in the collective memory.

Chapters 7 and 8 focus on chronicling memories and recounting key moments in commemorations surrounding the War of Independence in County Galway. They document the numerous ways communities have memorialised people and events associated with their locality. In Chapter 7, which chronicles memories during the period 1919–1970, an analysis of the fifty-year period is conducted to determine the extent, if any, of how this conflict was remembered and commemorated. Notwithstanding the aftermath of a bitter Civil War, the chapter shows how communities came together to honour and respect their dead. Markedly, political policies seemed to revere all things related to Easter 1916, in preference to the subsequent War of Independence. However, local ceremonies still continued to be held on significant dates surrounding incidents or prominent fatalities. This overview is continued in Chapter 8, which chronicles more recent memories from 1971–2021. Critically, collective memory associated with some notable funerals such as Fr Michael Griffin and the Loughnane brothers transcended into an intergenerational event, especially when the living memory of those affected waned or evaporated. It should also be noted that nationally, it was also a period marred by the Northern Ireland Troubles, which began in the late 1960s. This resulted in the Irish government becoming increasingly cautious about the perils of glorifying violence. Despite this, local events continued to take place. One therefore needs to ask does remembrance shape the societies of today and create a cohesiveness amongst communities? Fiona Barber puts forth the argument that ‘in a society where historical events are continually relevant to contemporary life, both cultural memory and [the] process of memorialization become significant means whereby people live out their identities’.¹⁶ Following on from this, Chapters 7 and 8 both expand the discussion on cultural memory and identity in the county of Galway. Likewise, given that the centenary

¹⁵ David Fitzpatrick ‘The Price of Balbriggan’ in *Terror in Ireland 1916–1923* edited by Fitzpatrick 75.

¹⁶ Fiona Barber ‘At Vision’s Edge: Post-Conflict Memory and Art Practice in Northern Ireland’ in *Memory Ireland Volume 3 The Famine and the Troubles* edited by Oona Frawley (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014) 232.

commemoration of the Easter Rising saw a large increase in sites of memory, it was generally expected that the centenary of the War of Independence would produce a similar trend. However, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic broadened the parameters of this study, which also looks at the impact of lockdowns and restrictions on the nature and practice of War of Independence commemorations in County Galway, and the switch to online forms of remembrance.

Chapter 9 contains the *Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory*, which consists of an extensive portfolio of material categorised into historic sites, artefacts and manuscripts, memorabilia, and memorials. This unique practice-based approach to the heritages of the conflict explores and amalgamates material from several sources into one inventory. However, the fluid dynamics surrounding heritage of this nature can be subjective. For instance, one needs to ask what cultural value has a receipt or a fundraising invitation within the perspective of this struggle for independence? Or, despite annual remembrances to honour the memory of Fr Griffin, why has a relic (with his blood-stained stole) associated with his death apparently been lost, or at the very least its whereabouts forgotten? Only by harnessing the learnings and observations from the previous chapters, which focus on the histories and memories associated with this conflict, was it possible to compile the inventory. The segmentation of the inventory into the four above-mentioned categories allowed for a broad range of items to be included, for example, plaques, medals, memorial cards and grave plots. Other intriguing items include: a lock of hair belonging to Fr Griffin; a lock of hair belonging to Peg Broderick inside the cap of a petrol bomb that was original used to bomb her home; a handgun used in the shootout in the railway station in Galway railway; and memorials to Captain Cornwallis (who was killed during the Ballyturin ambush). At the same time, not every grave plot throughout the county is listed or indeed every RIC station photographed. The content of each category will conceivably be enhanced by availing of ‘Crowdsourcing’; a term used by heritage/cultural practitioners and institutions to denote the practice of supplementing a professional model of cataloguing with voluntary contributions by members of the public who have personal knowledge or items to offer for inclusion.¹⁷ Where

¹⁷ Crowdsourcing is discussed later in more detail. However, see Johan Oomen and Lora Aroyo ‘Crowdsourcing in the cultural heritage domain: Opportunities and challenges’ Conference: Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference on Communities and Technologies, C&T 2011, Brisbane, QLD, Australia, June 29–July 2, 2011

appropriate, relevant entries in this inventory are also cited throughout the body of this study, providing additional context to the many incidents, commemorations and community-based remembrances which embody the War of Independence in County Galway.

Chapter 10 is the concluding chapter. This summarises the academic significance and societal implications of the findings of this study, within a wider framework which draws upon comparisons between County Galway and other Irish counties during course of the War of Independence. Consideration is given to the consequential deaths that occurred from November 1920, especially Fr Griffin and the Loughnane brothers, which brought to bear a sense of helplessness on the communities around County Galway. Moreover, it discusses how these deaths continue to hold relevancy in those same communities. Equally of note in this discussion is the recovery of women's histories, and how, a century after this conflict took place, their voice has yet to be fully realised. Additional perspectives are also offered about the nature of memory and heritage, and the changing nature and practice of anniversary commemorations. What comes to light is that the most extreme and traumatic events generate a more lasting remembrance, even amongst the creative compositions as shown in the Heritage Inventory. The thesis ends with further reflections on the development of post-conflict heritage initiatives by the ATU Heritage Research Group, in partnership with Galway County Council. In addition to the *Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory*, the discussion also focuses on the legacy implications of another major initiative, *The Loughnane Brothers Heritage Trail: Explore Historic Sites & Memorials of Ireland's War of Independence*. Comprising of two versions – an ArcGIS ESRI StoryMap and a 82-page bilingual guide book – this heritage trail will include details about eleven sites related to the capture, killing and memorialisation of Pat and Harry Loughnane. Further details on these initiatives are supplied in the Appendices. As will be seen, all these initiatives have the potential to leave a lasting legacy for current and future generations.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Introduction

In furtherance of the aims and objects I have outlined in Chapter 1, this literature review focuses on three key themes, historiographical (local and national) approaches, memory, and heritage. In order to methodically identify, where possible, a reference to the War of Independence in County Galway, 1919–1921, the initial approach was to employ a systematic desktop search of these terms and associated themes.¹ This in turn provided the scope for what is in the main, a more traditional literature review based on the overall aims of the study: provide a new perspective on this conflict; discover any associated memories; engender a legacy in the form of heritage initiatives. By critically evaluating the theories, concepts and approaches to these topics, including those focused on locality, it is possible to outline how this study differs, or indeed emphasises, any new perspectives or insights that have been established. Equally, there has been a growth of published work nationally surrounding this period just prior to, and since, the centenary. These writings have not only enriched the scholarly discourse, but presented the welcome opportunity to compare or contrast the various actions by individuals, communities or authorities both nationally and locally during the conflict. Therefore, by exploring the relevant literature surrounding these three key themes and their application within the study itself, this study endeavours to contribute to the overall greater understanding of the period.

In the time that has passed since the Irish War of Independence took place, several narratives and hypotheses have been integrated into the associated historiography. From the traditional nationalist writings that malign English oppressive rule, yet praise the gallant Irish, to those seeking a revision of this narrative, specifically from 1938 following the founding of the journal *Irish Historical Studies*. Encouraged by T. W. Moody and R. Dudley Edwards' approach to professionalising and developing structured research methods, there was an 'exponential boom in historical research' as the history departments of Irish universities developed quickly.² Some studies were pioneering, others contested, a few are viewed as ambitious, some nationalistic in tone. However, when reviewing the first half of the century, Helen Mulvey's bibliographical

¹ For an in-depth discussion on benefits, differences, skills and production of, either a traditional or a systematic, literature review see Jill K. Jesson, Lydia Matheson and Fiona M. Lacey *Doing Your Literature Review: Traditional and Systematic Techniques* (London: SAGE Publications, 2011)

² Ian McBride. 'Ireland's History Troubles' in *Field Day Review* 3 (2007) 205

essay, 'Twentieth-Century Ireland, 1914–70' is of particular significance to this study.³ In her survey, she states that the writings of the period 1914–1921 prompted a 'wide variety of writers, English, American, and Irish to focus their work on the two 'most important subjects ... the rising of 1916 and the treaty'.⁴ Mulvey also refers to some writings as focused on, the 'war which preceded the treaty of 1921', possibly suggesting its periphery amid what became regarded as more consequential events.⁵ However, her sharp insights on these various writings merit a reference to her comments on the work of Tim Pat Coogan, namely in, *Ireland Since the Rising*.⁶ She states:

Future historians will undoubtedly both criticize and make use of Mr Coogan's book. It is frequently over informal in style, indeed breezily journalistic, and there are some errors of fact and emphasis, but the author's efforts to be objective are admirable, and the book has the feel of life. It is based on an extensive range of printed sources, historical and contemporary, on government documents, on periodicals, and on interviews with a wide variety of people in present day Ireland.⁷

Coogan himself would become embroiled in debates surrounding what he referred to as Irish history's grievous suffering by revisionist historians.⁸

As with this study, new resources can often shed light or change the perceptions surrounding previously held assessments. In Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh's historiography chapter, 'Ireland, 1800–1921', these new ideas of the period are discussed.⁹ He affirmed that the above-mentioned 'revisionist intention' of the historical writing during the decade, 1970–79, was drawn from 'newly accessible source materials or reflecting on familiar material from fresh perspectives'.¹⁰ However, historiographical developments continued when this revisionist debate shifted to the anti-revisionism and post-revisionism discourse which also provided rich and varying themes on the War of Independence. The Troubles in Northern Ireland, in addition to the changing social and political policies in the South were also reflected in historical approaches. So too was the narrative of women during the War of Independence, which had

³ T.W. Moody and Helen F. Mulvey 'Twentieth-Century Ireland, 1914–70' in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 66 (September 1970) 151–184

⁴ Moody and Mulvey 'Twentieth-Century Ireland, 1914–70' 155

⁵ Moody and Mulvey 'Twentieth-Century Ireland, 1914–70', 163

⁶ Tim Pat Coogan, *Ireland Since the Rising* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1966)

⁷ T.W. Moody and Helen F. Mulvey 'Twentieth-Century Ireland, 1914–70' in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 66 (September 1970) 153

⁸ *Irish Times* 16 November 2016

⁹ Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh's 'Ireland, 1800–1921' in *Irish Historiography 1970–79*, edited by Joseph Lee, (Cork: Cork University Press, 1981) 85–131

¹⁰ Ó Tuathaigh's 'Ireland, 1800–1921' in *Irish Historiography 1970–79*, 96

previously been sorely neglected. Yet, the revisionist debate is one that persists to this day.¹¹ As do strong nationalist opinions, particularly when, for example, discussions on the inclusion of RIC commemoration or themes surrounding their differing loyalties appear in national newspapers or social media.

For the most part, the studies that are specifically focused on issues such as land agitation, political prisoners, Sinn Féin and the 1918 Election, ambushes and the IRA, counter-insurgency tactics, as well as gender histories are generally quite informative and have at times provided a valuable perspective. By surveying the wider national debates or concepts surrounding this conflict, the critical analysis of a local study on the history of Galway's War of Independence was further enhanced and interpreted based on the information found in these writings.

Regarding the relationship between history and memory, Guy Beiner commented in 2001 on 'the clock of Irish historiography', by suggesting it 'often appears to be running a bit slow'.¹² Furthermore he maintained that despite the role memory plays in the 'constriction of Irish identities', Irish historians were behind the more contemporary research pattern of their counterparts in other parts of the world.¹³ As new 'explorations of collective memory, developing concepts of *lieux de mémoire* and social memory [became] pioneering fields of historical inquiry', Beiner also concedes, these concepts are not altogether 'appropriate in the case of Ireland'.¹⁴ Therefore, it is necessary to also seek out other writings on Irish memory studies. The act of commemoration often prompts such investigations into the field of memory studies. For instance, remembrance of the Irish Rebellion of 1798 is one that garnered some attention early in the memory debate in Ireland.¹⁵ Subsequently, papers included in *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, edited by Ian McBride, continued the debate on memory by questioning, concepts, terms and meanings. However, as with remembrance of 1798, other writings that centred on memory and commemoration relating to Ireland's revolutionary period have also generated a scholarly debate. Oona

¹¹ See Fearghal Mac Bhloscaidh, 'Revisionists—they haven't gone away, you know' in *History Ireland* Vol. 28 Issue 4 (July/August 2020), and subsequent letters

¹² Guy Beiner, review of *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, edited by Ian McBride (Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2001) in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 128 (November 2001) 600

¹³ Beiner, review of *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, 600

¹⁴ Beiner, review of *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, 600

¹⁵ See *Rebellion and Remembrance in Modern Ireland*, edited by Laurence M. Geary (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001) and *1798: A Bicentenary Perspective* edited by Thomas Bartlett, David Dickson, Dáire Keogh, Kevin Whelan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003) to mention but two.

Frawley, has contributed with her collection of essays, *Memory Ireland*, which have appeared in four volumes and furthers concepts such as ‘memory cruxes’ and ‘bumps’ that create a space in the wider ‘memory bank of Irish cultural experience’.¹⁶ Indeed much of which has been produced during the Decade of Centenary Programme, such as commemorative projects for example, encouraged the re-imagining of previously held narratives.¹⁷ For example, Heather Laird maintains that through such events/studies, we

propose ways that we can both make the roads untaken in history visible and ‘remember’ them. It links the untaken roads of the past to side-branching roads in the present: real possible alternatives to dominant ways of thinking and being. Outlining commemorative practices that could connect these two sets of roads.¹⁸

Similarly, the field of heritage studies, as explored in this chapter, has seen the production of seminal works such as David Lowenthal’s *The Past is a Foreign Country*.¹⁹ However, it is the collected papers, *The Heritage of Ireland* edited by Neil Buttimer, Colin Rynne and Helen Guerin that still provides a comprehensive understanding of what heritage is, the practice of heritage-making and best practice in management, that is most applicable to the Irish context.²⁰ It requires some updating on policies and changing governmental departments but the essence and practice of heritage is captured by leading scholars in the area. The relevance of heritage in past and present societies is also explored in various Heritage Council publications, such as *Heritage Resource Guide: Making Connections with the Past and Present*.²¹ Other secondary sources that have been produced through various County Councils during the Decade of Centenaries include, amongst others, *Heritage Centenary Sites of Rebel County Cork*, *Historical Sources on the History of County Kerry During the Period 1919–1923* and *The Independence Struggle in County Galway, 1916–1923: A Research Guide*.²²

¹⁶ Oona Frawley ed., *Memory Ireland Volume 1: History and Memory* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011); *Memory Ireland Volume 2: Diaspora and Memory Practices* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2012); *Memory Ireland Volume 3: The Famine and the Troubles* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014) 1; *Memory Ireland: Volume 4: James Joyce and Cultural Memory* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014)

¹⁷ The Decade of Centenaries Programme 2012–2023 was initiated in 2012. It is now under the responsibility of the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in 2012 to complement the on-going programme of annual State commemorations. <https://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/>

¹⁸ Heather Laird, *Commemoration* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2018) Back Cover

¹⁹ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

²⁰ Neil Buttimer, Colin Rynne and Helen Guerin, eds., *The Heritage of Ireland* (Dublin: Collins Press, 2001)

²¹ The Heritage Council, *Heritage Resource Guide: Making Connections with the Past and Present* (2018)

²² Heritage Unit of Cork County Council, *Heritage Centenary Sites of Rebel County Cork* (Cork: Heritage Unit of Cork County Council, 2016); Kerry County Council and Kerry Library, *Historical Sources on the History of*

Historiographical Overview

Within the broader literature on the history of War of Independence, as with this study, the scope of the conflict is defined as 21 January 1919–12 July 1921. However, as discussed in this Chapter, there are to date only a limited amount of single monographs specifically focused on the War of Independence at a national level, for example Michael Hopkinson's *The Irish War of Independence* or Charles Townshend, *The Republic: The Fight for Irish Independence 1918–1923*.²³ This is in direct contrast to the number of volumes that span pre-Easter 1916 through to the end of the Civil War and beyond such as Marie Coleman, *The Irish Revolution, 1916–1923* or Diarmuid Ferriter's, *A Nation and Not a Rabble: The Irish Revolution 1913–1923*.²⁴ While those confined to Galway as a county, extant to date are two publications, with many other more localised accounts detailing people, towns or communities within the region. As previously suggested by Mulvey, early historical writings, tended to treat this revolutionary period 1916–1922, as a whole, with Easter 1916 the focus, and the Treaty as causing the next bitter conflict, the Civil War.²⁵ Consequently, the War of Independence was often included in wider studies of the revolutionary period and did not necessarily attract focused studies. One early account by Walter Alison Philips, a Trinity professor of history and a 'committed unionist by his own admission', was *The Revolution in Ireland, 1906–1923*.²⁶ Despite the obvious partisan nature of the text, Philips' unique access to records, especially 'confidential intelligence notes', presented certain evidence which highlighted the unwanted attention some Volunteers received by local police, and later Crown forces. Intergenerational membership of secret organisations prior to and during the War of Independence were classed as 'tradition of disaffection' and once noted by the local RIC they came under constant suspicion.²⁷ In addition, when exploring the influence of priests or the church in County Galway, and the firm grasp of both religious and superstitious beliefs, Philips' professional theories first appear condescending in tone. One such example was the inclusion of

County Kerry During the Period 1919–1923 (2020); Galway County Council, *The Independence Struggle in County Galway, 1916–1923: A Research Guide* (2021)

²³ Michael Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence* (Dublin: Gill, 2004) and Charles Townshend, *The Republic: The Fight for Irish Independence 1918–1923* (Allen Lane, London, 2013)

²⁴ Marie Coleman, *The Irish Revolution, 1916–1923* (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), Diarmuid Ferriter, *A Nation and Not a Rabble: The Irish Revolution 1913–1923* (London: Profile Books, 2015),

²⁵ T.W. Moody and Helen F. Mulvey 'Twentieth-Century Ireland, 1914–70' in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 66 (September 1970) 151–184

²⁶ Phillips, Walter Alison | [Dictionary of Irish Biography \(dib.ie\)](https://dib.ie) Accessed 11 November 2021

²⁷ W. Alison Philips, *The Revolution in Ireland* (1926) 87

stories of apparitions and moving objects which induced large collective responses in Ireland prior to and since, albeit not always encouraged by the church.²⁸ He noted:

Miracles are always of almost every day occurrence in Ireland, where the mass of the peasants, carefully preserved by their Church from the slightest contamination of 'Liberalism' live in an atmosphere of the supernatural and, like the grown-up children they are, use their naturally quick intelligence to people the waste spaces of their world with a host of creatures of the imagination. The spring of 1918, however, was particularly rich in portents. In Connacht a newborn baby prophesied woes to Ireland, and died within an hour. At Aughrim in Galway the Blessed Virgin appeared, while at Kiltristan in Roscommon there was a vision of a black pig, with a phantom litter of bonhams, a certain presage of trouble. The latter portent had been visible only to three little girls, but hundreds of people, including many priests, visited the spot where it was seen. Clearly the arguments of the Sinn Fein patriots were being reinforced by voices from heaven. The Roman Catholic churches all over Ireland were crowded with people signing the anti-conscription pledge.²⁹

Stephen Gwynn was a member of the Irish Recruiting Council and representative of the Irish Parliamentary Party for Galway Town until he 'abandoned' his seat in the 1918 election.³⁰ He provided an Anglo-Irish perspective in his writings and remarked in the chapter, 'The End of the Union' that a large spread of Irish diaspora utilised their influence, eventually 'the policy which had driven millions of Irish out of Ireland, weakened England in the world of nations'.³¹ His textbook, similarly named, was compiled from his earlier work *The History of Ireland*.³² Despite the obvious class-driven narrative in which there was two classes: 'landowners' and 'peasants', and his obvious regard for Éamon de Valera, Gwynn's account provided an illuminating insight on the transition from British governance justifying Home Rule, to 'The Birth of the Irish Free State'.³³

It is relatively recently that historical writing by women or about women has become a major area of interest within the field of history during this and other conflicts in any extensive way. This was imitative of the role of women in society throughout Ireland up until thirty or forty years ago and clarifies the deficiency of such accounts. However, subsequent to her 1937 publication, *The Irish Republic*, Dorothy Macardle's account was theoretically, 'mistrusted by the academic world as a one-

²⁸ See RTÉ documentary, 'Moving Statues - The Summer of 1985'.

²⁹ W. Alison Philips, *The Revolution in Ireland* (1926) 146

³⁰ [Gwynn, Stephen Lucius | Dictionary of Irish Biography \(dib.ie\)](#) Accessed 10 November 2021

³¹ Stephen Gwynn, *The Student's History of Ireland* (Dublin and Cork: The Educational Company of Ireland, 1925) 302

³² Stephen Gwynn, *The History of Ireland* (Unknown: The Macmillan Company, 1923)

³³ Gwynn, *The History of Ireland*, 520–538

sided apologia for de Valera's gradual tempering of republican zeal in the cause of winning and using political power'.³⁴ Yet, Eunan O'Halpin does concede that it had 'attributes' that 'make it important both as a political narrative and as an historical document'. Contrarily, Leeann Lane challenges this position as de Valera's 'mouthpiece' and prefers to view Macardle's role as 'proactive' rather than 'supportive', a position that she insists only reinforces the denigrative 'paradigm' of historical women that was established at the time.³⁵ Macardle's work is certainly propagandist in nature, a deliberate act on her part. Yet this account also yields insights. Take the example of Eliza Williams, common-law wife of District Inspector Cecil Blake, both killed in Gort, 1921. Williams' death, according to Macardle, was a consequence of British Crown forces incessant need to socialise publicly in uniform and bring their female companions with them.³⁶ Notwithstanding her demise, presenting Williams as a meek actor during this period does not correspond with other statements which will be covered in more detail later in this study. Nevertheless, although Macardle disagreed with de Valera on several issues, such as neutrality, and the fact that women's role was firmly centred on domesticity and the pursuance of family stability in the 1937 Constitution which effectively 'restricted women's roles in the public sphere', their friendship continued throughout her lifetime.³⁷ Macardle's work did come to the attention of Robert Dudley Edwards and Theodore Moody in the 1930's, both university based and part-founders of the new modern Irish historical profession.³⁸ Despite the new professionals focused attention on 'early modern rather than contemporary Irish history', Edwards in particular, 'praised her efforts'.³⁹

Revisionism

The late 1930s was an exciting time to be writing and studying history after a new journal, *Irish Historical Studies* was founded by the aforementioned Moody and Edwards.

³⁴ Eunan O'Halpin, 'Historical Revisit: Dorothy Macardle, 'The Irish Republic' (1937)' in *Irish Historical Studies*, (1999), Vol. 31, No. 123 389. This was a detailed narrative of the period 1916–1923 albeit within the strategy of pro de Valera

³⁵ Leeann Lane, 'Dorothy Macardle: 'The Irish Republic' author who was much more than de Valera's propagandist'

³⁶ Dorothy Macardle, *The Irish Republic* (Dublin: Irish Press, 1951) 442

³⁷ *Irish Independent*, 16 November 2019

³⁸ Nadia Clare Smith, 'Dorothy Macardle (1889-1958): Republican and Internationalist' in *History Ireland* Issue 3 (2007) Volume 15

³⁹ Smith, 'Dorothy Macardle (1889-1958): Republican and Internationalist' 15

It began to play 'a central and decisive part in the transformation of Irish historiography'.⁴⁰ Under the influence of the varied contributors and editorial teams, the first forty years produced an abundance of scholarly writings representing the latest theories and original research on Irish history. However, its exclusion of contemporary twentieth-century history did, as Kevin Whelan observed, 'attenuate the range and quality of public debate in Ireland, north and south'.⁴¹ This changed and for the most part the revisionist debate emerged alongside an intensified violent campaign in Northern Ireland from the late 1960s, prompting some Irish 'intellectuals' to re-examine the nationalist history (myths) that had dominated Irish historiography for several decades.⁴² Questioning how Ireland's revolutionary past has influenced the present, has preoccupied academics and scholars alike for decades. Yet, and although it may seem obvious, the need for a critical approach was recommended by Marc Bloch as he cautioned 'not to accept all historical evidence blindly ... more than one manuscript has falsified its date or origin ... [and] all the accounts are not true'.⁴³ In encouraging this spirit of enquiry, Moody and Edwards established and promoted a 'scientific' method of investigative scholarship.⁴⁴ However, with regard to the present study, the most pertinent debates began with challenges to the traditional nationalist opinion of the struggle for independence or the motives of primary actors and how that was reflected in the literature.⁴⁵ Although much of the revisionist debate makes reference to Easter 1916, or indeed the commemoration surrounding it, for the purposes of this study, the focus remains on those events associated with the War of Independence, 1919–1921.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ T. W. Moody, 'The First Forty Years' in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 20. No 80, (September, 1977) 378

⁴¹ Kevin Whelan, 'The Revisionist Debate In Ireland' *Boundary 2* 31, no. 1 (2004): 179–205
muse.jhu.edu/article/54264

⁴² See John M. Regan, 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde: 'the two histories'' in *History Ireland* (January/February, 2012) Vol. 20, No. 1 || Also, with reference to Conor Cruise O'Brien and Garret Fitzgerald, see Kevin Whelan, 'The Revisionist Debate In Ireland' *boundary 2* 31, no. 1 (2004): 179–205 muse.jhu.edu/article/54264

⁴³ Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992) 66. On contemporary Irish history see also F. S. L. Lyons 'The dilemma of the Irish contemporary historian' in *Hermathena* No. 115, Centenary Number (Summer 1973) 45–56

⁴⁴ David Hayton 'The laboratory for 'scientific history': T. W. Moody and R. D. Edwards at the Institute of Historical Research' in *Irish Historical Studies*, (2017) Vol 41 No.159, 41–57

⁴⁵ An example is Francis Shaw's examination of Patrick Pearse's writing and motives for Easter 1916. Francis Shaw, 'The Canon of Irish History—A Challenge' in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 61, No 242 (1972) 113–153 or Conor Cruise O'Brien, ed., *The Shaping of Modern Ireland* (London: Routledge, 1970) Also, John M. Regan, 'Irish Public Histories as an Historiographical Problem' in *Irish Historical Studies*, November 2010, Vol. 37, No. 146 (November 2010) 265–292

⁴⁶ Two examples are D. George Boyce '1916, Interpreting the Rising' in *The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy*, edited by D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day (London: Routledge, 1997) 163–187 and Ciaran Brady, *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994)

For instance, one senior academic, Francis Stewart Leland (F.S.L.) Lyons published his tome *Ireland since the Famine*, at the start of 1970s, when social, political and economic unrest was seconded only by the North's escalating violent clashes between Republicans and Loyalists.⁴⁷ Lyons was a popular man and his work was admired by many of his peers and students alike.⁴⁸ His chapter 'The Struggle for Independence' provides a balanced overview with often pragmatic observations such as:

in Ireland the most urgent problem was to come down from the emotional heights of 21 January [1919] to the practical problems of organising a government most of whose potential members were already in prison and the remainder likely to be before long.⁴⁹

The revisionist debate was not lost on Lyons. He endorsed an unbiased balance in historical research and when querying the 'other' or the loser, he was steadfast in his reproach of those who thought that Irish history began during Easter 1916. He stated, 'the prime duty and the chief reward of the historian [is] to study the past for its own sake. For him [the historian], the loser in any conflict is as full of interest as the victor—sometimes, indeed, more interesting ... His business is knowledge, not propaganda'.⁵⁰ Therefore to query the logic of the armed struggle over a more peaceful political dialogue or pondering alternative outcomes, or even considering motivations of those involved, only invigorates debate and can therefore afford a more nuanced account.

One leading voice in this revision of Irish history was Fr Francis Shaw, a Jesuit priest and academic. He wrote a controversial essay in 1966 in recognition of the Golden Jubilee of the 1916 Rising under the title 'Cast a cold eye: prelude to a commemoration of 1916'. He had intended the piece for a commemorative issue of the Jesuit journal *Studies*. However, on that occasion the article was turned down with the editor citing it ill-timed and lengthy. It was therefore only published in 1972, two years after Shaw's death under the revised title, 'The Canon of Irish History: A Challenge'.⁵¹ The essay caused a stir amongst his peers and has since been cited as the forerunner for much of the revisionist debate on the revolutionary period.⁵² It was

⁴⁷ F. S. L. Lyons *Ireland Since the Famine* (London, Collins/Fontana, 1973)

⁴⁸ *Irish Times* 1 May 2021

⁴⁹ Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* 404

⁵⁰ F. S. L. Lyons 'The dilemma of the Irish contemporary historian' in *Hermathena* No. 115, Centenary Number (Summer 1973) 52

⁵¹ Francis Shaw, 'The Canon of Irish History: A Challenge' in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 61, No 242 (1972) 113–153

⁵² See Patrick Maume, 'Fr Francis Shaw and the Historiography of Easter 1916' in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* Vol. 103, No. 412, *The Jesuits In Ireland: Before and After the Suppression* (Winter 2014/15) 530

critical of the writings of Pearse and his justification for the 1916 Rising, in particular his comparisons to the sacrifice of Christ. Shaw's article stimulated a debate surrounding this nationalist image of blood sacrifice being the sole means to achieve independence. He reminded readers that 'Irish people did not become extremists or separatists overnight', instead, this rallying of the people was founded in the 'protests of Redmond and Dillon, of Shaw and Stephens'.⁵³ He continued by voicing his abhorrence at 'extreme nationalism', stating, 'the world is discarding extreme nationalism as a negative and divisive force and today the horror of warfare pursued to its logical end of total destruction has inclined men to view all warfare as barbarous'.⁵⁴ Three years later, outside of the revisionist debate, Charles Townshend produced a unique set of findings in *The British Campaign in Ireland 1919–1921: The Development of Political and Military Policies*, that gave some perspective on the daily operations of the British justice administration.⁵⁵ Although, some sensitive records remained sealed at that time, his sources included the 'Public Record Office, and private papers, most notably in the Beaverbrook collection'.⁵⁶ Amongst several topics such as DORA (Defence of the Realm Act, 1914), the command of the police and intelligence, Military courts, he also provided an extraordinary account of transport and communications.⁵⁷ One example brought to light from this evidence was that, owing to a shortage of personnel, signals and wireless communications were not efficiently operational which 'meant that much reliance was still placed on pigeons, but these also required trained operators, and good loftmen were hard to find; besides which the pigeons had to be transported by road or rail to their starting positions'.⁵⁸ Such is the level of detail supplied in these documents that much of the information covered in Townshend's monograph is relevant to the present study.

As the Troubles in Northern Ireland intensified, efforts were made to curb any promotion of violence as an effective means to achieve change.⁵⁹ Revisionism agendas during the 1970s were in full swing with accusations that suggested an underestimation

⁵³ Shaw, 'The Canon of Irish History: A Challenge' 150

⁵⁴ Shaw, 'The Canon of Irish History: A Challenge' 150

⁵⁵ Charles Townshend, *The British Campaign in Ireland 1919–1921: The Development of Political and Military Policies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975)

⁵⁶ Townshend, *The British Campaign in Ireland 1919–1921* vii

⁵⁷ Townshend, *The British Campaign in Ireland 1919–1921* 57

⁵⁸ Townshend, *The British Campaign in Ireland 1919–1921* 57

⁵⁹ The introduction of the directive to Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act was also used to moderate public engagement with dissident republicanism. Also, senior republican members were banned from entering the US until the IRA ceasefire, 1994.

of the ‘gulfs’ that existed between revolutionary nationalism and Orangeism and equally, an overestimation of the 1916 Rising’s impact on the fight for or granting of independence.⁶⁰ More recently, Diarmaid Ferriter cited UCD historian Mary Daly’s ruminations on this period as:

the debate about revising historical interpretations during this era prompted a degree of ‘armchair history’; prolonged and tendentious discussions about 1916 and its legacy were ‘conducted without the benefit of any new research’ and became a comfortable alternative to long hours spent in the archives.⁶¹

Brendan Bradshaw also reflected on this period stating, ‘there ha[d] been the feeling that the Irish had been fed a nationalist myth which has stoked the fires of militant nationalism and that the best antidote was an increasingly strident anti-nationalism.’⁶² Amongst those he cited as writing in a more militant, aggressive, anti-traditionist style was Roy Foster, Ronan Fanning and David Fitzpatrick. Yet, Fitzpatrick was widely praised for his seminal book *Politics and Irish Life, 1913–1921*.⁶³ Here the forensic investigation into a region, County Clare, produced a case study that is both intriguing and staggering in its use of tables to evaluate evidence, a model to which early researchers aspired. Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh was palpably relieved to recommend Fitzpatrick’s work when he stated:

In demonstrating the impact of the revolutionary years on various groups in county Clare, Fitzpatrick has not only produced a case-history, integrated with great assurance into the ‘national’ picture, but he has also given a clear demonstration of how a historian should seek out, and, having found, make intelligent use of a great variety of source material.⁶⁴

Utilising several public and private archives, Fitzpatrick highlighted a number of areas for consideration, including agrarian agitation, the RIC as members of the community, and the reality of the demands of working the land and how this impacted on the ability of the Volunteers to commit to the fight for independence. This was especially true while the conflict continued to escalate, ‘as long as there were cows to milk, hay to save, and women to order about, the vast majority of Volunteers would have to remain

⁶⁰ For an overview of this debate see Diarmaid Ferriter, *Ambiguous Republic: Ireland in the 1970s* (Suffolk: Profile Books, 2014) 245–254

⁶¹ Ferriter, *Ambiguous Republic: Ireland in the 1970s* 247

⁶² ‘Interview with Dr Brendan Bradshaw’ in *History Ireland* (Spring 1993) Vol. 1 Issue 1 <https://www.historyireland.com/20th-century-contemporary-history/interview-with-dr-brendan-bradshaw-1-1/>

⁶³ David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life 1913–1921: Provincial Experiences of War and Revolution* (Cork: Gill & Macmillan, 2017 (first published in 1977)

⁶⁴ Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh ‘Ireland, 1800–1921’ in *Irish Historiography 1970–79* edited by Joseph Lee (Cork: Cork University Press, 1981)97

part-timers, on the plains.⁶⁵

Over a decade later Roy Foster who had previously contributed to the debate, now became a contemporary voice for revisionism. In his article 'We are all Revisionist Now' he strongly enforced the historian's right to investigate a revised narrative of the history of Ireland, despite the need to 'tread carefully for fear of the "anti-nationalist" smear'.⁶⁶ He stressed that by placing traditional assumptions under scrutiny, it was not 'the same thing as an endorsement of British influence in Ireland; it is merely adopting a different focus'.⁶⁷ In his publication, *Modern Ireland 1600–1972*, Foster all but suggests that the IRA during the War of Independence stumbled their way through what he called the 'takeover'.⁶⁸ Quoting Ernie O'Malley often throughout the chapter he then queried his 'mentality' as exaggerating the reality, and directly challenges O'Malley's accomplishments or attacks.⁶⁹ Although he acknowledges that 'central Munster and the Ulster borders' were active, he observed that 'the west was curiously quiescent in military terms, though levels of participation in organizations, and electoral support were high'.⁷⁰ Further on, he claimed that there was 'a considerable element who had thrived on the conditions of lawlessness, notably by cattle-driving: Connacht, quiescent in the campaign for independence, put up marked resistance to the Treaty'.⁷¹ However, Foster neglects to associate any interconnection between his assertions, as to why the IRA in County Galway might have struggled to fully engage with Crown forces during this conflict. The whole county did not have land issues, yet, as discussed later in this chapter, one is often confused with the other. Published also during this decade, was Joseph Lee's *Ireland 1912–1985: Politics and Society* and *Irish Political Documents 1916–1949* edited by Arthur Mitchell and Pádraig Ó Snodaigh. Both have delved into the archives and provided analysis of the documents, such as official 'statements and legislative acts ... speeches, pamphlets, [and] newspapers'.⁷² However, in Lee's 'perspectives' he provided a scathing commentary on how historians failed to fulfil their role to record the various tapestries

⁶⁵ Fitzpatrick *Politics and Irish Life 1913–1921*: 180

⁶⁶ Roy Foster, 'We are all Revisionist Now', in *The Irish Review*, No 1 (1986) 5

⁶⁷ Foster, 'We are all Revisionist Now', 2

⁶⁸ Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600–1972* (England: Penguin Books, 1988)

⁶⁹ Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600–1972* 500

⁷⁰ Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600–1972* 500

⁷¹ Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600–1972* 508

⁷² Arthur Mitchell and Pádraig Ó Snodaigh, eds., *Irish Political Documents 1916–1949* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1985) 13

of history and thus ‘decision-makers learned little’. He therefore stated:

Historians who were in a unique position to contribute deeper understanding, failed. A successful national strategy required recognition of the inter-relationship between the cultural, social, spiritual, intellectual, economic and political. The ability to perceive the inter-relationships is itself a key variable in developmental strategy. The historians might have offered the perception, but their concentrations on political and diplomatic history, to the virtual exclusion of other areas, meant that they illuminated only a narrow segment of the totality.⁷³

Therefore, it would appear that despite the need to revise and professionalise Irish history, in particular the writing of events or circumstances surrounding the War of Independence, more posturing than extensive inspection took place. That said, it should also be noted that it was not just a case of the specific approach to historiography but as Ferriter would later highlight, there was also a neglect of archival resources and governmental records. This was catastrophic in terms of eliminating opportunities and creating barriers for those engaged in the act of historiography.⁷⁴

Post-Revisionism

Despite Lee’s criticism, from the early stages of the peace process in the 1990s, to beyond the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland, there were some innovative concepts put forward, particularly those centred on the Famine.⁷⁵ Yet, one enduring squabble lingered, revisionism. An article in the *History Ireland* magazine in 1996 gave an account of a conference sponsored by Glucksman Ireland House at New York University entitled, ‘Visions and Revisions’.⁷⁶ Its relevance here is the discussion on Irish historiography and the fresh discord surrounding what is referred to as anti-revisionism and the subsequent term, post-revisionism, and the perceived ‘political agendas’ that overcame scholarship.⁷⁷ The session was moderated by Kevin Whelan, who himself has commented extensively on the theory of revisionism.⁷⁸ Here he emphasised that ‘Irish historiography, as with Irish history itself, finds itself at an important cross-roads’ and questioned the role of the historian going forward.⁷⁹

⁷³ Joseph Lee, *Ireland 1912–1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 632

⁷⁴ Ferriter, *Ambiguous Republic: Ireland in the 1970s* 245–254

⁷⁵ Such as Christine Kinealy, *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845–52* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1995)

⁷⁶ Charles C. Ludington ‘Visions and Revisions’ in *History Ireland* Issue 1 (Spring 1996), Volume 4 [History Ireland](#)

⁷⁷ Ludington ‘Visions and Revisions’

⁷⁸ For instance, Kevin Whelan, ‘The Revisionist Debate In Ireland’ *Boundary 2* 31, no. 1 (2004): 179–205 [muse.jhu.edu/article/54264](#) and ‘Interview with Kevin Whelan’ in *History Ireland* published online 2019

⁷⁹ Ludington ‘Visions and Revisions’

Whelan elaborated by signifying the need for regular engagement with international historians and the sharing of knowledge, whilst also reiterating the ever increasing need to explore archives, new sources and to step away from the associated politics of historical writing.⁸⁰

This last point may well have been directed at the two opposing panellists, Brendan Bradshaw and Roy Foster. Bradshaw as a noted firm defender of the nationalist view, had also previously wrote of ‘value-free’ history (or the historians neutrality) in the scientific approach which he concluded brought about gaps, this time between the ‘new professional history and the general public’.⁸¹ His contribution to the conference was, as recorded by Charles C. Ludington, to concede that historians were all ‘revisionists after a fashion’, yet, there were ‘good’ ones and ‘bad’ ones.⁸² Lee, according to Bradshaw, was on the right side and whilst ‘critical’ in his concepts, displayed a ‘concern for Irish historical heritage’.⁸³ Alternatively, and predictably, he viewed Foster as ‘bad’ and accused him of ‘deflating critical events in the Irish nationalist pantheon at the expense of those who genuinely suffered and died’. Foster in his rebuttal stated that ‘Irish historical “revisionism”, if it must be called that, neither excuses British behaviour in Ireland, nor is it monolithic, ideological or anti-national’. He embraced the ‘interrogative nature of contemporary Irish historiography’ as a growing sign of diversity in research. When the panel reached the topic of ‘post-revisionism’, Foster ‘hoped it would not signal a return to determinism, but rather a recognition of ambiguity and realism.’

Despite historians holding opposing views that can challenge influencing perceptions of the past, particularly those propagated through memorials and commemorations, historical debates such as these endorse the need to engage with diverse sources. Especially, as it could be argued that the terms, revisionism and anti-revisionism, are self-limiting labels that possess a predilection towards or against political, religious or social aspects of Irish history. It could be argued that wielding a singular approach can constrain other narratives from coming forward. For example, as demonstrated later in the chapter, historiography that did or did not include, the

⁸⁰ Ludington ‘Visions and Revisions’

⁸¹ Brendan Bradshaw, ‘Nationalism and Historical Scholarship in Modern Ireland’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 104 (Nov., 1989) 329–351

⁸² Kevin Whelan posed the question of how the new intellectual and cultural space should be filled and what the historians role should be. Ludington ‘Visions and Revisions’.

⁸³ Ludington ‘Visions and Revisions’ 6

role of women during the War of Independence was absent from the debate. Or equally questioning the generally held view that all RIC members were the enemy, despite some evidence that they assisted the IRA and protected members of the community from the Black and Tans. The opportunity to examine these narratives during their lifetime was lost, especially at a more local level. Amid deliberations at the same conference, 'Visions and Revisions', Nicolas Canny, one of the plenary panellists, responded to what he believed the role of a historian should be:

Historians should not be cultural critics or advisors. Their job is to write history and to critique the work of fellow historians. History is good when it clarifies and explains the past; it is not about making moral judgements.⁸⁴

During the same discussion on post-revisionism, Hiram Morgan, one of the founders and co-editors of *History Ireland*, stated that he and 'many in his generation seek a new Ireland, beyond the division of Catholic and Protestant.'⁸⁵ He continued that his belief was that 'one can be professionally critical while being open to a number of interpretations of the past.'⁸⁶ This 'post-revisionist' attitude, alongside the release or granting of greater access to archives, began to produce several compelling essays. Amongst them was Mary Kotsonouris' 'The Courts of Dáil Éireann', Tom Garvin's 'The Formation of the Irish Political Élite', and Maryann Gialanella Valiulis' 'Free Women in a Free Nation'.⁸⁷

War of Independence Histories

From the turn of the new millennium, there was 'much progress ... in relation to an understanding of the dynamics underpinning the War of Independence ... due to advances made in the availability of research material.'⁸⁸ The most significant of these were the aforementioned Michael Hopkinson's, *The Irish War of Independence*, Charles Townshend's *The Republic: The Fight for Irish Independence*, Marie Coleman's, *The Irish Revolution, 1916-1923*, Diarmuid Ferriter's *A Nation and Not a Rabble: The Irish Revolution 1913–1923* and Lorcan Collins' *Ireland's War of Independence 1919–21: The*

⁸⁴ Ludington, 'Visions and Revisions' 6

⁸⁵ Ludington, 'Visions and Revisions', 6

⁸⁶ Ludington, 'Visions and Revisions', 6

⁸⁷ Brian Farrell, ed *The Creation of the Dáil: A Volume of Essays from the Thomas Davis Lectures* (Tallaght: Blackwater Press 1994)

⁸⁸ *Irish Times*, 17 September 2016

IRA's *Guerrilla Campaign*.⁸⁹ A more general short overview is contained in Seán McMahon's recently-published *The War of Independence*.⁹⁰ Furthermore, recent research has produced two other ground-breaking bodies of work worthy of note, namely the *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* and *The Dead of the Irish Revolution*. Both are discussed in more detail later in relation to County Galway.⁹¹ In Hopkinson's 'Introduction', he made a reference to Brendan Bradshaw and the revisionist 'saga' and noted that it was still the case that, 'sensitivities are acute: even mild correctives are easily distorted into accusations of bias on one side or the other'.⁹² He also outlined the difficulties in obtaining official records from both British and Irish governments and the 'official procrastination and delay' surrounding the bureau of Military History papers.⁹³ Nonetheless, Hopkinson's study is especially useful not only in relation to the overall conflict, but also in its attention to the regional or county perspective. Not just the expected differences when comparing County Galway against other county studies such as Dublin and those in Munster, but areas such as, Wexford and Kilkenny. Similar to County Galway, Waterford, for example, had leadership issues and what could be described as bickering amongst the Volunteers.⁹⁴ Also, despite the 'reputation gained in 1798' and strong rebellious tradition, Volunteers in the North and South Brigades of Wexford, failed to gain any 'major success against the British'.⁹⁵ This draws attention to how inconsistent IRA activity was in different counties, despite possessing revolutionary traditions. In his account of the conflict, Townshend also wrestles with the British records when he openly questions the 'government's dismissive view of the separatist movement's prospects and their struggle to grasp the complexities of early ambushes and attacks'.⁹⁶ Using a comparative perspective, his attempt to identify the tactic of guerrilla warfare sheds light on the ambiguous nature of conflict and how it is interpreted:

⁸⁹ Michael Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence* (Dublin: Gill, 2004), Charles Townshend, *The Republic: The Fight for Irish Independence 1918–1923* (Allen Lane, London, 2013), Marie Coleman, *The Irish Revolution, 1916–1923* (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), Diarmuid Ferriter, *A Nation and Not a Rabble: The Irish Revolution 1913–1923* (London: Profile Books, 2015), Lorcan Collins, *Ireland's War of Independence 1919–21: The IRA's Guerrilla Campaign* (Dublin: O'Brien's Press, 2019).

⁹⁰ Sean McMahon, *The War of Independence* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2019)

⁹¹ John Crowley, Dónal Ó Drisceoil, Mike Murphy, eds, *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017) and Eunan O'Halpin and Daithí Ó Corráin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* (Cornwall: Yale University Press, 2020)

⁹² Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence* xvii

⁹³ Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence* xviii

⁹⁴ Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence*, 123

⁹⁵ Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence*, 123

⁹⁶ Townshend, *The Republic: The Fight for Irish Independence 1918–1923*, 85

Looking back, it was easy enough to see the winter of 1919–20 as a step-change, from confrontation to war. At the time, things were not so clear. Guerrilla fighting is a protean form of warfare, and has taken many shapes throughout history. As a strategy, it would become familiar as the twentieth century went on ... dramatic guerrilla triumphs, like the victory of the Viet Minh over the French army, or Fidel Castro's overthrow of the Cuban government, would astonish the world. In 1920, though, guerrilla warfare was not well understood.⁹⁷

Equally, Coleman's assessment of both the military and political campaign for independence discussed subjects such as the documents issued during the First Dáil, foreign policy, and the social composition and motivation of the IRA. Her consideration of the motivational factors of Volunteers or Cumann na mBan suggested the family encouragement to traditional memberships of organisations.⁹⁸ However, the core of local IRA companies were often close friends or neighbours, therefore many were emulating their peer groups. Also, ironically, the failure to implement conscription during World War I alongside restrictions on emigration, gave rise to a surplus of young men all requiring a place to settle and begin a family.⁹⁹ Yet, these personal motivations are often more difficult to discern without comparative examples in other literature.

To understand British counterinsurgency tactics, publications of note are Townshend's, *The British Campaign in Ireland 1919–1921: The Development of Political and Military Policies*, W.H. Kautt's *Ambushes and Armour: The Irish Rebellion 1919–1921* and D.M. Leeson *The Black & Tans British Police and Auxiliaries in the War of Independence*.¹⁰⁰ Townshend's examination and analysis of documents is exemplary. He describes how the official policy of reprisals stemmed from British public pressure and accusations targeted at Lloyd George's 'perilous silence' on Ireland, a situation that was 'letting the Republican case go by default'.¹⁰¹ Discussions between officials at the War Office and Field Marshall Henry Wilson were ongoing to curb the growing insurgency. However, Townshend stated that the first mention of 'official reprisals' between them was on 23 September 1920:

the only solution to this problem is to institute a system of *official* reprisals ... If there is a definite scheme of reprisals in force, and made known beforehand, it should be easy to get the troops to restrain their unofficial efforts, while the

⁹⁷ Townshend, *The Republic: The Fight for Irish Independence 1918-1923*, 113

⁹⁸ Coleman, *The Irish Revolution, 1916-1923*, 75

⁹⁹ Coleman, *The Irish Revolution, 1916-1923*, 75

¹⁰⁰ Charles Townshend, *The British Campaign in Ireland 1919–1921: The Development of Political and Military Policies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975); W.H. Kautt, *Ambushes and Armour: The Irish Rebellion 1919–1921* (Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2017)

¹⁰¹ Townshend, *The British Campaign in Ireland 1919–1921*, 119

deterrent effect on the Sinn Féin cannot be inconsiderable.¹⁰²

The consequences of this policy would change the course of the conflict and placed many Irish civilian's lives in jeopardy. Whilst not altogether devoid of controversy, by and large, the occupation of policing in Ireland was once considered to be a respectable profession. Yet, during this conflict, the RIC had become targets whilst, unexpectedly in many cases, so too had their neighbours and friends. Many RIC considered themselves staunch Irishmen and sympathetic to the nationalist cause. This complex sense of loyalties felt by local RIC is explored in Jim Herlihy's history of policing and Richard Abbott's list of police casualties.¹⁰³ In particular, consideration is given to those members of the RIC who struggled to comprehend the violent reprisal actions of the Black and Tans and began to use their position or skills to help those vulnerable in their communities. For example, Jeremiah Mee, a Galwayman stationed in Listowel police barracks, led a revolt when ordered to shoot as many IRA as they could. In addition, many RIC men became an invaluable resource to the IRA intelligence network.¹⁰⁴ Nonetheless, the reprisals instigated by the Crown forces evoked a state of lawlessness that struck terror wherever they took place and equally instilled a consequent fear within neighbouring towns and villages. David Fitzpatrick's edited volume on *Terror in Ireland 1916–1923* described these incidents of terror in Balbriggan, Kilmichael, Kildare and on Bloody Sunday in Dublin.¹⁰⁵ Similarly, in County Galway, incidents involving Black and Tans and later the Auxiliaries caused terror in areas such as Tuam, Oranmore and Ardrahan.¹⁰⁶ Some accounts were not necessarily headline news. Leeson's research into the police reports produced a case from Galway's West Riding. John Green a medical student was lodging in Salthill, when in the early hours of 15 May 1921 'a gang of police kidnapped' him and dragged him outside and began firing shots at him.¹⁰⁷ While he lay still but conscious, he heard the

¹⁰² Townshend, *The British Campaign in Ireland 1919–1921*, 119

¹⁰³ Jim Herlihy, *The Royal Irish Constabulary: A Short History and Genealogical Guide with a Select List Of Medal Awards and Casualties* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2016) 139, Richard Abbott, *Police Casualties In Ireland 1919–1922* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2000). See also Conor Brady, *Guardians of the Peace* (London: Prendeville Publishing, 2000)

¹⁰⁴ One famous example Herlihy cites is Eamon 'Ned' Bro; a mole in Dublin Castle that worked closely with Michael Collins, having been a member of both the RIC and the DMP, Bro went on to serve as Garda commissioner between 1933–1938. Also, Jeremiah Mee, after the Listowel mutiny, set about contacting his fellow RIC colleagues to provide information on Crown forces raids or reprisals.

¹⁰⁵ David Fitzpatrick, ed., *Terror in Ireland 1916–1923* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2012)

¹⁰⁶ See *Tuam Herald*, 28 August 1920, 6 November 1920, 13 November 1920, also *Connacht Tribune*, 21 August 1920, 25 September 1920, 29 January 1921.

¹⁰⁷ D.M. Leeson, *The Black & Tans: British Police and Auxiliaries in the Irish War of Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 202

man who shot him say, 'are you dead?' Green neither moved nor spoke, until he heard the man turning and going towards the road saying, 'He is gone'.¹⁰⁸ The young man survived and after reporting the incident, the case was investigated and quite unusually, the two constables, John Murphy and Richard Orford, were tried and sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment.¹⁰⁹ However, both were released in March 1922 after the sentence was commuted.

Writing Local History

'The past lives on in the landscape which surrounds us, even more than in documentary records.'¹¹⁰

When focusing on the area of County Galway, 1919–1921, it is essential to understand the significance and indeed the nature and practice of writing local history. Professor Raymond Gillespie has written and lectured extensively on this subject.¹¹¹ Delivering one of the keynote papers at a symposium in Belfast, he analysed several broad definitions of 'local history' (origin of growth, stories, zones of human activities).¹¹² However, he characterised what is most important out of these as 'the question of scale and the idea of space' and what goes into that space, for example 'community'.¹¹³ When writing local history, it is not merely compiling a series of statistics from the census or a collection of evidence but the communication of a 'story of a group of people in a particular place over time'.¹¹⁴ However, when researching the locality, Patrick J Duffy expanded the understanding of landscapes as not only geographical but cultural. The information found in community history is 'a goldmine of locally relevant records such as an estate survey, a collection of sketches or photos, a series of letters, a diary, or a particularly fruitful travel/tour account'.¹¹⁵ In his chapter 'Writing Landscapes', Duffy also illustrates the locality of literary landscapes, such as poems as

¹⁰⁸ Leeson, *The Black & Tans*, 202

¹⁰⁹ Leeson, *The Black & Tans*, 202

¹¹⁰ Patrick J. Duffy, *Exploring the History and Heritage of Irish Landscapes* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007) 15

¹¹¹ See Gillespie, Raymond and Hill, Myrtle, eds, *Doing Local Irish History: Pursuit and Practice* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1999); Gerard Moran, Raymond Gillespie, eds, *Galway: History & Society* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1996); Raymond Gillespie, 'An historian and the locality' in *Doing Irish local history: pursuit and practice* edited by Raymond Gillespie and Myrtle Hill (Belfast: The Institute of Irish Studies, 1998)

¹¹² Raymond Gillespie 'Pursuit and Practice of Local History' a symposium hosted by The Irish Committee of Historical Sciences and the Ulster Society for Irish Historical Studies at Public Records Office of Northern Ireland on 16 May 2019 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XM_Fly36gN8&t=292s

¹¹³ Gillespie 'Pursuit and Practice of Local History'

¹¹⁴ Gillespie 'Pursuit and Practice of Local History'

¹¹⁵ Duffy, *Exploring the History and Heritage of Irish Landscapes*. 27

‘valid perspectives in that fictive reality [that] can often contain more truth than everyday reality.’¹¹⁶ Following on from this, Maura Cronin’s ‘Local History’ for instance, provided a background on the popularity and approaches employed by local historians over several decades.¹¹⁷ Not least the contribution of historical geographers, which was ‘a development prompting among historians a more open attitude to the interdisciplinary nature of local history and a greater awareness of the importance of examining the *locale* in its own right.’¹¹⁸ Interdisciplinary approaches such as the dynamics of ‘economic, cultural and social change’, became more popular during this time. These agreed interpretations of terms like ‘local and community’ began to foster ‘co-operation between university-based and amateur local historians’.¹¹⁹ Equally, and also pertinent to this study is the analysis of how ‘centenaries and anniversaries have contributed their fair share of local studies, the best of which have prompted a re-examination of wider issues’ surrounding remembrance.¹²⁰ However, caution is advised by Tim P. O’Neill on what he referred to as ‘clones of researchers reproducing similar theses on familiar topics for different areas and losing the great eclectic aspect which characterised the best of some of [what he refers to as] the older journals’.¹²¹ This advice was well heeded during this study. In addition, he rebutted the assumption from personal experience, that ‘the local historian is often dismissed by the professionals as being preoccupied with trivia, of being obsessed with the minutiae of history’. As will be seen throughout this study, it is this ‘minutiae’ discovered in local records and publications that often provided some interesting nuggets of information. Significantly, O’Neill also discussed both folk narratives, and the folklore of memory, an interpretative reconstruction rather than an unchanging archival resource. He quoted Richard Dorson with an emphasis to bear in mind that there is ‘more than one folk [that] exists, and each folk group records events and personalities of the past through its own peculiar lens.’¹²² Janice Holmes, also reflected on the problems and prospects of Irish local history with special reference to the decades of

¹¹⁶ Duffy, *Exploring the History and Heritage of Irish Landscapes*. 199

¹¹⁷ Maura Cronin, ‘Local History’ in *Palgrave Advances in Irish History*, edited by Mary McAuliffe, Katherine O’Donnell, and Leeann Lane (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)

¹¹⁸ Cronin, ‘Local History’ in *Palgrave Advances in Irish History*, 149

¹¹⁹ Cronin, ‘Local History’ in *Palgrave Advances in Irish History*, 149

¹²⁰ Cronin, ‘Local History’ in *Palgrave Advances in Irish History*, 155

¹²¹ Tim P. O’Neill ‘Doing Local History’ in *Journal of The Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, Vol. 53(2001)

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¹²² O’Neill ‘Doing Local History’ 54

commemoration. She stated that:

The marking of anniversaries and commemorations has become increasingly modish and popular with both the government and the general public. This fashion combined with a market driven tourism and heritage sector, has fuelled a seemingly voracious public interest in the personal, the specific, the distinctive – in fact, the local – dimensions to great national events.¹²³

However, Holmes also cautioned that with the availability of online records and ‘governments, anxious to appear inclusive in their leadership of sensitive political commemorations,’ local history could be in danger of becoming ‘all about me’.¹²⁴ Yet, she concluded that, educating, training, supporting and directing, a new generation of local historians can ‘deliver lasting and game-changing results’.¹²⁵

Works on the War of Independence in County Galway

Despite the conflict being of national significance, with many issues that juxtapose easily on an intercounty level, this is a study primarily concerning the county of Galway. Therefore, identifying those key texts that either focus on the chronological events, specific themes, distinct geographical areas, or even provide a more associated biographical focus with County Galway is essential. Two particular monographs that provide specific detailed accounts of that particular period are William Henry’s *Blood for Blood: The Black and Tan War in Galway* and Conor McNamara’s *War and Revolution in the West of Ireland: Galway 1913–1922*. In addition, McNamara also has two chapters in the *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, and a short booklet on *The Life & Death of the Loughnane Brothers, Beagh, County Galway*, commissioned by Beagh Rural Development Association and produced by Galway County Council.¹²⁶ Furthermore, written in the Irish Language is Cormac Ó Comhraí’s *Sa Bhearna Bhaoil Gaillimh 1913–1923*, translated as *In the Danger Galway: 1913–1923*. There is also his photographic collection *The War of Independence and Revolution in Connacht: A Photographic History*

¹²³ Janice Holmes ‘Problems and prospects: reflecting on Irish local history’ in *Irish Historical Studies* Vol. 40 (2016) 278

¹²⁴ Holmes ‘Problems and prospects: reflecting on Irish local history’ 284

¹²⁵ Holmes ‘Problems and prospects: reflecting on Irish local history’, 284

¹²⁶ See Conor McNamara, ‘Connacht’ and ‘Galway’ in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, edited by John Crowley, Donal O Drisceoil, Mike Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017) 600-607 and 614-618, and Conor McNamara *The Life & Death of the Loughnane Brothers Beagh, County Galway* (Galway: Beagh Rural Development Association, 2021)

1913–23.¹²⁷ Furthermore, Tomás Kenny’s *Galway: Politics and Society, 1910–23* also dedicated thirteen pages to the conflict. More specific to the region of North Galway, is Jarlath Deignan’s *Troubled Times: War and Rebellion in North Galway, 1913–23*.¹²⁸ Some publications utilised and recognised the importance of the Military Archives in their research, however, since their publication, further releases of Pension Applications and the eagerly anticipated Brigade Reports, have permitted this study to further the research. For instance, detailed lists of IRA members who participated in attacks and ambushes have clarified or refuted previously held conjectures. Equally, whilst these past studies have yielded some important insights into the conflict, none have focused on the role of women in much detail. By utilising the latest releases of the female Pension Applications, this study can assist in the recovery of these important narratives. Nevertheless, as seen further on, these key works provide other thought-provoking theories that have contributed to this study. In addition to those above, various communities around County Galway have produced local studies on the War of Independence which often provided details that were absent or incorrect in the wider histories. Several specific points of information, or local knowledge can sometimes provide further ‘minutiae’, which, rather than being seen as a negative as suggested above, can in fact provide greater insight and understanding of the events.

Padraic Ó Laoi’s *History of Castlegar Parish* and Pat O’Looney’s *Killeenadeema Aille History and Heritage Stair agus Oidhreacht* are examples of such publications that were beneficial due to the inclusion of the finer detail.¹²⁹ O’Looney elaborates on the infamous shooting incident of Constable Krumm at Galway railway station by naming Tom Mahony of Grouse Hill as the man who was shot in the foot wrestling Krumm for a gun.¹³⁰ He also described that a man named ‘Wallop Walsh’, who was not only the best fighter in a tight situation but he was a member of the Active Service Unit that burned Bookeen Barracks near Kiltulla Cross.¹³¹ Walsh was the sort of person that would instil some confidence in a successful execution of such a task. Regarding

¹²⁷ Cormac Ó Comhraí *Sa Bhearna Bhaoil Gaillimh 1913-1923* (Galway: Cló Iar-Chonnacht, 2016) and Cormac Ó Comhraí, *Revolution in Connacht: A Photographic History 1913-23* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2013)

¹²⁸ Jarlath Deignan *Troubled Times: War and Rebellion in North Galway, 1913-23* (Galway: Lettertec, 2019)

¹²⁹ Pádraic Ó Laoi’s *History of Castlegar Parish* (Galway: Connacht Tribune, 1996), Pat O’Looney’s *Killeenadeema Aille History and Heritage Stair agus Oidhreacht* (Killeenadeema: Killeenadeema Historical and Heritage Society, 2009). Others include:

¹³⁰ Pat O’Looney’s *Killeenadeema Aille History and Heritage Stair agus Oidhreacht* (Killeenadeema: Killeenadeema Historical and Heritage Society, 2009) 370

¹³¹ O’Looney *Killeenadeema Aille History and Heritage Stair agus Oidhreacht* 370

the fugitive status of Volunteers, according to Ó Laoi, Thomas ‘Baby’ Duggan was a wanted man and ‘*Hue and Cry* offered a reward of £1,000 for information that would lead to his capture. They actually increased the amount to £10,000’ as time passed and he continued to evade capture’.¹³² Equally, Ó Laoi’s vignettes on local Volunteers assembled a profile of not only the individual personality but also of the community from which they come. Utilising this specific research directly resulted in a more in-depth understanding of local events which are central to this study.

Historical Background

Unlike other areas, prior to the start of this conflict, the west coast of Ireland had experienced serious agrarian unrest since the late nineteenth century, a situation that was to garner much attention from Crown forces. Consequently, as the Land War continued, reports were filed for known men whom the police kept under observation. This situation was to ultimately impede the Volunteers to reach their true potential during the conflict. Seminal contributions on the theme of agrarian agitation have been made by David Fitzpatrick in *Politics and Irish Life 1913–1921: Provincial Experiences of War and Revolution*, Fergus Campbell’s *Land and Revolution: Nationalist Politics in the West of Ireland 1891-1921* and by Tony Varley in ‘A Region of Sturdy Smallholders? Western Nationalists and Agrarian Politics during the First World War’ And ‘The Eclipsing Of A Radical Agrarian Nationalist: Tom Kenny and the 1916 Rising’.¹³³

The reverberations of land agitation before and after the 1916 Rising and why it became a prevalent issue in County Galway became apparent when viewing Campbell’s table on the ‘occupation of officers and the rank and file of south Galway IRA, 1917–1921’. His sampling results indicated that 76% of the IRA officers in the south-east of the county were farmers sons and 55% within rank-and-file. A far higher proportion

¹³² Ó Laoi’s *History of Castlegar Parish*, 136

¹³³ Fitzpatrick *Politics and Irish Life 1913–1921*; Fergus Campbell, *Land and Revolution* (Oxford: University Press, 2005); Tony Varley ‘A Region of Sturdy Smallholders? Western Nationalists and Agrarian Politics during the First World War’ in *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* Vol. 55 (2003) 127–150; Tony Varley, ‘The eclipsing of a radical agrarian nationalist: Tom Kenny and the 1916 Rising’ in *County Galway in Centenary Reflections on the 1916 Rising Galway County Perspectives* edited by Marie Mannion (Galway: Galway County Council, 2016) 92–113; See also Terry Dunne, ‘Cattle Drivers, Marauders, Terrorists And Hooligans’ in *History Ireland* 1 July 2020, Vol. 28 Issue 4, 30–33

than labourer and artisans at 8% officers and 18% /10% respectively rank-and-file.¹³⁴ In addition, many farm labourers and small landowners aided by Sinn Féin's initial policy on comprehensive land redistribution began to see the political advantage in association. Intimidation of neighbours was not uncommon. Successive Land Acts had not been able or capable of appeasing everyone and the elected members of Sinn Féin, many of whom were involved in the land agitation, allowed cattle rustling and intimidation to continue. To some degree the bullying was tolerated, more out of sympathy for landless neighbours, while others purposefully profited from the actions. In County Galway between May 1916 and December 1918, Sinn Féin membership 'expanded from 200 (in one branch) to 7,530 (across eighty-four branches).'¹³⁵ Many of these were members of a secret society such as the Irish Republican Brotherhood and/or returning internees/prisoners after the Rising. For some, the Land Wars were central and integrated with their politics. Of interest therefore is Fitzpatrick's, comprehensive local analysis focused on County Clare, but which also included several threads concerning County Galway which warrants further investigation. These included the difficulties faced by Galway Volunteers having a 'higher density of policemen to people' which succeeded in making it difficult to fully engage in subversive activities.¹³⁶ Equally of interest is, the reports pertaining to the RIC's belief that secret societies were to blame for the land agitation and were 'at the back of the recent rebellion' in Galway.¹³⁷

Yet, some opportunism was also at play as Cormac Ó Comhraí suggested in his introduction to *The Men Will Talk With Me: Galway Interviews*¹³⁸. He connected the successful breakdown of the British court system and the RIC's inability to protect landowners, with the 'explosion of land agitation in the west', which presented the real possibility of a 'collapse of social harmony'.¹³⁹ It must be highlighted however, that land was not an overriding issue for all Volunteers in County Galway, especially those living in urban and town environments. Some disagreed with both land agitation and the fight for Irish independence, preferring the parliamentary tradition.¹⁴⁰ Regardless

¹³⁴ Campbell, *Land and Revolution*, 261

¹³⁵ Campbell, *Land and Revolution*, 222.

¹³⁶ Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life, 1913–1921*, 4

¹³⁷ Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life, 1913–1921*, 114

¹³⁸ Cormac Ó Comhraí and Cormac O'Malley, eds., *The Men Will Talk With Me: Galway Interviews* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2013)

¹³⁹ Cormac Ó Comhraí, *The Men Will Talk With Me: Galway Interviews* 37

¹⁴⁰ See Conor McNamara, "The most shoneen town in Ireland": Galway in 1916' in *History Ireland*

of these observations, as the true violence of the conflict unfolded, an overwhelming sense of repression was felt by many throughout the county.

Previous studies have emphasised that although the revolutionary tradition in County Galway had been established prior to the Rising, Volunteers' participation and ensuing detention, hastened the practice of insurgency and realised a change in the mindset of ordinary civilians. In addition to the executions, the arrests and internments weighed 'significantly upon the attitudes of hundreds of families and communities and upon wider public opinion throughout the country.'¹⁴¹ Similarly, during the period of their imprisonment, they made contacts and preparations alongside other Volunteers for a resurgence of activities on release. The men from County Galway were recognised for their participation in the Rising and gained a certain reputation, one they were eager to uphold. For example, Pádraig Ó Fathaigh's memoirs recounts his role as an Irish language teacher during his time in prison in England after the Rising. Ó Fathaigh asserted that he instigated a flouting of regulations which stipulated that yard exercise be conducted in pairs only. Instead, he contrived a need for exercises to take place in groups of four, with one instructor to three students, to maximise tuition. Once this infraction was ignored by the duty warders, he contended that 'Lewes prison was transformed into a Gaelic school'.¹⁴² Recognising their continuing commitment after release, leaders such as Michael Collins, Cathal Brugha and Thomas Ashe set about 'reforming the Volunteers with a view to striking another blow for Irish freedom.'¹⁴³ Ó Fathaigh's memoirs also pointed to several events held to strengthen the resolve of Galway Volunteers and build comradeship. He made special note of a dinner which took place in November 1917. The event was held in Loughrea for the men who returned from prison in England and Wales. Amongst those present were Éamon de Valera, Eoin MacNeill and Francis Fahy. The former delivered the key note speech on an independent Ireland.¹⁴⁴ Desert dishes served at the dinner were humorously and defiantly named as 'Marmalade Pudding á la Frongoch, Topsy Cake á la Dartmoor and Tricolour Jelly' and the entertainment included patriotic verse such

¹⁴¹ William Murphy, 'Imprisonment, 1915–18' in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* edited by John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil, Michael Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017) 320

¹⁴² Timothy G. McMahon ed, *Pádraig Ó Fathaigh's War of Independence: Recollections of a Galway Gaelic Leaguer* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2000) 14

¹⁴³ Lorcan Collins, *Ireland's War of Independence 1919–21 The IRA Guerrilla Campaign* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2019) 44

¹⁴⁴ McMahon ed, *Pádraig Ó Fathaigh's War of Independence*, 14

as, 'for our country has awakened, we have heard the trumpet blast'.¹⁴⁵ The Volunteers that returned from imprisonment after the Rising adjusted quickly under new leaders, such as de Valera, Collins, Ashe, Mulcahy and Griffith. They set about consolidating the revolutionary tradition alongside a political one and by 'the spring of 1918, there were clear signs that Sinn Féin was gaining electorally on the Irish Parliamentary Party.'¹⁴⁶ Deignan contends that support for 'a separatist party that planned to establish a republican counter-state against a British government unreceptive to a notion of an Irish Republic', would provoke an inevitable conflict.¹⁴⁷

In reviewing the literature on Sinn Féin's electoral success, there seems to be general agreement that grassroots electioneering by Volunteers, British ill-timed consideration of conscription and widespread arrests of leaders, sparked a change.¹⁴⁸ Laffan, for example, pointed out that the Volunteers were determined to upskill and expand from the 'military discipline' unit into the art of electioneering.¹⁴⁹ They developed and honed the skill with remarkable competency and moved on to establish new Sinn Féin clubs, organised meetings and fought additional by-elections.¹⁵⁰ In Tuam, the new Sinn Féin party called themselves the 'Tuam MacHale Sinn Féin Club' after the 'formidable nineteenth-century Archbishop John MacHale' and held two seats on the board of Tuam Town Commissioners.¹⁵¹ Meanwhile in Loughrea, endorsed by his presence at one of the largest meetings, a popular local parish priest Fr. Dunne continuously raised the profile of Sinn Féin despite the misgivings of some of his parishioners.¹⁵² In addition, the death of Thomas Ashe reluctantly forced the Local District Council, many of whom were IPP supporters into 'condemning the authorities as 'barbarous''.¹⁵³ Frank Fahy, a member of Sinn Féin recognised that 'Loughrea served as the hub for political and conspiratorial activity during the Land War'.¹⁵⁴ Therefore,

¹⁴⁵ McMahon ed, *Padraig Ó Fathaigh's War of Independence*, 14

¹⁴⁶ Patricia Kilroy, *The Story of Connemara* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd, 1989) 150

¹⁴⁷ Deignan *Troubled Times*, 70

¹⁴⁸ See Michael Laffan *The Resurrection of Ireland: The Sinn Féin Party, 1916–1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), Richard Davis, *Arthur Griffith* (Dundalk, Dundalgan Press, 1976), Brian Farrell, ed., *The Creation of the Dáil: A Volume of Essays from the Thomas Davis Lectures* (Dublin: Blackwater Press, 1994), Mark McCarthy, *Ireland's 1916 Rising: Explorations of History-Making, Commemoration & Heritage in Modern Times* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), Brian Hanley, 'An Analysis of the 1918 General Election: Anatomy of an Electoral Landslide' in *History Ireland* (Ireland after the Rising 1916–18 Changed Utterly, 2017)

¹⁴⁹ Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland*, 81.

¹⁵⁰ Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland*, 81.

¹⁵¹ Dr Gabriel O'Connor, 'Tuam Town Commissioners: Their Finest Hour, 1899–1925' in *Glimpses of Tuam Through The Centuries: Proceedings of a Seminar* 28 September 2013. 71

¹⁵² Joseph Forde, *The District of Loughrea: History, 1791–1918* (Galway Rural Development, 2003) 636

¹⁵³ Forde, *The District of Loughrea*, 639

¹⁵⁴ Forde, *The District of Loughrea*, 638

both he and de Valera strategically organised a large rally to be held on the site of a previous 1880s historic meeting spot called ‘Tarpey’s Haggard’, which appealed to the ‘ageing Land Leaguers in the local Irish Party.’¹⁵⁵

Emerging Conflict in County Galway

There are several individual memoirs associated with the War of Independence, some drafted for publication, others as interviews or remembrances later edited and published. Noted in particular for what Eunan O’Halpin described as ‘bombastic and self-promoting’ is Dan Breen’s *My Fight for Irish Freedom* and Tom Barry’s *Guerilla Days in Ireland*. Another is Ernie O’Malley’s *On Another Man’s Wound*, which described his experiences during the conflict in a somewhat poetic narrative that suggests a certain romanticism to his exploits. Additionally, O’Malley sensed a need to record other veterans’ experiences, especially as many did not talk openly about their involvements, and he feared these valuable memories would be lost. He travelled around several counties to collect what he could from veterans, ‘660 individual interviews’, making notes as he went.¹⁵⁶ Afterwards, his notes were incorporated into regional volumes entitled, *The Men Will Talk To Me*, edited by Cormac O’Malley. Of particular note to this study is the *Galway Interviews*, co-edited by Cormac Ó Comhraí who provides interpretive notes to accompany the text. Also pertinent to County Galway, and consulted for this study were, Colm Ó Gaora’s *On the Run: The Story of an Irish Freedom Fighter*; the aforementioned Pádraig Ó Fathaigh’s *War of Independence: Recollections of a Galway Gaelic Leaguer*; Geraldine Plunkett Dillon’s, *All in the Blood: A memoir of the Plunkett family, the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence*; and *Lady Gregory’s Journals 1916–1930* edited by Lennox Robinson.

These texts construct a vivid portrayal of how the Volunteers (now referred to as the IRA) endured through the period and how they travelled or even remained hidden throughout the county. Comments on specific activities provide significant context to incidents and the state of mind of those who were affected. For instance, Lady Gregory’s diary entry on 9 November 1920 stated:

Malachi Quinn came to see me looking dreadfully worn and changed and his

¹⁵⁵ Forde, *The District of Loughrea*, 628

¹⁵⁶ Eve Morrison, UCD Archives Launch of the Papers of Ernie O’Malley, 1 October 2019

nerves broken, he could hardly speak when he came in. There had been aeroplanes flying very low over the place all day, and as he came from Raheen one had swooped and fired three shots over him. He believes they shot her [his wife Eileen] on purpose—they came so close. He was so fond of his wife, 'she could play every musical instrument'.¹⁵⁷

Colm Ó Gaora, a language teacher born in Rosmuc Connemara, published his autobiography in the Irish language and it has since been translated and edited.¹⁵⁸ He outlined the campaign in his locality in West Galway and explained some of the issues that prevented a greater participation in the campaign by those living in the area. Despite widespread poverty and emigration, local Volunteers were determined to secure the Sinn Féin vote and elect Pádraic Ó Máille. Once the fighting started, Ó Gaora's account referred to several false starts by the Volunteers mainly due to not receiving permission for an attack or lack of armaments.¹⁵⁹ He also alluded to the fact that the RIC in the area was heavily reinforced by Black and Tans, which made it difficult for any Volunteer to remain in the one spot, especially as it would mean a certain reprisal for those who aided his concealment:

My life had been a crazy one for a while by this juncture. I travelled a twilight world, moving constantly between a succession of safe houses and hide-outs, often under the cover of darkness. I never stayed more than one night in any house for fear of capture and could never even stay long enough anywhere to eat. I might be only just gone when the door would be banged in and the searches would begin.¹⁶⁰

The necessity and importance of local dances and other such events is highlighted by Ó Gaora when he discussed how he posed as a visiting dancer in order to gain access to Volunteers or collect for the National Loan project. This was a key tactic employed by local groups of Cumann na mBan and Volunteers, and became widespread throughout the country. Drilling, gathering arms and attempts to attack RIC barracks were not so subtle and as Deignan states, four Tuam men were jailed for four months under DORA for drilling in a field at Ballygaddy Road in open defiance of the British authorities.¹⁶¹ With few supplies and competent men sparse, this would have been a significant blow to the local company.

Henry points to the changing aspects that developed in 1919 when Galway police

¹⁵⁷ Lennox Robinson, ed., *Lady Gregory's Journals 1916–1930* (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1946)

¹⁵⁸ Ruán O'Donnell and Mícheál Ó hAodha eds *On the Run The Story of an Irish Freedom Fighter* A translation of Colm Ó Gaora's *Mise* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2011)

¹⁵⁹ O'Donnell and Ó hAodha eds *On the Run The Story of an Irish Freedom Fighter*, 277-285

¹⁶⁰ O'Donnell and Ó hAodha eds *On the Run The Story of an Irish Freedom Fighter*, 280

¹⁶¹ Deignan, *Troubled Times*, 72

found it hard to distinguish Volunteers from ordinary citizens. They responded by coming out in force to disrupt Sinn Féin meetings.¹⁶² Arrests and beatings became more commonplace. Yet, the first fatality as recorded in *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* since the commencement of the conflict was not until the 6 February 1920 when James Ward, Sir Thomas Blake's ward was shot whilst chatting to a neighbour.¹⁶³ The shooting, according to McNamara, 'encapsulated the complexities that land agitation could generate for the republican movement'.¹⁶⁴ Both Henry and McNamara agree that by 1920, arrests and ferocious retaliation meted out by the RIC dispelled any tentativeness the Volunteers may have felt about violent force.

Once the IRA campaign in County Galway had begun in earnest the incessant land agitation and other such issues needed to be resolved in a manner that was authoritative. Therefore an alternative Republican court system was quickly established in Galway to adjudicate upon the disputes. Mary Kotsonouris has provided a comprehensive overview of how these courts were established and administered.¹⁶⁵ Kotsonouris stressed the clandestine nature of such gatherings and how the court sittings were held in 'all sorts of places'.¹⁶⁶ But in rural areas in County Galway where public buildings and halls were scarce, the recourse 'was to creameries, farmhouse, outhouses, barns and any place with four walls and a roof that could be made ready and reasonably usable for the purpose'.¹⁶⁷ However, specific records are sparse due to the heavy sanctions against not only the judiciary but also the solicitors and clients discovered availing of this illegitimate court system. Yet, Marie O'Neill confirms one such document exists relating to cases held in front of Republican courts in Tuam (albeit from the later dates of 14 September 1921–17 January 1922).¹⁶⁸ She has stated that the courts in Tuam or 'tribunals – functioned from 1919 until after the Treaty. In all cases a valiant team of local workers kept the system in operation'.¹⁶⁹ Insights into the mechanisms and administration of this subversive local judicial system also points

¹⁶² William Henry, *Blood for Blood: The Black and Tan War in Galway* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2012) 35

¹⁶³ O'Halpin and Ó Corráin, eds, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution*, 120

¹⁶⁴ Conor McNamara, *War and Revolution in the West of Ireland: Galway 1913–1922* (Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2018), 172

¹⁶⁵ Mary Kotsonouris, *Retreat from Revolution: the Dáil Courts, 1920–24* (Irish Academic Press, 1994)

¹⁶⁶ Kotsonouris, *Retreat from Revolution* 42

¹⁶⁷ Cited in Kotsonouris, *Retreat from Revolution*, 46

¹⁶⁸ Marie O'Neill 'the Republican Courts in Tuam' in *Glimpses of Tuam since the Famine*, ed John A Claffey. (Old Tuam Society, 1997) 204–209

¹⁶⁹ Marie O'Neill 'the Republican Courts in Tuam' in *Glimpses of Tuam since the Famine*, ed John A Claffey. (Old Tuam Society, 1997) 204–209

to the character of those chosen to arbitrate. Yet as Kotsonouris attests, nothing much changed, 'given that the members of the King's Inns and of the Incorporated Law Society were long trained in the common law of England ... even the revolutionary courts had not sought to dent that tradition.'¹⁷⁰

Deployment of Black and Tans in County Galway

Quite quickly after their arrival into Ireland, the Black and Tans began to employ a series of counter-insurgency tactics that included violent raids and reprisals on civilians. Their reputation in some cases had created such negative opinions that this perception continues to the present day. Their characterisations as drunks, deranged, and blood-thirsty individuals prone to extreme violence are included throughout the many aspects of their involvement. A number of authors have also captured these themes and invariably this is reflected in the historiographical discourse surrounding any discussions on the Black and Tans. For example, Roy Foster declared that they 'behaved more like independent mercenaries; their brutal regime followed the IRA's policy of killing policemen and was taken by many to vindicate it.'¹⁷¹ Diarmaid Ferriter also referred to the mercenary element of their recruitment adding, they had 'deserved [a] reputation for brutality'. However, in his discussion on those who were, in his words, 'keepers of the flame' or writers of political history (unpublished in some cases) he revealingly also requoted Ernest Blythe, an Ulster Protestant and Minister for Finance in the pro-Treaty government and committed revisionist.¹⁷² When Blythe downplayed the excesses of the Black and Tans, as 'hysteria' or 'merely the kind of thing that always occurs when troops or police anywhere are subjected to persistent guerrilla attack', Ferriter referred to these comments as "laudatory' of Britain's 'magnanimity'".¹⁷³ Joe Lee succinctly outlined his analysis when he stated that out of 40,000 soldiers in the country in 1921 'much of the fighting was borne by 7,000 Black and Tans and 6,000 Auxiliaries ...recruited for a police operation'.¹⁷⁴ He stated that

¹⁷⁰ Kotsonouris, *Retreat from Revolution* 109

¹⁷¹ Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600–1972* 498

¹⁷² Diarmaid Ferriter, *A Nation and Not a Rabble: The Irish Revolution 1913–1923* (London: Profile Books, 2015) 53. See also, Daithí Ó Corráin, 'Ireland in His Heart North and South': The Contribution of Ernest Blythe to the Partition Question' in *Irish Historical Studies* Vol. 35, No. 137 (May, 2006) 61–80

¹⁷³ Ferriter, *A Nation and Not a Rabble*: 53

¹⁷⁴ J.J. Lee, *Ireland 1912–1985: Politics and Society* (Wiltshire: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 43

the:

new recruits were too few to impose a real reign of terror, but numerous enough to commit sufficient atrocities to provoke nationalist opinion in Ireland and America, and to outrage British liberal opinion which felt that if Britain could not hold Ireland according to 'British' standards then she shouldn't hold Ireland at all. The British lost the propaganda war with [a] spectacular series of own goals.¹⁷⁵

Concerning County Galway, Henry's depiction of these events also described the 'legacy of hate' that developed in relation to the Black and Tans 'which [has] left bitter memories'.¹⁷⁶ He expanded on how the Black and Tans systematically sought out anybody associated with the Volunteers, and how they forcibly beat and harassed those who resisted them. As an example he detailed the experience of the Higgins family in Ardahan. Upon entry to the Higgins home the Black and Tans ordered everyone out of bed at gunpoint, and although the children were all under the age of fifteen, 'none old enough to be involved in politics' they were ordered outside.¹⁷⁷ Whereupon the Stacks of barley were set alight. As the family all anxiously stood in front of these men:

Higgins asked them not to burn the house, but his pleas fell on deaf ears, as they set fire to the corner of the building before leaving ... Like the others who had lost their homes and winter feed that night, the barley was all the Higgins family had to live on for the winter.¹⁷⁸

Henry cites several examples of how the 'Galway men who risked all in Ireland's fight for independence' overcame this indiscriminate persecution from the Black and Tans.¹⁷⁹ By placing the experiences of the Volunteers in such reverence, he conveys a pattern of 'them' and 'us' throughout. Yet, notably he also mentions some Crown forces who 'saw the behaviour of the Auxiliaries and Black and Tans as a disgrace to their country'.¹⁸⁰ This comment furthered a notion that not all Crown forces or RIC members, that remained in their post, were so eager to inflict violence on civilians or Volunteers as some nationalist historical studies would suggest.

McNamara also discusses the impact of the early deployment of the Black and Tans in County Galway. He lists chronologically the systematic targeting of civilians in an attempt to flush out the insurgents in what he referred to as 'everyday violence and

¹⁷⁵ Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985*, 43

¹⁷⁶ Henry, *Blood for Blood*, 15

¹⁷⁷ Henry, *Blood for Blood*, 122

¹⁷⁸ Henry, *Blood for Blood*, 122

¹⁷⁹ Henry, *Blood for Blood*, Back Cover

¹⁸⁰ Henry, *Blood for Blood*, Back Cover

detention'.¹⁸¹ However, on some occasions, it is unclear whether the issue was land or insurgency related. Of course, it is worth noting that some examples he cites illustrates how unrestrained the Crown forces were in their actions regarding either trigger point. One such example was in Moycullen in September 1920, when Crown forces forcefully separated a congregation after mass and informed them in no uncertain terms that Richard Abbott, agent to Colonel Campbell would be returned to his home:

and “if a hair on his head was touched, six republicans would be killed” ... Uniformed men visited the villages of Corofin and Cummer on consecutive nights during the same month [October 1920] dragging twenty men from their beds, stripping them naked and flogging them on the roadside.¹⁸²

Significantly, November 1920 became one of the most harrowing months apropos the aforementioned terror with ongoing reprisals and deaths. Consequently, the related literature and the local histories documenting the War of Independence in County Galway reflect this. The incidents that attracted the most scrutiny include: Eileen Quinn; local parish priest, Fr Michael Griffin; and two young brothers, Pat and Harry Loughnane. This is unsurprising given that, in the first instance, shooting a heavily pregnant mother of three, or a member of the clergy would have been inconceivable to the Volunteers and secondly, the attack and murder of the two brothers showed a level of brutality that would have been unthinkable to the average person at the time. Equally, these three separate events contributed significantly to an increasingly disturbed state of trepidation and most likely a feeling of helplessness, not only amongst the communities concerned but also by the wider community of County Galway. So much so that the gruesome details of these deaths were heavily recorded in the newspapers at the time and would be difficult to avoid during the research stage of any publication. Examples of local histories that detail these deaths include Ó Laoi and O’Looney, who both compiled biographies on Fr Griffin several years apart, which include the vivid chronology of his death and intriguingly, several possible reasons behind it.¹⁸³ Also, the details surrounding Harry and Pat Loughnane’s deaths are recounted in *Beagh: a History & Heritage*, and, a century after her death, Eileen Quinn’s grandson Gerard Quinn, considers her death in the law magazine, *Law Society*

¹⁸¹ McNamara, *War and Revolution*, 140. On some occasions the narrative travels back and forth between 1920 and 1921.

¹⁸² McNamara, *War and Revolution*, 142

¹⁸³ Pádraic Ó Laoi, *Fr Griffin 1892–1920* (Galway: Privately Published, 1994), Pat O’Looney, *A Zealous Priest: the Murder of Fr Michael Griffin 1920* (Galway: Privately Published, 2020)

Gazette.¹⁸⁴ Particular elements of local knowledge were found in each publication, for example, the circumstances surrounding the discovery of the Loughnane bodies. It was a young friend, Michael ‘Tully’ Loughnane, that found the brothers. He claimed to have had a vision of Pat talking to a man at a spot which was familiar to him, as he worked in the area previously. Unable to shake off the image he cycled to the exact spot in his vision to investigate the site, only to find the charred bodies of the two brothers.¹⁸⁵ It is curious that under such mysterious circumstances as a vision, the very spot was located despite the fact that many neighbours and friends had been alerted to their disappearance. Yet Tully’s word is never doubted as to its accuracy, which possibly attests to the character of the young man.

To further measure the wider implications of fatalities during the period 1917–1921 in County Galway, a recent publication that took years in its compiling is, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution*.¹⁸⁶ As the name suggests it is a comprehensive account of all fatalities, ‘as accurately as possible’ that resulted as a ‘consequence of Irish political violence between April 1916 and 31 December 1921.’¹⁸⁷ After careful analysis of the lists during the period 1917–1921, sixty-five fatalities were identified as having occurred in County Galway with only one prior to January 1919.¹⁸⁸ Each entry is listed under the date of death, the name, association if any, age, occupation, marital status, children, religion, address, an account of the circumstances of the death and any compensation awarded. The methodologies employed have sought to determine as ‘accurately as possible’ the extent of fatalities that took place in Ireland during a historic period of conflict. Equally, the nature and manner in which the content is presented to the reader makes it an essential text for both researchers or history enthusiasts alike.

One last mention in this section especially in relation to the period in County Galway, is to the *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*.¹⁸⁹ This large volume of essays that span the Irish revolutionary period between 1913–23 is justifiably celebrated for its layers

¹⁸⁴ Marie McNamara and Maura Madden eds., *Beagh: a History & Heritage* (Galway: Beagh Integrated Rural Development Association, 1996), Gerard Quinn, ‘The Killing of Eileen Quinn’ in *Law Society Gazette* November 2020. 26–31

¹⁸⁵ McNamara and Madden eds, *Beagh*, 122

¹⁸⁶ O’Halpin and Ó Corráin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution*

¹⁸⁷ O’Halpin and Ó Corráin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution*, 1

¹⁸⁸ Martin Hansberry accidentally shot himself 16 September 1917. O’Halpin and Ó Corráin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* 103

¹⁸⁹ Crowley, Drisceoil, and Murphy, eds, *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*

of content, astutely researched findings and assuredly described as ‘ground-breaking’¹⁹⁰. Of particular note is the ‘300 original GIS maps unveiling startling geographical patterns from new data: battle maps, rebels’ meandering life-maps; maps of IRA structure down to 1,900 local companies; or ITGWU branches spreading like a rash of red measles’.¹⁹¹ These alongside the ‘Regional Perspectives’ enable an exploration and comparison of counties in order to emphasise the differences or indeed similarities that might exist. There are also two contributions from Conor McNamara under this theme, which provide an overview from both the province ‘Connacht’ and County ‘Galway’ perspective.¹⁹² This study also discusses the legacies of the revolution, which includes collective memories and cultural representations. Of equal significance, was Marie Coleman’s ‘Cumann na mBan in the War of Independence’, noteworthy by its inclusion in the ‘military dimensions’, a welcome recognition of the women’s contribution to the conflict.¹⁹³

Recovering Women’s Histories

Much of the historiography discussed thus far was primarily centred around the role of men. There is a straightforward reason for this, up until recent times, the role of women during the War of Independence was marginalised to the point of nonexistence or in some cases as Linda Connolly described, was considered ‘subsidiary’.¹⁹⁴ After violent conflict ceased and following the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922, the role of women reverted to that of domesticity, motherhood and in general playing the supporting role to the menfolk. This was not a role that was accepted by all women, especially those who fought for personal independence not just autonomy from England. Yet, informed by a deep-seated Catholic identity adopted by subsequent governments, various legislative bills were passed in the Oireachtas which further restricted women’s rights to their ‘employment, bodily autonomy and

¹⁹⁰ *Irish Times*, 16 September, 2017

¹⁹¹ Mic Moroney, Review in *Irish Arts Autumn* 2017 149

¹⁹² Conor McNamara, ‘Connacht’ in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*. edited by John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil, Mike Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017) 600–607 and Conor McNamara, ‘Galway’ in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*. edited by John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil, Mike Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017) 614–618

¹⁹³ Marie Coleman’s ‘Cumann na mBan in the War of Independence’ in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*. edited by John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil, Mike Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017)

¹⁹⁴ Linda Connolly, eds, *Women and the Irish Revolution* (Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2020) back cover

personal rights'.¹⁹⁵ Notwithstanding the support that political leaders such as James Connolly offered, or indeed the 1916's Proclamation which promised equality for women, the social and political constraints placed on women almost immediately on the foundation of the new State were devastating. Despite a constant struggle for equality, continuing constraints placed on women's rights over the course of the century resulted in a deep-rooted elusion surrounding the examination of women's history, especially during this conflict. Nonetheless, they did participate in the War of Independence, and whilst recovering their history was challenging as sources were sparse, evidence of their role was not completely absent. Furthermore and of key significance is the fact that, the burgeoning evidence accepts their contribution as intrinsic to the success of the War of Independence.

In order to accomplish this aim, it was not unexpected that the inclusion of the complex issue of women's histories invariably overlapped on the themes of both local history and that of memory, or rather a task of re-remembering. Not complex in the sense of beyond understanding, but quite the opposite: women were very active prior to, during and after this period. Simply put, once the set of measures established post-conflict ensured that the voice and role of women during and after this conflict would be for the most part, omitted or at least suppressed, the remaining details were sporadic. Margaret MacCurtain equated this with 'a cage' within which the women lived.¹⁹⁶ Over time, as the historic record of this conflict was documented, the agency of women was not considered to be of any particular relevance and was merely discarded and forgotten. Therefore, their histories were, at times, difficult to integrate into the standard chronology of this study without losing the significance of their contribution. This was redressed in the latter part of this study through the inclusion of their narrative within the memory chapters, which allowed their role to be recorded in a meaningful way and as such to also act as a way of re-remembering the significance of their part in the conflict.

In general, the Irish women that took part in this conflict have only begun to feature in literature over the last four decades or so. Maria Luddy put into context the task

¹⁹⁵ Lucy Roche, 'A History of Women's Rights in Ireland: What has the European Union done for us?' <https://www.youngfeminist.eu/2019/04/a-history-of-womens-rights-in-ireland-what-has-the-european-union-done-for-us/> Accessed 9 December 2021

¹⁹⁶ Margaret MacCurtain, 'The Historical Image' in *Irish Women: Image and Achievement*, edited by Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin (Dublin: Arlen House, 1985) 49

for the historian:

Women's history presents an exciting challenge. For the interested reader, teacher and pupil of Irish history, a whole new area of historical study is unfolding. Irish women's history asks new questions of old sources, queries the very nature of historical study in this country and constitutes, arguably, the most important new field of Irish history to have emerged in the last fifty years.¹⁹⁷

Lil Conlon's *Cumann na mBan and the Women of Ireland*, written in 1969, was an early example determined to fill this dearth of information. It was compiled following an explicit expression of disappointment that the Cumann na mBan Executive did not publish a history of its own for the fiftieth anniversary of 1916, and according to the author, it is 'a pot pourri of bitter-sweet memories'.¹⁹⁸ Thereafter, another lacuna existed until Margaret Ward's *Unmanageable Revolutionaries* also embraced the challenge and eventually others followed suit.¹⁹⁹ Much like their male counterparts, many women played pivotal roles throughout the broader revolutionary period, and this was slowly reflected in the literature.²⁰⁰ Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, for example, was an avid suffragette campaigner, feminist and revolutionary and was arrested on several occasions. Yet, despite her enthusiastic promotion of women's rights, Skeffington's father 'consistently voted against all female suffrage bills, giving her a profound insight into the extent to which women were marginalised within social movements'.²⁰¹ In *Ariadne's Thread: Writing Women into Irish History*, MacCurtain in her insightful analysis of Irish identity asserted that from the 1990s any discussion of identity 'led to the issue of gender as one of its components'.²⁰² Historiographical debates on the revolutionary period could no longer ignore the forgotten histories of women, in particular, the role played by members of the Cumann na mBan, albeit considered auxiliary. Cal McCarthy argued there was much more to the organisation than 'the historical gender dynamic' or their 'partial intellectual attachment to feminism. There was much more to Cumann na mBan than their place in women's history'.²⁰³ Equally, it must be remembered that not all women who took an active

¹⁹⁷ Maria Luddy, *Women in Ireland 1800-1918: A Documentary History* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1995) xxv

¹⁹⁸ Lil Conlon, *Cumann na mBan and the Women of Ireland 1913-25* (Kilkenny, Kilkenny People Ltd, 1969) 1

¹⁹⁹ Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 1983). See also Margaret Ward, *In Their Own Voice: Women and Irish Nationalism*, (Dublin: Attic Press, 1995)

²⁰⁰ See Margaret Ward, *Fearless Woman: Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Feminism and the Irish Revolution* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2019), Sinéad McCool, *No Ordinary Women: Irish Female Activists in the Revolutionary Years 1900-1923* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2015), Anne Haverty, *Constance Markievicz: An Independent Life* (London: Pandora Press, 1988).

²⁰¹ <https://womensmuseumofireland.ie/articles/hanna-sheehy-skeffington> Accessed 25 February 2021

²⁰² Margaret MacCurtain, *Ariadne's Thread: Writing Women into Irish History* (Galway: Arlen House, 2008) 52

²⁰³ Cal McCarthy, *Cumann na mBan and the Irish Revolution* (Cork: Collins Press, 2014) 3

role in the War of Independence were members of Cumann na mBan and uncovering their history was also a challenge. Some experiences of women were not of heroic circumstances or of making influential speeches; it was of fear and shame. An experience that most women may well have endured.²⁰⁴

It is therefore unsurprising that an analysis of the available literature has also debunked the view that no sexual violence or ‘outrages’ took place during this period.²⁰⁵ Ann Matthews’ *Renegades: Irish Republican Women 1900–1922* responded to the available academic discourse by stating:

This has not been adequately addressed and has never been discussed in a historical context, perhaps because public discussion of sexual assault and rape in war is a modern phenomenon. While being careful not to place the context of the modern world onto this period, it is necessary to record that women and their families suffered a terror that was not confined to armed conflict. Caught between the violence of the reprisals perpetuated by the IRA and the Black and Tans, the lives of women within the population descended into a living nightmare.²⁰⁶

Thus, once again, exploration of the issues of gender violence not only in County Galway during the War of Independence but also nationally, needed fresh consideration. Articles by Louise Ryan, Linda Connolly and Amy Reece, alongside radio interviews and conference papers, began to unlock the delicacies and open the debate on several surrounding issues of gender violence.²⁰⁷ Their assessments detailed that ‘during armed conflicts, women’s bodies bec[a]me battlefields’ and rape ‘ha[d] long been both an unintended consequence and a deliberate weapon of war’.²⁰⁸ In addition, wartime rape was a ‘three-way relationship – between the perpetrator, victim and the victim’s male compatriots. The ‘them’ and ‘us’ opposition in military conflict is

²⁰⁴ Occurrences of physical, sexual and physiological violence are well documented in a global context and span across several academic disciplines. For example see, Khuloud Alsaba & Anuj Kapilashrami, ‘Understanding women’s experience of violence and the political economy of gender in conflict: the case of Syria’ in *Reproductive Health Matters*, (2016) 24:47, 5–17,

²⁰⁵ *Conditions in Ireland Interim Report* (New York: American Commission on Conditions in Ireland, 1921) 86

²⁰⁶ Ann Matthews, *Renegades: Irish Republican Women 1900–1922* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2010) 266

²⁰⁷ Louise Ryan, ‘Drunken Tans: Representations of Sex and Violence in the Anglo-Irish War (1919–21)’ in *Feminist Review* No. 66, Political Currents (Autumn, 2000), pp 73–94, Professor Linda Connolly, ‘Towards a Further Understanding of the Violence Experienced by Women in the Irish revolution’, *Maynooth University Social Science Institute (MUSSI)*, Working Paper Series, no.7. Working Paper. MUSSI, January, 2019 (Unpublished), Amy Reece, ‘Outrages on the Women of Ireland: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Committed by Crown Forces During the Anglo-Irish War’, in *Creating Knowledge: The LAS Journal of Undergraduate Scholarship*, (2016) Vol. 9. Also several online lectures provided by Lindsey Earner-Byrne such as Machnamh 100 Seminar V <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3kLGRs-KUdE>

²⁰⁸ Louise Ryan, ‘Drunken Tans: Representations of Sex and Violence in the Anglo-Irish War (1919–21)’ in *Feminist Review* No. 66, Political Currents (Autumn, 2000), 82, and second quote, Amy Reece, ‘Outrages on the Women of Ireland: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Committed by Crown Forces During the Anglo-Irish War’, in *Creating Knowledge: The LAS Journal of Undergraduate Scholarship*, (2016) Vol. 9. 86

subverted by the common/shared violent treatment of women on both sides'.²⁰⁹ Pregnancy, fear and resulting shame prevented, not only the women involved, but their families, from coming forward to complain. Equally, the family needed to consider or question if shunned by their church and community, how would other members of the family be treated if seeking employment or indeed marital prospects. According to the 1911 Census, 'almost 98% of the population in Galway were Roman Catholics'.²¹⁰ If consideration is given to later evidence-based reports on those sent to the Catholic-administered mother and baby homes from 1922, these concerns were not unfounded.²¹¹ However, as noted in this study, violence towards women is recorded on both sides. Yet the idea that IRA men within the community committed violent acts was not necessarily a debate that historians of any gender readily entered. More recently a new set of literature exploring the role of women during this period has been published based on new research into Military Pension files utilising methodologies from current post-conflicts papers and reports.²¹² This study, alongside others including the previously mentioned works, has finally initiated the task to re-establish and recover the story of women pertaining to this conflict period.

Memory Studies

Official history, that which is published or otherwise viewed as authoritative, is noteworthy not only for what it recalls but what it doesn't—events and details that are considered 'inconvenient' are often relegated to oblivion. Other kinds of vernacular history persist, however—like oral history or folklore—in which such details can be shared and maintained informally.²¹³

One significant aim and a concurrent theme of this research surrounding the War of

²⁰⁹ Professor Linda Connolly, 'Towards a Further Understanding of the Violence Experienced by Women in the Irish revolution', *Maynooth University Social Science Institute (MUSSI)*, Working Paper Series, no.7. Working Paper. MUSSI, January, 2019 (Unpublished), 21

²¹⁰ <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/exhibition/galway/main.html> Accessed 2 November 2020

²¹¹ The Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes and certain related matters was established by the Irish Government in February 2015 to provide a full account of what happened to vulnerable women and children in Mother and Baby Homes during the period 1922 to 1998. See full report at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d4b3d-final-report-of-the-commission-of-investigation-into-mother-and-baby-homes/#>

²¹² See Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward, eds., *Irish Women and Nationalism: Soldiers, New Women and Wicked Hags* (Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2019), Siobhra Aiken, 'The women who had been straining every nerve: Gender specific medical management of trauma in the Irish Revolution' in *Trauma and Identity in Contemporary Irish Culture (1916–1923)* edited by Melania Terrazas Gallego (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2020) 133–158 and Oona Frawley, ed., *Women and the Decade of Commemorations* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2021)

²¹³ Guy Beiner <https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/bcnews/humanities/history/burns-visiting-scholar.html#:~:text=%E2%80%9CWhen%20it%20comes%20to%20history%2C%20it%20can%20be,protestors%20in%20Northern%20Ireland%20by%20the%20British%20Army.> Accessed 13 December 2021

Independence and key to the concepts of personal, social and cultural identity, is that of memory. Notably, to link those past events to the present and thereby safeguarding those remembrances for future generations. However, as Guy Beiner has explained, the significance of memory studies had been undervalued at a time when ‘a generation of so-called ‘revisionist’ Irish historians, mentored by Moody and his equally influential peer Robert Dudley Edwards ... obstinately denied the historical value of myths and shied away from memory’.²¹⁴ Nonetheless, French historian Pierre Nora pioneered the exploration of boundaries as regards the interrelated studies of history and memory in the multi-volume, *Les Lieux de Memoire*.²¹⁵ His work has been internationally accepted as a breakthrough in terms of how the concept of memory is understood and has arguably resulted in multiple other works arising. With scholars from a multiplicity of disciplines, such as heritage scholars and practitioners, geographers, sociologists, and anthropologists, all contributing different perspectives on the concept and practice of memory. The significance here is within the context of trauma or conflict and how communities remember.

Paul Connerton’s early contribution to memory studies, *How Societies Remember*, posits his concept that ‘images of the past and recollected knowledge of the past are conveyed and sustained by ritual performances’ for example commemorative ceremonies.²¹⁶ These rituals then create a social or collective memory over time that constructs a national identity. Connerton also draws attention to the historian who can ‘receive a guiding impetus from, and can in turn give significant shape to, the memory of [these] social groups ... [especially] when a state apparatus is used in a systematic way to deprive its citizens of their memory.’²¹⁷ Yet, viewing the past through the lens of the present can sometimes create difficult divisions, as varying communities gather in remembrance or commemoration of familiar events associated with conflict. There is an inherent need to find the antagonist. The same is true of the War of Independence, or indeed when Civil War post-conflict allegiances persist. Nonetheless, David Lowenthal in the 1980s, was one of the earliest scholars to

²¹⁴ Guy Beiner, *Forgetful Remembrance: Social Forgetting and Vernacular Historiography of a Rebellion in Ulster* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020) 3

²¹⁵ Pierre Nora, ‘From Lieux de Mémoire to Realms of Memory’ in *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past. Volume I Conflicts and Divisions* edited by Kritzman, L.D. (Columbia University Press, New York, 1996) xv–xxiv.

²¹⁶ Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014 (first published in 1989), Back Page

²¹⁷ Connerton, *How Societies Remember* 14

recognise that:

the past is everywhere ... relics, histories, memories suffuse human experience. Each particular trace of the past ultimately perishes, but collectively they are immortal. Whether it is celebrated or rejected, attended to or ignored, the past is omnipresent.²¹⁸

Since then, the exploration into the dynamics of memory has developed expeditiously into a wide multidisciplinary research subject internationally and the same is true here in Ireland.²¹⁹ Approaches, concepts and methods in the study of memory, which can appear boundless, are given a focus within the international recognised journal, *Memory Studies* (established in 2008).²²⁰ This international, peer reviewed journal,

examines the social, cultural, cognitive, political and technological shifts affecting how, what and why individuals, groups and societies remember, and forget. The journal responds to and seeks to shape public and academic discourse on the nature, manipulation, and contestation of memory in the contemporary era.²²¹

Importantly, the diversity of cultural, collective or social memory, Astrid Erll has argued, should not occupy the challenges of scholars over its inclusion amongst terms such as 'myth, tradition and individual memory'.²²² Instead:

it is exactly the umbrella quality of these relatively new usages of memory which helps us see the (sometimes functional, sometimes analogical, sometimes metaphorical) relationships between such phenomena as ancient myths and the personal recollection of recent experience, and which enables disciplines as varied as psychology, history, sociology, and literary studies to engage in a stimulating dialogue.²²³

Ian McBride's *History and Memory of Modern Ireland* and Guy Beiner's *Remembering the Year of the French: Irish Folk History and Social Memory* both signalled the beginning of this memory research in an Irish context.²²⁴ Notably, McBride's book in his own words, 'is about the relationship between the past and the present in Irish society, and the ways in which historical consciousness has been shaped and structured by oral tradition, icons and monuments, ritual ceremonies and re-enactments'.²²⁵ Beiner, on

²¹⁸ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) xv

²¹⁹ See Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning eds., *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (Germany: De Gruyter, 2010); Irish Memory Studies Network via <http://irishmemorystudies.com/>

²²⁰ <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/mss> Accessed 28 March 2022

²²¹ <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/mss> Accessed 28 March 2022

²²² Erll and Nünning eds, *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, 2

²²³ Erll and Nünning eds, *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, 2

²²⁴ Ian McBride, *History and Memory of Modern Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and Guy Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French: Irish Folk History and Social Memory* (USA: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007)

²²⁵ McBride, *History and Memory of Modern Ireland* 5

the other hand, revealed ‘alternate visions of the Irish past and ... [brought] into focus the vernacular histories, folk commemorative practices, and negotiations of memory that have gone largely unnoticed by historians’.²²⁶ Of significance is Beiner’s connection between ‘hidden’ history and memory albeit applying the theme focused on the rebellion in 1798.²²⁷ Similarly, memory and remembrance of the War of Independence, the battle that succeeded in gaining independence for Ireland, has not always had the attention it deserved within the academic discourse in Ireland. There are other comparisons to be found in this study, in particular when researching those associated with women. He explained the impact of the book stating, ‘You won’t find anywhere in the world – or so I’ve been told – a book looking at the history of memory and forgetting over 200 years in such detail.’²²⁸ Critically, the paradigm of forgetting certain unpleasantness associated with the War of Independence and the bitter divisions that ensued from the Civil War had become intrinsic in the process of nation building or the forging of identities.

Since then Oona Frawley’s *Memory Ireland* series furthers the field of memory studies to discuss if cultural memory relies on ‘the memories of individuals, or does it take shape beyond the borders of the individual mind.’²²⁹ The series will eventually include four volumes with essays from ‘top scholars in the field of Irish studies’, to analyse amongst other themes, the connection between memory and history.²³⁰ In her introduction, Frawley stated that Irish ‘cultural memory has an array of milieus’ and ‘is also located in cultural forms that remain unattached to a geographical space’.²³¹ The variety of which could be artefacts, pamphlets, poems, songs, photograph and paintings, each become remnants of cultural memory. In Guy Beiner’s ‘Modes of Memory’, ‘Ninety-eight is a quintessential Irish *Lieu de mémoire*’, a conflict, in which he

²²⁶ Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French* Abstract

²²⁷ <http://historyhub.ie/guy-beiner-intra-community-remembering-forgetting-commemoration-ulster> Accessed 1 November 2021

²²⁸ *The Newsletter*, 23 January 2019 <https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/protestant-role-1798-rebellion-forgetfully-remembered-134338> Accessed 10 November 2021

²²⁹ There are three in the series so far. Oona Frawley, ed., *Memory Ireland*, Volumes 1, 2, 3 (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011, 2012, 2014), also there is podcast series that features more than 200 recorded lectures, papers, interviews and presentations that have taken place on the subject of memory via <https://www.ucd.ie/humanities/events/podcasts/>

²³⁰ Oona Frawley ed., *Memory Ireland: Volume 1 History and Modernity* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011) cover

²³¹ Oona Frawley, ‘Introduction’ in *Memory Ireland: Volume 2 Diaspora and Memory Practices* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2012) 129

stated, 'left lingering traumas that cast long shadows'.²³² Notably, the legacy of the War of Independence has also cast shadows and has become part of Ireland's cultural heritage, both the tangible and the intangible. Frawley has used the term 'memory cruxes' to determine specific elements of time that for whatever reason are remembered by individuals or collectively within the cultural memory of a group.²³³ These 'bumps' are not necessarily associated with momentous occasions but more often determined by 'identity formation', that unfolds into a type of memory surge.²³⁴ Frawley provided her definition as:

Memory cruxes ... center around perceived traumatic historical spaces that pose questions and offer conflicting, oppositional, and sometimes intensely problematic answers about the way that a culture considers its past, and that are crucial in the shaping of social identities.²³⁵

Argued here is the idea that manifestations of these cruxes can be triggered by several means, including historic sites visited, artefacts seen or held, and even attendance at commemorations. Although the Loughnane brothers, Eileen Quinn and Fr Griffin were in essence ordinary people, they too have become part of the cultural 'crux' of memory related to this period. Apart from the literature mentioned earlier, (*A Zealous Priest: The Murder of Fr Michael Griffin 1920, Fr Griffin 1892–1920, The Life & Death of the Loughnane Brothers, Lady Gregory's Journal 1916–1930*), their memory now resides in the built and cultural heritages of monuments, songs, poems and in the use of the photographs associated with their capture and deaths. However, these and other locally published narratives in County Galway also kept the memory of the conflict alive within the community. For example, Pádraic Ó Laoi's biography of Fr Griffin was written not on a significant anniversary but because of the ongoing interest, which he could not 'satisfy by just giving talks'.²³⁶

However, studies in an Irish context became more focused as the onset of public commemorations began to produce explorations on modes or approaches to the study of memory in areas associated with identity, cultural memory, sense of place,

²³² Guy Beiner, 'Modes of Memory' Remembering and Forgetting the Irish Rebellion of 1798' in Oona Frawley ed., *Memory Ireland: Volume 1 History and Modernity* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011) 66

²³³ Oona Frawley, *Memory Ireland Volume 3 The Famine and the Troubles* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014) 1

²³⁴ Frawley, *Memory Ireland Volume 3*, 2

²³⁵ Frawley, *Memory Ireland Volume 3*, 2

²³⁶ *City Tribune*, 6 May 1994

and practices of memory.²³⁷ Similarly, with memory studies and trauma studies considered critically important discourses in understanding culture and society, an Irish Memory Studies Network was established in 2015, and hosted by University College Dublin's Humanities Institute. One aim was to 'open up a critical dialogue across multidisciplinary aspects of, and international contexts for, memory studies, with a view to generating discussion across disciplinary boundaries and, it is hoped, laying the foundations for collaborative research work'.²³⁸ Significant to this study, the network questioned, 'whether [by] discussing the recent past or more distant histories, our conversations are marked by an interrogation of what and how we remember; what and how we choose to commemorate; and what we forget'.²³⁹ By encompassing differing approaches to memory within the Network and other academic explorations, discussions have emerged on how historic events are recorded, and in some cases the transgenerational affects that have taken place.

Equally worthy of note is *Irish Studies and the Dynamics of Memory: Traditions and Transformations*, edited by Marguerite Corporaal, Christopher Cusack and Ruud van den Beuken.²⁴⁰ Published during the Decade of Centenaries, this edited study is intended to 'showcase the fecundity of Irish memory studies ... in the ways they engage with recent developments in memory theory and critically interrogate the manifestations and functions of memory in Irish and Irish-diasporic culture and society'.²⁴¹ In her chapter, Eve Morrison referred to the veterans of the Irish independence struggle, as:

a generation of transition, their memories stretching from the old Ireland in which they were reared – the Ireland they fought against – through the independence struggle itself and continuing into the new, post-revolutionary, partitioned jurisdictions created by the conflict.²⁴²

Their memories were so significant to the period that various projects were established to gather their testimony, thereby creating an awareness of history, which

²³⁷ See the Irish Memory Studies Network at <http://irishmemorystudies.com/> also *Memory Ireland* series edited by Oona Frawley.

²³⁸ <http://irishmemorystudies.com/index.php/what-is-memory-studies/> Accessed 1 November 2020

²³⁹ <http://irishmemorystudies.com/index.php/what-is-memory-studies/> Accessed 1 November 2020

²⁴⁰ Marguerite Corporaal, Christopher Cusack and Ruud van den Beuken eds., *Irish Studies and the Dynamics of Memory: Transitions and Transformations* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2017)

²⁴¹ Corporaal, Cusack and van den Beuken, *Irish Studies and the Dynamics of Memory: Transitions and Transformations* 13

²⁴² Eve Morrison, 'Hauntings of the Irish Revolution: Veterans and Memory of the Independence Struggle and Civil War' in *Irish Studies and the Dynamics of Memory: Transitions and Transformations*, edited by Marguerite Corporaal, Christopher Cusack and Ruud van den Beuken eds., (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2017)

'likewise enhances communal and national identity, legitimating a people in their own eyes'.²⁴³ Many of their testimonies have only recently come to light 'or become easily accessible, and there is almost certainly more awaiting discovery.'²⁴⁴ Public interviews, letters, or memoirs, became, she states, 'active agents of memory in a public sphere of well-known published accounts and private disputes.'²⁴⁵ An example of one significant addition to the record which is yet to be published but which is included in this study is Nora Loughnane's recollections of her brothers' death, held in National University Ireland, Galway (see Chapter 9, B14).

However, as first-hand memories ceased to be, the built and cultural heritages that remain continue to provide a sense of place to those whose cultural memory can now be encouragingly forged from remembrance of historic events. As Lowenthal noted,

Groups lacking a sense of their own past are like individuals who know nothing of their parents. Parallels between personal and national identity, a powerful stimulus to early nineteenth-century European nationalism, culminated a century later in Max Dvorak's association of cherished family icons and heirlooms with the need to preserve national historic monuments.²⁴⁶

Often the manifestation of this memory takes the form of statues, monuments or memorials, placed in areas that have historic significance and in turn become as mentioned earlier, a site of memory. The essentiality of these sites can become intergenerational (or transgenerational) whereby the site is used regularly for remembrance or commemoration and shared within families or amongst neighbours. Nowadays these sites of memory can, on some occasions, be a source of great pride for the communities involved and can also contribute to the forging of cultural identities. Affirmation to being Irish, as distinct to British for example, often precipitates the use of various heritages to denote identity such as language, poetry, music, humour, and various others. This ingrained sense of place is especially true of the diaspora. Hence many Irish Americans raise their children with many traditional values such as Irish dance but also with a knowledge of historical figures such as Michael Collins, Éamon de Valera, Tom Barry, or Dan Breen. In addition, significant historic sites such as Dublin's GPO and Croke Park, Tipperary's Soloheadbeg and

²⁴³ Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* 44

²⁴⁴ Morrison, 'Hauntings of the Irish Revolution', 83

²⁴⁵ Morrison, 'Hauntings of the Irish Revolution', 83

²⁴⁶ Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 44. Also, the reference to Max Dvorak was cited in Lester B.

Rowntree and Margaret W. Conkey eds., 'Symbolism and the Cultural Landscape' in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (Dec., 1980), pp 459–474

Cork's Kilmichael, are also used to establish this connection with the past. Gregory Ashworth and Brian Graham's in *Senses of Place: Senses of Time* explored these themes and theorised that 'we create the heritage that we require and manage it for a range of purposes defined by the needs and demands of our present'.²⁴⁷ McBride too held that 'present actions are not determined by the past, but rather the reverse: that what we choose to remember is dictated by our contemporary concerns.'²⁴⁸ This notion needed further exploration when researching the memories and heritages of the War of Independence in County Galway. Especially when social or political circumstances possibly determined the differences or similarities between local and national commemorations. In 2018, at what she referred to as the Decade of Centenaries' 'midpoint', Heather Laird published her book *Commemoration*, a reimagining of commemoration and an exploration of the many varied paths [of commemoration] not travelled.²⁴⁹ This book is part of the Síreacht collection that examines and provokes discussion under the topic of 'Longings for Another Ireland'.²⁵⁰ In this concise volume, Laird skilfully interconnects history, literature, documentary and commemoration and ponders several questions. One such question arises from her belief that the ten year period prior to the foundation of the Free State was 'potent with possibility' and what would it take to 'remember' the futures it could have given rise to.²⁵¹ Contentiously, Laird suggests that it would include alternatives to approaches already offered, such as,

It would involve something more and other than bemused and sometimes patronising references to the seemingly odd and eccentric ways of being that were practised or countenanced during the ten-year period we are commemorating. It would involve something more and other than tokenistic gestures toward inclusivity. And it would certainly involve something more and other than offering a balance between nationalist and Revisionist (with a capital 'R') versions of the historical events being commemorated.²⁵²

As welcome as these insights are, Laird, does not include a remembering of those RIC members that assisted and risked their lives for the benefit of the independence struggle.

²⁴⁷ G.J. Ashworth and Brian Graham, eds, *Senses of Place: Senses of Time* (Oxfordshire, Routledge, 2016) 5

²⁴⁸ McBride, *History and Memory of Modern Ireland* 7

²⁴⁹ Heather Laird, *Commemoration* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2018)

²⁵⁰ See *Irish Times*, 25 April 2019

²⁵¹ Laird, *Commemoration* 71

²⁵² Laird, *Commemoration* 71. In the notes Laird refers to Roy Foster and his 'tongue in cheek' passage on the writer Rosamond Jacob and the tokenistic inclusion of a large photograph of unionist politician Edward Carson and black dancers in a commemoration by the GAA of 1916.

Heritage Studies

Defining and researching the heritages of the War of Independence in County Galway during this study was influenced by several practitioners in the scholarly field of heritage studies. The terms built and cultural heritage are an inherently useful rubric to understand and interpret a variety of heritage components, and are used throughout this body of work.²⁵³ One stimulating explanation of heritage that furthers this, is a ‘cultural process that seeks to link past and present, but also aims to influence the future’.²⁵⁴ Furthermore, as this study explores, is the significance of heritage in the formation of identities and remembrance. How this can inspire new ideas and thereby display to others what we value. Thus, ensuring these heritages for future generations. Instructively, David Lowenthal opened his influential book with the statement, ‘The past is essential – and inescapable. Without it we would lack any identity, nothing would be familiar, and the present would make no sense.’²⁵⁵ Lowenthal was ‘perhaps the most important figure in the founding of Heritage Studies as an academic discipline’, and his innovation was to explore the differences between heritage and history.²⁵⁶ He stimulated discussions by stating that ‘the past is also a weighty burden that cripples innovation and forecloses the future’.²⁵⁷ The ‘risks’ of returning to the past have, as he describes, ‘four potential drawbacks ... disappointment ... inability to cope with its circumstances, the danger of being marooned in it, and possible damage to the fabric of both past and present’.²⁵⁸ These are valid concerns when political histories have, as mentioned above, dominated the historiography in the past.

In essence, the heritages of the War of Independence in County Galway are bound up with the history of the conflict. David Lowenthal expressed a concern in his preface to *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* that:

No aspect of heritage is wholly devoid of historical reality; no historian's view is wholly free of heritage bias. As I myself stress, just as yesterday's heritage becomes today's history, so we in turn embrace as heritage what our precursors took as history.²⁵⁹

²⁵³ See The Heritage Council of Ireland <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/what-is-heritage> Accessed 20 March 2021

²⁵⁴ Johanna Turunen, ‘Introduction: using our pasts, defining our futures – debating heritage and culture in Europe’ *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Volume 26, 2020 - Issue 10. 975

²⁵⁵ Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, inside cover

²⁵⁶ See *The Guardian*, 27 September 2018 and <http://heritagestudies.nl/?p=347> accessed 30 March 2022

²⁵⁷ Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, inside cover

²⁵⁸ Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 28

²⁵⁹ David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Lowenthal's analysis exemplifies the varied understandings of heritage both tangible and intangible, including contested heritages exposed from conflict, which include a reference to Irish sufferance and grievance resulting from Easter 1916. However, one example he cites is most intriguing to this study, especially when cataloguing the heritage items located in Chapter 9. He depicts an exhibition in Minute Man National Historical Park which commemorates the opening battle in the American Revolutionary War. In an effort, he states, to 'play down grand historical events' and focus on ongoing usages of everyday life, a 'wooden darning egg, a needle holder, a detachable pocket, and an old comb are displayed ... with the legend: "Life was a daily thing. Battles only temporary. But both went on while colonists waited out the war"'. These artefacts are exactly the sort of items that spark the curiosity of communities, mixing the mundane with the conflict produces a more intimate connection with the exhibit.

More specific in an Irish context, *The Heritage of Ireland*, published in 2001, was a first of its kind to structure a 'multidisciplinary approach to defining and describing Ireland's rich and complex heritage'²⁶⁰. Within the chapters, there are several professionals (serving diverse disciplines) from both North and South of Ireland determined to highlight the importance of the protection, management and interpretation of Irish heritage. By drawing attention to the various aspects of Irish heritage and its practitioners, this edited volume brings together seemingly unrelated associations attributed to heritage, whilst encouragingly endorses the various dynamics and hidden aspects within the field of heritage studies. For example, and relevant in this study, Marie-Annick Desplanques makes a convincing argument on the importance of including aspects of folklore, traditional or popular culture, into the notion of heritage, as it reinforces 'the core notion of collective identity'.²⁶¹ She states that 'without an appropriate representation of traditional and popular culture, one cannot fully comprehend heritage in terms of the sociocultural legacy of a people.'²⁶² Similarly, Pat Cooke's 'Principles of Interpretation' examines several issues worthy of investigation in this study, financial, cultural, bias, and technology.²⁶³ However, he too

²⁶⁰ Neil Buttimer, Colin Rynne and Helen Guerin, eds, *The Heritage of Ireland* (Cork: The Collins Press, 2000)

²⁶¹ Marie-Annick Desplanques, 'Folklore and Ethics' in *The Heritage of Ireland* edited by Neil Buttimer, Colin Rynne and Helen Guerin (Cork: The Collins Press, 2000) 179

²⁶² Desplanques, 'Folklore and Ethics' 179

²⁶³ Pat Cooke, 'The Principles of Interpretation' in *The Heritage of Ireland* edited by Neil Buttimer, Colin Rynne and Helen Guerin (Cork: The Collins Press, 2000) 375–389

warns of ‘an unpleasant or problematic dimension’ that warrants the question, ‘should it be avoided or revealed?’²⁶⁴ This is an issue that is not so easily resolved unless vigorous attempts are made to investigate who and why this is necessary. This, he states, is realised by adding ‘a cultural resonance’ only after conducting ‘critical analysis and in-depth research’.²⁶⁵ He continued that, ‘the point is that the story does not need to be happy (it is a boon of course when it genuinely is) but to be compelling’.²⁶⁶ Cooke also correctly observed that there must be some connection between what is being interpreted and the interpreter, in other words, ‘value and meaning’. Yet, he contends ‘the value of our heritage to others is largely a function of our capacity to articulate its depth, richness and complexity to ourselves’.²⁶⁷ However, as argued in this study, prior to the Decade of Commemorations, the complex heritages surrounding the War of Independence had been accorded less priority than the Easter 1916 Rising. Therefore, not all complex heritages are easily grappled with, in regard to interpretation and dissemination. Although some of the content in this book is now dated, and would benefit a contemporary update, nonetheless much of its content is of sufficient value to the heritage practitioner.

Under discussion in Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge’s *A Geography of Heritage* published in 2002, Peter Howard’s *Heritage: Management, Interpretation, Identity 2003*, and *Pluralising Pasts: Heritage, Identity and Place in Multicultural Societies* in 2007, is how the heritage industry has become big business and falls within the scope of political policy and the formation of identities.²⁶⁸ In his discussion on heritage as identity, Howard determines that ‘heritage strengthens the identities at the level of our home, our neighbourhood, our town, our region (which may have several layers), our nation and at the continental and universal levels’.²⁶⁹ Stipulating the motives for interpretation, he continued that ‘whether we are discussing the family photograph album or the national park, a major outcome of conserving and interpreting heritage ... intended or not, is to provide identity to that family or that nation.’ Yet, one point he reaches, that is later discussed in this study, is the ‘designation, conservation and interpretation of much heritage simultaneously makes another group feel less important, less welcome

²⁶⁴ Cooke, ‘The Principles of Interpretation’ 376

²⁶⁵ Cooke, ‘The Principles of Interpretation’ 377

²⁶⁶ Cooke, ‘The Principles of Interpretation’ 377

²⁶⁷ Cooke, ‘The Principles of Interpretation’ 377

²⁶⁸ Peter Howard, *Heritage: Management, Interpretation, Identity* (London: Continuum, 2004)

²⁶⁹ Howard, *Heritage: Management, Interpretation, Identity* 147

and less secure.²⁷⁰ Also under the theme of identity and inclusivity in commemorative heritage, Ashworth *et al* recognise that:

societies, notably in Western countries, are becoming more self-consciously socially and culturally diverse, a fragmentation which raises issues as to how this heterogeneity should be reflected in heritage selection, interpretation and management.²⁷¹

Furthermore, as shown later in this study, where communities have erected memorials or commemorative plaques associated with the War of Independence, a certain sense of place was revealed amongst younger members of the community and in turn their wider families and friends. Thus, building a wider sense of identity within the community. Products of the 'creative imagination of the individual and of society, while place identities are not passively received but are ascribed to places by people.'²⁷²

Kate Moles considered the issues of national identity and its partnership with heritage in 'A Landscape of Memories: Layers of Meaning in a Dublin Park'.²⁷³ Based on the theory that "people in the present are the creators of heritage, and not merely passive receivers or transmitters", she argues that heritage 'is formed through the intertwining threads of economy, society, culture and politics, reformed and reconstituted continually through the shifting interactions of these constitutive parts.'²⁷⁴ And while only one narrative of history can be displayed during the processes of heritage, which is based on singular means of remembering, events, people, and places, there are, she continues, 'multiple, overlapping, conflicting and often unrelated understandings of particular events, material and cultural artefacts that constitute places of heritages'.²⁷⁵ The process is, as Susie West describes, 'a dynamic and reflexive concept. It stands for the thoughts and actions that join the tangible remains of the past with contemporary meanings and practices. Heritage processes and practices are found at a variety of scales, from international agreements down to informal but socially meaningful and iterative actions'.²⁷⁶ Equally, in the context of Irish diasporic identity, the built and cultural heritages found in their homeplaces and also within the

²⁷⁰ Howard, *Heritage: Management, Interpretation, Identity* 147

²⁷¹ Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge eds, *Pluralising Pasts*, 2

²⁷² Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge eds, *Pluralising Pasts*, 5

²⁷³ Kate Moles, 'A landscape of Memories: Layers of Meaning in a Dublin Park' in *Heritage and Identity: Engagement and Demission in the Contemporary World* edited by Marta Anico and Elsa Peralta (Oxen: Routledge, 2009) 129

²⁷⁴ Moles, 'A landscape of Memories: Layers of Meaning in a Dublin' 130

²⁷⁵ Moles, 'A landscape of Memories: Layers of Meaning in a Dublin' 130

²⁷⁶ Susie West, ed., *Understanding Global Heritage: Understanding Heritage in Practice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) 1

wider national landscape, strengthen their affiliation with home. It is by understanding this diasporic and domestic heritage attachment, that the inspiration behind big business occurs. With the end of the Celtic Tiger towards the end of 2008, 'it was tourism that many people, not just politicians and major stakeholders, turned to as a possible answer to the financial and employment difficulties of the country. It is this 'economic and social importance of both tourism and heritage ... [and] the policies and practices that underpin them' that Catherine Kelly examined in her study 'Tourism and Heritage'.²⁷⁷ Whilst she agreed that 'heritage forms an important part of the tourist experience and is therefore a key aspect of the tourist industry in Ireland ... as a form or expression of national and cultural identity [it] is something to be nurtured and cherished'.²⁷⁸ However, further in-depth analysis on the heritages of conflict in the War of Independence and how this is represented in tourism was absent. Or indeed, the lack of literature that spans the link between history, memory and heritages on themes such as the War of Independence was also neglected.

However, just as the Decade of Centenaries was about to begin in 2012, Mark McCarthy's timely publication, *Ireland's 1916 Rising: Explorations Of History-Making, Commemoration & Heritage In Modern Times* provided some engaging insights in the dimensions of heritage, and the ways in which it is entwined with other concepts, including memory.²⁷⁹ Significantly, McCarthy focuses on the memory and heritages surrounding the 1916 Rising, and its notable transgenerational prominence as a fundamental event in the fight for independence. No such equivalent publication has been unearthed during this research and demonstrates the lack of available literature on the memory and heritages associated with the War of Independence. Nonetheless, McCarthy's examination of characteristics such as the relationship between politics and memory, Anglo-Irish relations, sites of memory, and the cultural and built heritages, associated with the 1916 Rising provides the genesis for future research as seen throughout this study. The following year in 2013, and almost at the outset of landmark centennials, and within the context of World War I, *Towards Commemoration: Ireland in War in Revolution 1912–1923*, exhibits a developing interest

²⁷⁷ Catherine Kelly, 'Tourism and Heritage', in *Understanding Contemporary Ireland* edited by Brendan Bartley and Rob Kitchin (London: Pluto Press, 2007)

²⁷⁸ Kelly, 'Tourism and Heritage', 180

²⁷⁹ Gregory John Ashworth, Brian Graham and J. Tunbridge, *A Geography of Heritage* (London: Arnold, 2002), Mark McCarthy, *Ireland's 1916 Rising : Explorations Of History-Making, Commemoration & Heritage In Modern Times* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012)

in subject area as the decade of commemoration approached. This book has several chapters questioning the relationship between history and commemoration in Ireland, both North and South.²⁸⁰ For example, at a time when the Irish Government's new policy frameworks, in support of reconciliation, attempted to nurture peace, David Fitzpatrick in his chapter explores 'Historians and the Commemoration of Irish Conflicts, 1912–23' and their role in commemoration. The need for dignified remembrance regardless of which side of the community the dead hail from is emphasised. In Anne Dolan's chapter, she questions the reverberations of remembrance and how painful memories stir 'hatred and division'.²⁸¹ At the launch of this monograph in 2013, Former President of Ireland Mary McAleese reflected that this publication and the Decade of Commemorations offered an opportunity to 'stretch ourselves' into making new memories centred around 'diverse perspectives' and peace building, in what she maintained was a shared history.²⁸²

Providing a new perspective and most pertinent to this study is Lisa Godson and Joanna Brück's edited monograph *Making 1916: material and visual culture of the Easter Rising*, 2015.²⁸³ Acclaimed as an 'excellent collection on the visual and material culture of the Rising', this compilation sets out to present a unique study on the visual and material culture (objects and images) associated with the 1916 Rising and its remembrance.²⁸⁴ Published during the Decade of Centenaries, such a study clarifies that artefacts and sites, are not just illustrations or ruins of history but they have an 'agency and effect on material practices central to identity and the creation of social memory.'²⁸⁵ Furthermore, the process of gathering and collecting the various items, 1916 tricolour flag, documents, portraits, and autograph books, and also the interpretation by varied experts, have formed a unique aspect of heritage that in itself contributes to the wider understanding of identity, remembrance and heritage-making. Significantly, Jack Elliott explores ephemera and the material culture that was produced

²⁸⁰ John Horne And Edward Madigan eds., *Towards Commemoration: Ireland in War in Revolution 1912–1923* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2013)

²⁸¹ Ann Dolan, 'Divisions and Divisions and Divisions: Who to Commemorate?' in *Towards Commemoration: Ireland in War in Revolution 1912–1923*, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2013) 146

²⁸² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kA3ZUBKqf5I> Accessed 12 January 2022

²⁸³ Lisa Godson and Joanna Brück eds., *Making 1916: Material and Visual Culture of the Easter Rising* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015)

²⁸⁴ Catriona Crowe, 'Review Essay: The Material and Performative Culture of 1916' in *Éire-Ireland*, Volume 51, Numbers 3 & 4, (2016) 124–140

²⁸⁵ <https://www.designhistorysociety.org/news/view/new-publication-making-1916-material-and-visual-culture-of-the-easter-rising-edited-by-lisa-godson-and-joanna-br%C3%BCck-published-by-liverpool-university-press#:~:text=Featuring%20more%20than%2020%20essays,understanding%20of%20the%20Easter%20Rising.>

in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising.²⁸⁶ He contends that

with a few notable exceptions, there is an absence of any serious consideration of the significance of this material ... [however] by paying serious attention to the material culture produced in the aftermath of the Rising, one can begin to explore the ways in which individuals engaged with and began to shape narratives that sought to make sense of the armed insurrection.²⁸⁷

This is also true of objects and sites associated with the War of Independence. When compiled with a focus on a specific area, in this case County Galway, consideration is given to those who interacted with such items, or why did some individuals, sites or memorials become more symbolic of the painful remembrance of this conflict.

The subject of heritage and tourism arose again in Glenn Hooper's edited collection, *Heritage and Tourism in Britain and Ireland*, which examines the 'natural, but sometimes troubled, relationship that exists between' them.²⁸⁸ In a similar way to *The Heritage of Ireland* some years before, this edited volume brought together 'a range of professionals with consultancy and marketing experience, together with mainstream academics drawn from disciplines including history, archaeology, heritage policy and geography' to analysis the outstanding issues.²⁸⁹ Hooper stipulated that this work was a continuation of other studies from previous decades, under themes such as environmental, cultural and political concerns. The publication therefore responded to his identified 'need for greater diversity in the industry and for heritage professionals to be more engaged with the various needs of their visitors'.²⁹⁰ Tawny Paul identified a link between 'legitimizing [the] individual, community and national identities' with the 'profound effect on our consciousness, on our sense of ourselves' and the need to engage with diaspora (albeit in a Scottish context).²⁹¹ Once again, in what may seem obvious from a heritage professional's perspective but something that does not necessarily tie in with a tourism understanding is that 'heritage is so important to diasporic identity' yet engagement policies in various national contexts does not necessarily reflect this.²⁹² From a diasporic perspective, and noteworthy for this study,

²⁸⁶ Jack Elliott, "'After I am hanged my portrait will be interesting but not before": Ephemera and the Construction of Personal Responses to the Easter Rising' in *Making 1916: Material and Visual Culture of the Easter Rising*, edited by Lisa Godson and Joanna (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015) 91–98

²⁸⁷ Elliott, "'After I am hanged my portrait will be interesting but not before': Ephemera and the Construction of Personal Responses to the Easter Rising' 91

²⁸⁸ Glenn Hooper, ed, *Heritage and Tourism in Britain and Ireland* (Glasgow: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) back cover

²⁸⁹ Hooper, ed, *Heritage and Tourism in Britain and Ireland*, 4

²⁹⁰ Hooper, ed, *Heritage and Tourism in Britain and Ireland*, 4

²⁹¹ Tawny Paul, 'Engaging the Scottish Diaspora: Memory, Identity and Place' in *Heritage and Tourism in Britain and Ireland* edited by Glenn Hooper (Glasgow: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) 214

²⁹² Paul, 'Engaging the Scottish Diaspora', 213

‘museums, historic sites, memorials and natural landscapes all serve in various ways as “sites of memory” or places where the past takes physical form, which become integral to individuals’ understandings of their identities’.²⁹³ This so-called ‘continued’ work in the field of heritage studies certainly contributes some thought-provoking essays and strengthens research into the future of the profession. It reinforces a certain understanding of the advantages of this relationship between heritage and tourism. So when delivering the outputs resulting from this study, this notion of engagement with those outside the community, which includes the diaspora, is most instructive.

The research outputs contained within this study relating to the Loughnane brothers are intended to add to recent work on the heritages of the revolutionary period in County Galway, especially the work of Mark McCarthy, Marie Mannion and Shirley Wrynn in *Galway County 1916 Rising Heritage Trail: Go Explore the Historic Sites & Memorials*.²⁹⁴ They have produced a comprehensive guide book with four optional trails that offer a discovery of ‘the tangible legacies of those who fought for Irish independence in 1916’.²⁹⁵ The project was also included in the *Galway County Centenary Programme, 1916–2016*. Listed, amongst others, as part of the various trails are historic sites, memorials, graves and plaques. Signage at various information sites are mentioned in the booklet, which are intended to cater to local communities or tourists.²⁹⁶ As will be seen in Chapters 9 and 10, some of the research outputs of this study are intended to complement the findings of earlier work on 1916 by generating a series of legacy initiatives on the heritages of 1919–1921. These include the Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory and ArcGIS ESRI and guide book versions of *The Loughnane Brothers Heritage Trail: Explore Historic Sites and Memorials of Ireland’s War of Independence*. By disseminating research in such a public manner, it is hoped to leave legacies for future generations that in turn could provide a vital framework for the heritage management of former sites of conflict. Thereby raise awareness about the importance of preserving and conserving the heritages of the Irish revolutionary years. Locals and visitors to County Galway who ‘curiously’ engage

²⁹³ Paul, ‘Engaging the Scottish Diaspora’, 213

²⁹⁴ Mark McCarthy, Marie Mannion and Shirley Wrynn, eds *Galway County 1916 Rising Heritage Trail: Go Explore the Historic Sites & Memorials* (Galway: Galway County Council and Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, 2017)

²⁹⁵ McCarthy, Mannion and Wrynn, eds *Galway County 1916 Rising Heritage Trail*, 11

²⁹⁶ This information is online via the Galway Decade of Commemoration website <https://www.galwaydecadeofcommemoration.org/content/topics/galway-county-1916-rising-heritage-trail> Accessed 5 November 2020

in heritage tourism, are also projected to be the beneficiaries of these new legacy initiatives.²⁹⁷

Conclusion

This research was informed by a number of important publications which are reviewed in this chapter. The key concepts derived from the literature consulted, under the three central research areas of local history, memory and heritage, assisted in framing the research at hand. However, with the aims and objectives primarily focused on County Galway during the War of Independence, 1919–1921, there was a number of questions that remained to be addressed.

For example, some historical accounts, although informative, tended to provide more of a national overview of the conflict. This means that only the high-profile incidents or events were cited in order to emphasise those areas considered more immersed in the violent clashes or considered to have participated to a greater extent in the struggle for independence. However, this was somewhat mitigated as local histories contained a more focused perspective. They revealed specific issues that established advantages or impediments to both Volunteers and Crown forces alike. Yet, this review has also sought to reveal a number of gaps and shortcomings, specifically the inadequate inclusion of gendered histories which echoed the struggle to include the female narrative voice of the period in question. Consequentially, gender specific publications with more of a focus on recovering women's history were sought out, many of which were emerging at the time of writing. Each explored various perspectives that were at once inspiring, challenging and thought-provoking. To remedy the scarcity and indeed reflect the emergence of new literature, an objective of this study was to utilise these resources on gender to guide in the recovery of personal accounts of women during this conflict in County Galway. This may well go some way to fill existing gaps and augment the wider search into the huge role played by women in the period. Likewise, there were other areas of interest that came into focus such as the involvement of priests, the possible radicalisation of prisoners, the

²⁹⁷ Culturally Curious is the term applied by Fáilte Ireland to those tourists who engage with authentic local culture and history and records reveal they linger in areas where self-guided trails have been established. Many engage with online repositories prior to their travel experiences.
<https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/eZine/Culturally-Curious.pdf>

progression of political prowess of Sinn Féin, and also what influence had photographs in the propaganda machine. Nonetheless, there are still some gaps in the research that could be expanded. For example, research is needed that widens the study of RIC activities, or broadens explorations into the effect of the overly radicalised IRA Volunteer on the civilian population.

Similarly, a relatively new academic area in an Irish context are topics encompassing the relationship between history, memory and heritage. Up until now, the documentation of how, why, and in what ways the memories of this conflict have persisted over the course of the last century in County Galway had been overlooked. It may be, as Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh has identified, the ‘wrestling’ between history and memory, that has prevented professional historians from fully engaging in the practice of researching memory.²⁹⁸ For instance, unlike the long-established chronology of historic narratives, memory is often dynamic, ‘far from being handed down in the timeless form of “tradition”, it is progressively altered from generation to generation’.²⁹⁹ This in turn also alludes to the tension that often arises between the local and professional historian, especially those engaged with ‘public history’ – a term defined by Ó Tuathaigh as ‘the state of historical awareness among the general public, not specifically trained or educated in historical enquiry or exposition’.³⁰⁰ This sometimes disparaging impasse suggests that the local historian, of which there are many mentioned in this study, are separate from the professional historian in their approach to research. Yet, both are, as Ó Tuathaigh argued, of their generation, and therefore share the ‘assumptions, concerns, preoccupations of their own time and place’.³⁰¹ During the research conducted for this study, the local historian’s work has often resulted in more detailed accounts of incidents and activities. However, the works of professional historians are typically characterised by national comparisons that bring context to these more local accounts. However, Ó Tuathaigh also raises the issue between ‘public history’ and the participation by professional historians in ‘official’ commemorations, a space that is often contested. In his critical assessment of the bicentenary commemorations of the 1798 rebellion Roy Foster has argued that

²⁹⁸ Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, ‘Commemoration, Public History and the Professional Historian: An Irish Perspective’ in *Estudios Irlandeses*, Number 9, 2014, 138 See also, J.J. Lee, ‘Irish History’ in *The Heritage of Ireland* (Cork: The Collins Press, 2000) edited by Neil Buttimer, Colin Rynne and Helen Guerin 117–136

²⁹⁹ As cited in Ó Tuathaigh, ‘Commemoration, Public History and the Professional Historian’ 138

³⁰⁰ Ó Tuathaigh, ‘Commemoration, Public History and the Professional Historian: An Irish Perspective’ 138

³⁰¹ Ó Tuathaigh, ‘Commemoration, Public History and the Professional Historian: An Irish Perspective’ 144

'historical memory was bewilderingly recycled into spectator sport and tourist attraction'.³⁰² He asserted that 'what gives one pause for thought is the extent to which professional historians were involved in the repackaging and alterations of emphasis'.³⁰³ This space, he noted is where the public endorsement of memory comes into play. These events where the politicians 'choreograph' how and what we remember should be treated with caution.³⁰⁴

Nonetheless, the exponential growth of interest in Irish memory over recent years has been grounded in various studies in areas such as the Great Famine, the 1916 Rising, institutional abuse, the Troubles, and its use in the politicisation and commercialisation of commemorative events. Similarly, the 'Decade of Centenaries' has underlined the significance of past histories in the present and promoted a sense of place within the local community. The success of which has also brought about a change from Foster, who admitted that despite his initial scepticism, the commemorations of 1916 in 2016 were for the most part, a success.³⁰⁵ In addition, one well-established concept that reverberated throughout this literature review is that heritage involves connecting and engaging with the past in order to understand the present, ultimately leading to better value-focused thinking in the future. Returning to a previous point and of equal merit is a critical approach to the interpretation of heritage, questioning what is presented as much as what is omitted or who is commemorated and who is forgotten. Political positioning surrounding purposed commemorative events as shown in this study can polarise communities and prevent challenges to popular narratives. Approaches to commemoration also highlight the necessity to provide cultural context as to why certain decisions are made and by whom. Finally, as there are no lists of built or cultural heritages associated with the War of Independence in County Galway, the value of practice-based approaches to heritage management is an area that deserves close attention in future research agendas.

³⁰² Roy Foster, 'Remembering 1798' in *History and Memory in Modern Ireland* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001) edited by Ian McBride. 68, 87

³⁰³ Foster, 'Remembering 1798' 87

³⁰⁴ https://www.tcd.ie/news_events/articles/video-prof-roy-foster-explores-challenges-of-commemoration-at-public-lecture/ Accessed 18 September 2022

³⁰⁵ For more information see Roy Foster, 'The promise of 1916: radicalism, radicalization and resettlement, 1916–2016' in *The Promise and Challenge of National Sovereignty The Promise of 1916* (Dublin: Fourcourts Press, 2016) edited by Tom Boylan, Nicholas Canny & Mary Harris 25–40

Chapter 3. Sources and Methods

In the process of compiling local histories, documenting memories, and developing post-conflict, practice-based initiatives that encompass the War of Independence in County Galway 1919–1921, a range of sources and methods were utilised. Notwithstanding the challenges of conducting much of this research during the Covid-19 pandemic, it was still possible, in the end, to yield fresh perspectives on the conflict from a broad range of primary and secondary sources. In addition, where possible, field research was deployed as a critical method of data collection. Being present at locations often stimulated observations and queries related to incidents, and, in some cases, provided an interaction with local residents that resulted in informal discussions and the unearthing of local publications. Simultaneously, information was catalogued and developed for inclusion in the *Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory* and the ArcGIS ESRI and guide book versions of *The Loughnane Brothers Heritage Trail: Explore Historic Sites & Memorials of Ireland's War of Independence*. Accordingly, by chiefly utilising written documentation from many sources, employing qualitative research methods for each objective, a new perspective on the period was developed in this body of work. In addition, this study endeavoured to interpret not only the local history of the War of Independence in County Galway, but also the memory and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible. Cultural heritage is defined by many 'categories of heritage'.¹ For example, tangible cultural heritage embraces not only 'movable cultural heritage' such as photographs, coins, manuscripts but also 'immovable cultural heritage' such as monuments, archaeological sites, built heritage and so on.² Intangible cultural heritage, includes oral traditions, performing arts, rituals, festivals. However, also significant within the scope of cultural heritage are landscapes. There have been recent efforts to document and map the landscape of conflicts such as *Galway County 1916 Rising Heritage Trail: Go Explore the Historic Sites and Memorials* and *Heritage Centenary Sites of Rebel County Cork*.³ The approach used in the former publication proved to be of immense value in guiding the research that was undertaken

¹ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-trafficking-of-cultural-property/unesco-database-of-national-cultural-heritage-laws/frequently-asked-questions/definition-of-the-cultural-heritage/> Accessed 2 December 2020

² <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/illicit-trafficking-of-cultural-property/unesco-database-of-national-cultural-heritage-laws/frequently-asked-questions/definition-of-the-cultural-heritage/> Accessed 2 December 2020

³ Marie Mannion, Dr Mark McCarthy and Dr Shirley Wrynn eds, *Galway County 1916 Rising Heritage Trail: Go Explore the Historic Sites and Memorials* (Galway: Galway County Council, 2016), Damien Shiels, *Heritage Centenary Sites of Rebel County Cork* (Cork: Cork County Council 2016)

to compile another heritage trail related to the revolutionary years in County Galway.

Desk-based Research

So, where did this study's exploration of County Galway during the War of Independence begin? It seemed pragmatic to start by researching the background to this conflict through a desk-based search, using terms such as 'War of Independence', 'conflict in County Galway', 'rebellion', and 'Ireland 1919-1921'. As the centenary of the 1916 Rising in Galway was marked by several high-profile events, it was not surprising that several online results produced associated information. This began to form a certain background to the War of Independence. For instance, why participate in another attempt to gain independence, what had changed? The Easter Rising had not been considered a victory in the military sense, yet, research revealed that a certain sense of achievement was realised, if only in terms of public support post executions. The knowledge gleaned from Easter Week, instigated a strategy to find an alternative. What had changed to make the leaders believe they could now succeed? Hence, the circumstances that preceded the War of Independence also necessitated an investigation to provide the platform to understand the thinking behind the conflict. In addition, events in Galway needed to be framed within a national and international context in addition to those regional and county factors and conditions. Instrumental to this was the historic monographs and journal articles mentioned in the previous chapter. Also, on a more local level, publications that included incidents and events surrounding the conflict and the communities effected were also very illuminating. Historiographical perspectives also aided in the understanding of how over the past century, historians perceived this period. It also proffered questions regarding gender.

Women's Histories

A review and analysis of trends in the historiographical discourse exposed a dearth of research in the study of women, more particularly, women from Galway. Centenary events brought a plethora of research into women's suffrage, so too did the bid to achieve a more gender-balanced approach to other centenary events. Margaret Mac Curtain, an early advocate of the recovery of women's histories, is described as a

'pioneer' and is quoted as saying 'my determination to write women into mainstream history, though resisted for years, has succeeded beyond my wildest dreams'.⁴ Hence, to also redress the balance, this author endeavoured to include women's histories wherever possible. However, this was not so easily achieved. Despite rigorous research into archival records, a realisation loomed that only fragments of their narrative survived here also. Sadly, those narratives, however captivating, did not follow a straightforward chronological narrative. Therefore, any efforts to include a comprehensive account of women's history within the sections on local histories would only have perpetuated the exclusion of their agency. Yet, it was during this qualitative process of collection and analysing their collective experience that a more appropriate concept of inclusion under the theme of memory began to establish itself. Significantly, the women of County Galway appeared to have a similar experience to those nationally. Their collective and social memory, was primarily discovered through their applications in the Military Service Pension Collection or the Bureau of Military History, Witness Statements. This guided the majority of the research and facilitated a more defined method of re-remembering. Another source of significant information was found in the online catalogue of Colonel Maurice Moore Papers 1841–1939, Peace With Ireland Council.⁵ Upon on-site inspection, this particular folder had four items of interest, that included letters and articles on the ill-treatment of women by Crown forces during the period between 1920–1921. One particular list of female names and places detailed, in most of the cases, the horrific sexual violence that was directed towards the women.

Auction Houses

Whilst researching items for inclusion in the Heritage Inventory, one initiative bore results immediately, namely a desk-based search of auction websites such as Whytes, Fonsie Mealy or Adam's. This brought forth some interesting artefacts that had sold or were on sale from the War of Independence era.⁶ Of those associated with County

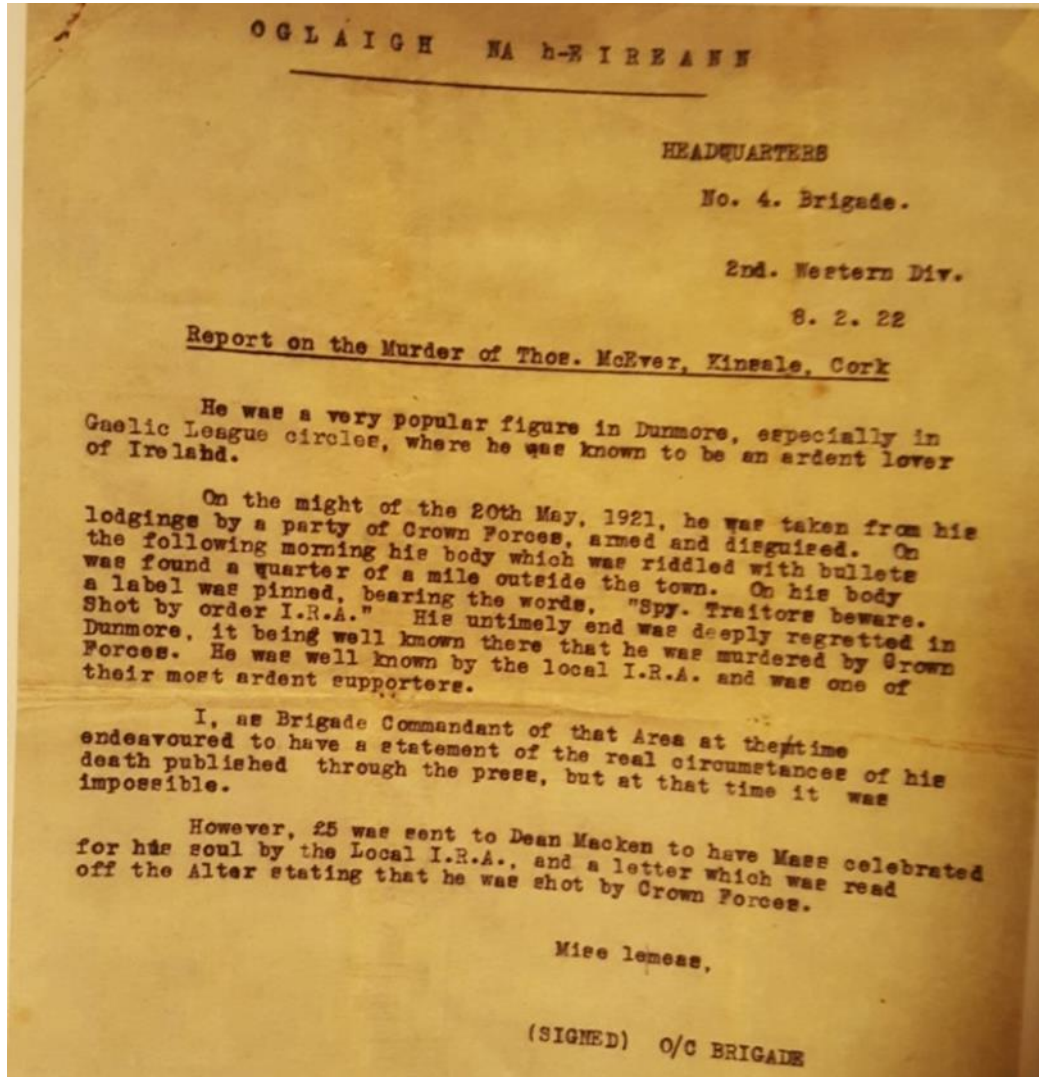
⁴ *Irish Times*, 6 October 2020

⁵ National Library of Ireland (NLI), Colonel Moore Papers 1841-1939, MS 10,556/8 (Manuscripts Reading Room)

⁶ For examples see :<https://www.whytes.ie/art/1916-1921-1916-medal-war-of-independence-medal-and-1971-medal-to-patrick-connolly-of-galway/137495/?SearchString=&LotNumSearch=&GuidePrice=&OrderBy=HL&ArtistID=&ArrangeBy=list&NumPerPage=15&offset=20> <https://fonsiemealy.ie/auctions/lot-12240217/> and <https://www.whytes.ie/>

Galway, several sets of medals were identified such as a 'good boxed group of Medals issued to Thomas Cloney, Oranmore, Co. Galway,'⁷ The 'Hammer Price' on this particular set, LOT: 582 in 2009 was €14,000.00.

Figure 3.1. An item from Lot 1460, report on death of Thomas McEver
Source: Geoff Power



One other lot, 1460, Thomas McEver (1884–1921) required more research. The site listed fourteen items such as 'a letter from Dáil Éireann Department of Defence clarifying the circumstances of his death (Fig. 3.1.), news cuttings, a photograph of his grave, and postcards of his native town.'⁸ Power is a freelance producer, writer and relative of McEver. He and his father bought the lot when researching McEver for a

⁷ https://www.adams.ie/Rare-Set-of-Irish-Service-Medals-1916-1971-Western-Division-I-R-A-A-very-good-boxed-group-of-Medals-issued-to-Thomas-Cloney-Oranmore-Co-Galway-of-the-I-R-A-s-Western-Division-for-1916-/Var-of-Indepen?Itemid=&view=lot_detail

⁸ <https://www.whytes.ie/art/view-lot/130229/> Accessed 21 August 2019 When contacted, Whyte's kindly sent this researcher's details to the buyer, Geoff Power in 2019.

family project. The story inspired him to use the research for a Documentary on One, detailing the violent nature of McEver's death and how this had affected his then fiancé Tess Murray. Power's documentary is a potent reminder of the legacy of violence, and how, like many other incidents of the period, this event was never spoken about by his family.⁹ Many of the items found on auction websites are listed in the Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory in Chapter 9.

Military Archives

The substantial records held in the Bureau of Military History have informed this study significantly. The various material found within the Witness Statements, Pension Applications, Brigade Activity Reports, contemporary documents, photographs and *An tÓglac* Magazine (1918–1933) have provided a unique contemporary context when compiling local histories. In addition, contact with on-duty archivists regarding questions surrounding Pension Applications or Witness Statements not yet published online have proved productive.

Whilst not all Galway Volunteers involved in the War of Independence have files located in one or another of these repositories, of those that do, some mention other Volunteers or specific areas which are noteworthy. More specifically, these highly significant sources have, in addition to auxiliary documents and photographs, 1,773 Witness Statements collected by the State within the ten-year period between 1947 and 1957 and 270,000 to 300,000 pension application files from participants and veterans of the independence movement from April and May 1916 through to the War of Independence and the Civil War. John Gibney in his article for *History Ireland* states the key difference between the pensions collection and the Witness Statements:

the significance of the [pensions] collection arises from three key distinctions that set it apart from the Bureau of Military History (BMH): far more people applied for pensions than gave BMH statements, they did so at a much shorter remove—in the 1920s and 1930s—and, crucially, their claims had to be verified. It is the latter that makes the Military Service Pensions Collection so potentially useful.¹⁰

In addition to the personal accounts, each was particularly important when analysing

⁹ 'Thomas and Tess' produced by Geoff Power and Tim Desmond, *Documentary on One* RTÉ Radio 1, 27 July 2019. <https://www.rte.ie/radio1/doconone/2019/07/19/1063966-thomas-and-tess/>

¹⁰ John Gibney. 'The Military Service Pensions Collection'. *History Ireland*, Issue 3 (May/June 2014), Vol. 22. 40

or affirming specific geographical locations or movements of Volunteers. Collectively the Witness Statements or Pensions files can give a basis for an overall narrative of what was happening within brigades in the County of Galway. However, individual Witness Statements or Pension Applications gave a very detailed account of precise events and records how the actions or indeed, reactions of those Volunteers or the companies that shaped their war, thus, building a personal picture or profile of those Volunteers involved.

The Military Service Pensions Collection (MSPC), 1916–1923

One vital component of this study and one that forms the backbone of any local or regional investigation, is the inclusion of individual testimonies drawn from the Military Service Pensions Collection, which are published online. They contain unfamiliar narratives waiting to be revealed. Both women and men of the War of Independence sought to receive a pension for their participation, not only for monetary compensation but also recognition; not all were successful. The application process for a pension under the legislature Constitution of the Irish Free State (Oireachtas of Saorstát Éireann) began in June 1923. The premise was:

to recognise and compensate wounded members, and the widows, children and dependents of deceased members, of Óglaigh na hÉireann including the National Army, the Irish Volunteers, and the Irish Citizen Army through the payment of allowances and gratuities.¹¹

This was extended to include members of the Hibernian Rifles, Cumann na mBan, Fianna Éireann and those members of the Connaught Rangers who partook in the mutiny in India, 1920. Subsequently, over the next six decades, successive governments introduced provisions and amendments to the Act. This extended the range of qualifying applicants and with it, their personal stories and memories. Claims were determined by the Referee and Advisory Committee, using supporting records, such as Brigade Activity Reports and Battalion and Company nominal rolls (RO) for ‘verification and adjudication’.¹² The records held within this repository and its availability to the public have changed the debate surrounding many of the familiar

¹¹ <https://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/about-the-collection/origin-and-scope> Accessed 1 November 2020

¹² http://www.militaryarchives.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/MSPC/documents-34/27.Military_Archive_Report_WEB_4Dec.pdf Accessed 22 November 2019

narratives, particularly those held in communities. In addition, the personal nature of the testaments has greatly enhanced family histories and provided a context to many mementos. Family members can now read about their ancestors' experiences, many of which have never been discussed at home. It is a unique record of memories.

Figure 3.2. Example from Search Page of the Military Archives, War of Independence Pension Applications
Source: Military Archives

The screenshot displays a search page with a left-hand navigation menu and two main content sections on the right. The navigation menu includes links for 'MSPC Home', 'Brigade Activity Reports', 'Truce Period Fatalities', 'War of Independence', 'About The Collection', 'Search The Collection', 'Easter Rising 1916', 'Release History', 'Military Service Pensions Blog', 'Gallery', and 'Frequently Asked Questions'. Below this is a 'Guide to the Collection' section with a brief description and a 'download >' link. The first featured section is 'Brigade Activity Reports', which includes a historical photograph of soldiers and a 'See more >' link. The second featured section is 'Military Service Pensions Blog', which includes a photograph of soldiers with numbered markers (1-5) and a 'View Details >' link.

The online searchable website is easy to navigate (Fig. 3.2.). Utilising the data fields, searches can be refined to surname, county, and conflict, all of which yield results efficiently, or within a broader context for the casual browser.

As a result of using the data fields, the initial search parameter yielded 288 male applications under the electronic filters of Galway/War of Independence. Under female applications the list is 52 Galway women. However, there are as yet no overall figures 'for numbers applying and being successful in receiving pensions' until all the

application files are processed by the BMH.¹³ After further investigation, this number reduced for several reasons. For example, the initial search included Julia Sammon because her last address was listed as County Galway, however her active service was confined to County Mayo.¹⁴ Or in the case of Lena McDonald, who according to the application 'was heavily involved in the purchasing, acquisition and transferring of arms and munitions in Scotland for the Irish Volunteers and IRA'.¹⁵ Yet, it was through her contact Fr Fahy in Loughrea that her association with County Galway existed. Similarly in the matter of male applications after a quick review of 'Subject Information', it was possible to reduce the number of consulted files.¹⁶ Nevertheless, a periodic check on these results became necessary as mothers often applied for pensions on behalf of their sons. A case in point is a file that related to the application of Mary Keane for a dependency award in relation to her son Michael Joseph Howley who was shot and killed on 5 December 1920, having just alighted from a train in Broadstone.¹⁷ Each application process was rigorous and difficult, especially when engagement with the enemy required what is referred to as, 'active service'. It should also be understood that 'poverty formed the backdrop' to many applications, some of those that applied were in dire circumstances, and although this added urgency when requesting a response, it had no bearing on the result. This in turn necessitates the obvious caveat: without evidence to corroborate their testimony, alternative sources were required, such as supplementary testimonials to verify the various functions played by Volunteers. Even then, the exacting details required may not have been forthcoming. This was to cause some confusion when several Volunteers stated they were present at particular ambushes or raids, especially if shots were fired. For example, some RIC barracks were raided several times and not all brigade members participated each time. Some early reports or supporting ambivalent evidence from commanding officers did not necessarily alleviate this confusion. This necessitated the need for a more formal, comprehensive accurate list of activists throughout the regional areas specifying the diverse functions and roles and supplementary evidence, such as maps.

¹³ Email received from Hugh, Duty Archivist Military Archives 25 November 2019

¹⁴ Julia Sammon, Bureau of Military History (hereafter BMH)) Military Service Pension (hereafter MSP) 34REF52561

¹⁵ Lena McDonald, BMH, MSP 34REF56964

¹⁶ When a result file is opened, a short synopsis of the file provides certain information that can determine if further investigation is required.

¹⁷ Michael Joseph Howley, BMH, MSP 1D402

The Brigade Activity Reports

One of the most anticipated instalments from the Military Service Pensions Collection was released in February 2019, Namely, the Brigade Activity Reports (BARs). Cécile Gordon contextualises the importance of these files:

All individual memory is intertwined with the memories of others and the Brigade Activity Reports (BARs) are a perfect reminder of this permeable relationship between the individual, familial, local, organisational and wider collective memories.¹⁸

The initial impetus to collect such reports was first put forward by Humphrey Murphy, a member of the Advisory Committee and former Officer in Kerry IRA.¹⁹ The motivation behind the formation of Brigade Committees was to assist the Referee and Advisory Committee in 1935 and in theory, speed up the decisions by providing a comprehensive list of activity in their area. Names and dates of incidents, maps of locations and positions of Volunteers during events if known, although amendments were made in margins. One key list was 'IRA membership, down to local company level, for the two critical dates of 11 July 1921 and 1 July 1922.'²⁰ The release of these files provided another layer of information after an already lengthy search through Witness Statements and Pension Statements for Volunteers names and local companies they were assigned to. The search also provided acknowledgements of possible disparities or gaps.

The files cover the period between '1 April 1920 and 11 July 1921 – the height of the War of Independence.'²¹ Galway Brigades include: 1 South East Galway Brigade - 1 Western Division; 2 South West Galway – 1 Western Brigade; Galway South East Brigade - 1 Western Division; Galway South West Brigade – 1 Western Division; North Galway Brigade – 1 Western Division; Galway No1 Brigade/Mid Galway – 1 Western Division; 4 Tuam Brigade (North Galway) – 2 Western Division; 3 West Connemara - 4 Western Division and 4 East Connemara – 4 Western Division.²² In general the documents give specific information on certain ambushes or raids

¹⁸ Cécile Gordon editorial comment *The Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection: The Brigade Activity Reports* (Department of Defence, 2018)

¹⁹ Michael Kean, 'Introduction to the release of the Brigade Activity Files series', in *The Military Service (1916 – 1923) Pensions Collection: The Brigade Activity Reports* (Department of Defence, 2018) 13

²⁰ Kean, 'Introduction to the release of the Brigade Activity Files series', 14

²¹ <https://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/brigade-activities/about/> Accessed 2 March 2019

²² See Figure 3a 'Connacht' in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* edited by John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil, Mike Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017) 602

furnished by Battalion/Brigade Committees. Upon further inspection of the files, however, not all cooperated in providing the required information. In the case of the Tuam Brigade, Vincent Corcoran, Secretary to the Brigade committee stated in his reply to the request for information that:

the committee wish to express their opinion that it is grossly unfair of those men who (although continuously available for service during the qualifying periods) through no fault of their own did not happen to come into actual conflict with the enemy do not get the same due considerations which is expected by their more fortunate comrades.²³

This decision was to prevent many from due process on Pension Applications. In summary, when an applicant's sworn evidence differed from the verifying officer's evidence, the matter was referred back to the Brigade Activity Reports provided by the Brigade committee. In this instance after several years of deferrals, the referee gave evidence to say that because of the refusal of the Brigade Committee to cooperate in the work, 'the committee [pension referees] have found it absolutely impossible' to award pensions.²⁴ Notwithstanding this, the reports do clear up some confusing chronologies in Witness Statements, such as who was present at particular attacks that happened recurrently (the same barracks was attacked on different dates by different Volunteers). There are three maps depicting important incidents, namely: the Bookeen Barracks Attack July 1920, Woodlawn (possible attack on barracks) and the Ballyturin Ambush 15 May 1921.²⁵ The latter was of particular significance when conducting a field trip to review where the incident took place.

Bureau of Military History Witness Statements (BMH, WS)

The entire collection of Military History Witness Statements includes, 1,773 witness statements; 334 sets of contemporary documents; 42 sets of photographs and 13 voice recordings collected by the State between 1947 and 1957.²⁶ Three hundred and seventy-five Witness Statements mention Galway in their text based on general search

²³ North Galway Brigade – I Western Division MA/MPC/A/28 Brigade Activity Reports from the Military Service (1916-1923) Service Pensions Collection.

²⁴ North Galway Brigade – I Western Division MA/MPC/A/28 Brigade Activity Reports from the Military Service (1916-1923) Service Pensions Collection.

²⁵ <https://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/brigade-activities/about/>

²⁶ <https://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/bureau-of-military-history-1913-1921/about/guide-to-the-collection/> Accessed 2 November 2019

results. Searching the index of witnesses, 74 are from Galway, and 7.5% are female, all of these Witness Statements were consulted on different occasions over the research period. As sparse as it may appear, this invaluable collection of personal accounts became instrumental in researching geographical locations of interest or people of interest. For example, using the search function for Shanaglish (the home of Pat and Harry Loughnane who were killed in 1920) produced 10 results, Tuam produced 67 results. Identifying information surrounding individual names such as Joe Stanford (Commanding Officer, Galway Brigade) produced 867 results, based on both 'Joe' and 'Stanford'. However, the most pertinent results appeared on the top of the results, others further down the list were not connected to Galway. One Witness Statement of particular note is that of Mrs. Mary Leech, sister of Fr John O'Meehan.²⁷ He had been an active Volunteer recruiter prior to 1916 and had shared a house with his fellow curate, Fr Griffin, before the latter was kidnapped and killed. Although it is widely acknowledged that O'Meehan played an instrumental part in the War of Independence, he was to die some years later without leaving an account of his activities. Therefore, the significance of Mrs Leech's statement alongside some passing references to him found in other Witness Statements helped to frame his contribution in an otherwise forgotten history.

Although these statements were collected several years after the incidents took place, they contain a richness of personality and afford the reader an insight not necessarily found in other writings associated with the period. For instance, the Volunteers that spoke of Nora Loughnane subsequent to her brothers' deaths in November 1920, did so with reverence. In his statement, Pádraig Ó Fathaigh's admiration for her behaviour was reinforced with the words that 'she bore the trying ordeal with spartan heroism.'²⁸ Her own and their mother's combined statement in the Contemporary Documents file, tells a story in itself: how they came to hear of Pat and Harry's death, and what happened in the aftermath, were of such significance to the Bureau that they asked for a formal record.²⁹ The discovery of this undated statement during research, began to stimulate theories of sustained prolonged propaganda that may have continued beyond the conflict. Consequently, the memories

²⁷ Mrs. Mary Leech (Nee O'Meehan), 7 November 1954, Bureau Military History (hereafter BMH), Witness Statement (hereafter WS) 1034

²⁸ Pádraig Ó Fathaigh, 23 October 1956 BMH, WS 1517

²⁹ BMH-CD-230/3, Bureau of Military History Contemporary Documents, Military Archives

associated with the brothers' deaths, as described in Chapter 8, have undoubtedly been used to exemplify the brutality of British tyranny right up to the centenary of their deaths. The online availability of these and other files, as Anne Dolan posits, continues to stimulate questions related to those involved in the conflict.³⁰

Other Primary Sources and Methods

Archival research is a key aspect of any historical study as it augments the investigation, providing the researcher with access to valuable sources and information not necessarily within the public domain. With digital technology constantly developing, and more archives becoming available, 'older research can be re-evaluated, ensuring the expansion and revision of information' from a new perspective.³¹ Engaging in both local and national archives such as the Irish Newspaper Archive, the *Irish Times* Archive, Galway County Council Archives, NUI Galway Special Collections, National Archives, and National Library broadened the investigation of this study. In addition, the landscape of cultural memory encompassing the War of Independence in County Galway has many facets. Some of those have already been discussed in the above paragraphs. Astrid Erll acknowledged its importance:

Memory plays an important role in various areas of social practice. The calendar of commemoration – national, religious, ethnic – seems to be ever-increasing. Remembering and forgetting are major themes in contemporary literature and art. Memory enjoys top billing in daily and weekly newspapers. It has become a controversial topic in politics and the public sphere (in the context of phrases such as national tradition or truth and reconciliation). And memory even occupies us in our free time, in the form of a thriving heritage industry.³²

It was while collecting and cataloguing some of these heritages of the War of Independence in County Galway that several investigative methods were employed, including site visits and explorations of digital archives. Contemporary newspapers were an invaluable source of information throughout the research.

³⁰ Anne Dolan, *Machnamh 100*, Online Seminar hosted by President Michael D. Higgins

³¹ <https://www.researchinformation.info/viewpoint/value-archive-content-academic-research> Accessed 28 June 2018.

³² Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 1

Newspapers

During the peak of the conflict 1920–1921, many newspapers were subjected to severe restrictions on what could be published. Under DORA (Defence Against the Realm Act, 1919) it was deemed an offence to publish ‘false reports or make false statements; or spread reports or make statements intended or likely to cause disaffection to His Majesty or to interfere with the success of His Majesty’s forces’.³³ Ian Kenneally has stated that the ambiguity behind this statement enabled the Crown forces the power to exploit as situations arose.³⁴ Although restricted, the War of Independence era newspapers ‘capture not just the military dimensions of the conflict but also the surrounding social upheaval of the period.’³⁵ However, between June and December 1920 over twenty-six newspapers were attacked by Crown forces, fifteen were unable to resume.³⁶ One of these was the *Galway Express*, a paper run by Seamus Murphy, Senior Officer Commanding in Galway. Contemporaneous records of a particular period, in this case the War of Independence give a sense of atmosphere and are vital for any historical research. As with most primary sources, newspaper reports can provide specific results. In this study they were consulted alongside other sources, Witness Statements, Pension Applications and archival research particularly using dates of events. These articles sometimes provided names of others present, exact locations and ‘reflect social and cultural values of a certain place and time and often contain unique information that cannot be found anywhere else’.³⁷ Unquestionably during the so called ‘terror’ in County Galway the escalation of tensions was palpable as unfolding reports detailed specific events or occurrences. For example, the Tuam burnings or reports of the search for Fr Griffin. In addition, some newspaper articles include quotations from senior officers within the Crown forces that may not be in formal military reports but was directed at ordinary citizens.

This study began by focusing initially on only Galway newspapers that existed between 1919–1921 namely the *Connacht Tribune*, *Tuam Herald* and *Galway Express*.

³³ Quoted in Ian Kenneally, ‘Irish Newspapers During the War of Independence’ in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, edited by John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil and Mike Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017) 385

³⁴ Kenneally, ‘Irish Newspapers During the War of Independence’ 385

³⁵ Donal Fallon, ‘New Radical Voices in the Irish Newspaper Archives’, *History Ireland* November December 2019. 6

³⁶ Kenneally, ‘Irish Newspapers During the War of Independence’ 388

³⁷ Sanjica Faletar Tanacković, Maja Krtalić and Darko Lacović 2014, ‘Newspapers as a Research Source: Information Needs and Information Seeking of Humanities Scholars’ Paper presented at The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Conference (IFLA) Lyon.
https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/newspapers/Geneva_2014/s6-lacovic-en.pdf Accessed 28 June 2018.

That led to a more concentrated narrowing of the scope to the region and further again in some cases into the townlands and parishes concerning Volunteers, Crown forces and indeed local citizens. However, as the research progressed, this focus was widened to provide a national context to try gauge how incidents that happened in County Galway were viewed outside it. When, for example, Fr Griffin went missing and his death was finally announced, it was also reported sometime later in the *Derry Journal* under the headline ‘Priest Murdered: A Galway Horror’.³⁸ Significantly, these events surrounding Fr Griffin were not only reported in regional newspapers but were often provided in more detail in other newspapers. The *Daily Mirror* reported on the then Bishop Dr O’Dea’s letter to the Chief Secretary Hamar Greenwood in which he stated that several priests had received threatening letters, including himself.³⁹ The *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* reported details from a threatening letter received by a Fr Considine, ‘Your efforts to stir up the blood lust against the Crown forces are duly noted. You will be duly compensated’.⁴⁰ Sir Hamar Greenwood was also put under pressure to answer other questions on events that happened for example in Croke Park when he claimed that the Crown forces surrounded the park to search for arms and only began firing when they were fired upon.⁴¹

Of significance from a national perspective is the *Irish Times*, *Irish Independent*, and *Freeman’s Journal*, were considered. Sometimes this entailed an online detailed search paper by paper, alternatively, using the search function, names or dates were entered and results checked. Yet, despite a clear escalation in violence throughout the conflict period a certain cautionary bias is presumed in some quarters. The *Irish Times*, for example, acknowledges in their historical timeline, that once the Arnott family bought the paper, its politics ‘shift from Protestant nationalist to unionist’ prior to the establishment of the Irish Free State.⁴² The more extreme alternative *An tÓglách* was published twice a month initially and determinedly promoted the deeds of Dáil Éireann and the Irish Volunteer. As Ian Kenneally has noted, the *Irish Independent* came under pressure in December 1919 when it was raided and machinery broken by the IRA for an article they disapproved of. Kenneally has cautioned:

³⁸ *Derry Journal*, 22 November 1920

³⁹ *Daily Mirror*, 26 November 1920

⁴⁰ *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 26 November 1920. Fr Considine attended Eileen Quinn as she lay dying and tried unsuccessfully to give evidence at her inquiry as to her dying words.

⁴¹ *Londonderry Sentinel*, 23 November 1920.

⁴² <https://www.irishtimes.com/about-us/the-irish-times-trust> Accessed 1 November 2020.

Too often the press is used as a source without any consideration of the pressures and ideologies that formed what appeared on the page. A better understanding of those influences might help us to develop a deeper understanding of those times.⁴³

Nonetheless, widespread coverage of reprisals by Crown forces did overwhelmingly begin to change the view of lawlessness in Ireland and how ordinary citizens were targeted in the conflict.

Similarly, when researching commemoration and memorials up to the present, the availability of the Newspaper Archive online became a valuable resource and facilitated a broader scope of significant dates that was required to cover a variety of possible remembrances. Inevitably, the search for local commemorations led to a more intensive scrutiny. Memory of the War of Independence was overshadowed and obscured by the Civil War that followed. Once the process of nation-building began, 'the challenge for those commemorating, therefore, has been to find ways to remember the revolutionary period that do not aggravate tensions in the present.'⁴⁴ Actions that Roisín Higgins also stated, 'often ended in defeat', if not endorsed by strong local influential veterans or steered by state officials.⁴⁵ Consequently, at the outset, when researching memorials or commemorations surrounding the conflict in County Galway, a method of entering a series of different significant dates was employed. It was quickly determined after a short period of intensive research that specific dates associated with the War of Independence, for example, 21 January 1919 or 12 July 1921, and the subsequent anniversaries of these dates, had quite a mixed result. Only periodically did the 21 January appear in commemoration of the First Dáil and the Golden Jubilee of the date 12 July. With the exception of the Loughnane brothers, or Mass services held for Eileen Quinn and Fr Michael Griffin, held almost annually, unveiling of memorials and/or commemorations mostly took place during government-led commemorations for Easter 1916, or sometimes on the anniversaries of deaths. Prominent built heritages such as the St Michael's church in memory of Fr Griffin, Castlegar company memorial, or Thomas Whelan memorial, Clifden, Quinn/Loughnane Hall, were advertised well in advance for fund-raising purposes. However, one method of searching death notices using the Brigade Reports for names proved more bountiful for remembrance. Sometimes entering the word 'unveiling'

⁴³ Kenneally, 'Irish Newspapers During the War of Independence' 388

⁴⁴ Higgins 'Commemoration and the Irish Revolution' 848

⁴⁵ Higgins 'Commemoration and the Irish Revolution', 848

into search tabs, in a smaller date parameter of a decade, succeeded. However, the search function often failed to retrieve any hits.

Of note was the turbulent period in Northern Ireland, during which remembrance ceremonies or commemorations were less conspicuous or did not appear. Anecdotal evidence collected during fieldwork suggested that this was deliberate so as not to attract attention from dissident republicans who may have wanted to sabotage them for political agendas.⁴⁶ Although sometimes frustrating, the random type of results did bring to the fore some articles on women that assisted to build their narrative. One example is of a woman named Mrs Mary Keogh, Ballinasloe who was reported as a founding member of Cumann na mBan in Galway under Dr Ada English addressing a meeting in Ballinasloe where both were arrested and imprisoned.⁴⁷ Another example is the activist, Mrs Kathleen Cusack (nee Keane,) who started as a suffragette in London. After her marriage to Brian Cusack (elected to the First Dáil in 1918) she became an active member of Cumann na mBan in Galway.⁴⁸

Other Sources and Methods in Research

Identifying and recording tangible and intangible cultural heritages to include in Chapter 9, which contains the *Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory*, began by categorising them under four main themes: A. Historic Sites, B. Artefacts and Manuscripts, C. Memorials and D. Memorabilia. As discussed in earlier paragraphs, some artefacts were discovered using the method of a desk-based internet search of auction sites. When researching for the category of Historic Sites, possibilities were first identified using the primary and secondary written sources such as Witness Statements, newspapers or through the literature mentioned in the previous chapter, and then a series of fieldtrips were scheduled. These fieldtrips gave rise to an opportunity to identify local memorials such as Thomas Whelan's in Clifden, Fr Griffin's in Barna, and the memorial of the Loughnane brothers in Shanaglish. One main advantage to field research is the ability to observe the surrounding landscape and become acquainted with any local publications or heritage groups. Regrettably, many

⁴⁶ Several people mentioned this point such as, John Conneely, Kinvara; Joe Loughnane, Loughrea; Colman Shaughnessy Loughrea; Tom Kenny, Galway; Pat O'Looney, Loughrea.

⁴⁷ *Irish Independent*, 1 November 1962

⁴⁸ *Irish Independent*, 6 March 1967

fieldtrips to communities around County Galway were curtailed during Covid-19 restrictions. The situation was also to affect the social interactions that would normally transpire during research. Yet, posts on social media did begin to appear which mentioned events surrounding the era.

Figure 3.3. A social media post by Maire Burke, *Tuam Herald*, highlighting the memorial to James Daly
Source: Maire Burke



The Old Tuam Society for example tweeted the following on 2 November 2020, ‘1920 in Tuam, Co. Galway, three republican men were jailed for cutting off a young woman’s hair for allegedly ‘going with Tommies’ or an article describing the sacking of Tuam in July 1920.⁴⁹ In addition, social media contributed to the discovery of some memorials such as the inconspicuous plinth dedicated to James Daly, located in Ballymoe (Fig. 3.3.), who was involved in the India mutiny while serving with the Connaught Rangers,

⁴⁹ See <https://twitter.com/OldTuamSociety> or <https://www.facebook.com/The-Old-Tuam-Society-501876316660886>

Solon Barracks 1920.⁵⁰

Song and Poem

The creative tradition of writing songs and poems is, as Katie Brown stated, ‘so intimately involved in the collective remembering of events in Irish history’, that a search to find any correlation with Galway’s War of Independence was considered to be an essential element to this study.⁵¹ Prior to this conflict, Arthur Griffith wrote in *The United Irishman*, 1904 what he thought was the value of ballads when he stated that, ‘every generation finds its account in them. They pass from mouth to mouth like salutations; even the minds which loose [lose] their words are under their influence, as one can recall the starry heavens who cannot revive the form of a single constellation.’⁵² Yet, while probing for songs and poems a general search online produced no results. Alternatively, the online catalogue database of the Irish Traditional Music Archive first produced 189 results under the search term ‘Black and Tans’, yet none referred to County Galway. Contact with local song collectors, Caoilte Breatnach, Eugene Lambe and Matt Keane provided some limited results. In addition, several local publications mentioned in pervious chapter were consulted. That said, considering Ireland’s tradition of using music as ‘a conduit for memory’, the low number of results appeared surprising.⁵³ It may be that songs and poems were written or sung locally and never made it past the parish boundaries, unlike for example, several poems about the Loughnane brothers and Fr Griffin, made popular by those in the diaspora. Or alternatively, a feeling of abashment prevented only the more confident writers from emerging. Much like Tommie Quinn, a seventeen-year-old Volunteer in 1920, who was tasked to meet Nora Loughnane (Pat and Harry’s sister) and accompany her to the barn where her brothers were laid out. He was so affected by their deaths and subsequent wake, he wrote an emotional poem in remembrance. However, sometime later he was somewhat ashamed or embarrassed by his emotions and he disowned the poem.⁵⁴ Yet, he still wanted the poem to remain in the

⁵⁰ <https://twitter.com/maireaburke> Accessed November 2020. The plinth is located behind St Croan’s church in the middle of the village. There is no signposts to guide visitors to the site.

⁵¹ Katie Brown, ‘The Tone of Defiance: Music, Memory, and Irish Nationalism’, in *Memory Ireland: Volume 2 Diaspora and Memory Practices* edited by Oona Frawley (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2012) 147

⁵² <https://www.itma.ie/events/lisa-oneill-drawing-from-the-well> Accessed 1 January 2021

⁵³ Brown, ‘The Tone of Defiance: Music, Memory, and Irish Nationalism’, 147

⁵⁴ Discovered in conversation with his son Thomas Quinn.

community's memory, so he dropped it outside the local school to be found later by the school principal.⁵⁵

Irish National Folklore Collection

The Irish Folklore Collection is a valuable resource when conducting research on the collective memory of the Irish nation, especially as it includes a group of people 'typically excluded from scholarly history'.⁵⁶ Its utilisation to 'demonstrate how social memory offers new perspectives for the study of the past' has been more than exemplified by Guy Beiner's research into the memory of the 1798 Rebellion.⁵⁷ The repository itself has amassed a large collection dated from 1935, and consists of: The Main Manuscript Collection; Questionnaires; The Schools' Collection; The Photographic Collection; The Audio and Video Archives; Folk Music Archive. The Schools' Collection began its remarkable scheme by issuing guide books to aid teachers in the initial subject areas with which the commission was most interested in gathering. These included Holy Wells, Farming Practices, Festivals, and Local Poets. The collection contains material from 5,000 schools by more than 50,000 children in the 26 counties, gathered between 1937 and 1939. Material collected includes themes such as 'oral history, topographical information, folktales and legends, riddles and proverbs, games and pastimes, trades and crafts.'⁵⁸ By the time all the collectors/schoolchildren returned their findings, the subject areas needed to be expanded owing to the sheer amount of results and their variety. Consequently, approximately 1,700 topics were finally established from the entire Schools' Collection. This body of work is identified as the 'Schools' Collection Subject List'.⁵⁹ The copybooks in which the children recorded these stories have all been digitised and are easily searchable for the general public. The digitisation process proved somewhat difficult as topics and the page sequence in which they appeared in copy books were in some cases 'incorrectly linked'. However, once identified, the errors were corrected by the editorial team with help from the public.

⁵⁵ Thomas Quinn, son of Tommie Quinn.

⁵⁶ *Irish Times*, 4 July 2009

⁵⁷ Guy Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French: Irish Folk History and Social Memory* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, 2009) 8

⁵⁸ <https://www.duchas.ie/en/info/cbe> Accessed 27 November 2019

⁵⁹ <https://www.duchas.ie/en/tpc> Accessed 7 May 2020.

As the Schools' Collection contained some references to the War of Independence, it warranted further exploration. However, references directly related to the War of Independence in County Galway are limited and their discovery was not straightforward. Under the search heading, 'War of Independence' there was zero results. Consequently, several other alternative phrases or words contemporary to the period were applied. The results are as follows: Tans (33), Black and Tans (24) and Loughnane brothers (1). Although the search term 'Reprisals' produced 15 results, none were located in County Galway. Similarly, under the search term of 'Terror', an expression used frequently in contemporary newspapers at the time, yielded a total of 23 results. However, none were a reference to the War of Independence. Under the specific term of 'Auxiliaries' produced a total of 7 results, however, once again none of these referred to Galway. Only one result mentioned the attack on Captain Blake and his tennis party in Gort, 'The Local Landlord — Lady Gregory'.⁶⁰ Another result made reference to a previously unknown event, the burning of a big house 'Marblehill and its Antiquities'.⁶¹ Poems and songs listed elsewhere refer to the Loughnane brothers or Fr Griffin. Another unanticipated entry was that of Hugh Loughnane, brother of Pat and Harry. He is listed as an informant, and the collector is Mabel Nolan from Lurga National School, Beagh. Hugh does not, however, tell the story of his brothers' capture and demise. Instead, he recounts the story of the Children of Lir. This is a rather compelling choice considering Oisín Kelly's similar use of the mythological family as a link to the historic past at the commemoration ceremony in Dublin's Garden of Remembrance in 1971, fifty years after the signing of the Truce. This transformation of children into swans was used by Kelly as a symbolic theme for the rebirth of the Irish nation.⁶²

Whilst this archive is a remarkable testament to Irish cultural memory, a considerable amount of this valuable heritage is written in the Irish language and awaits volunteer translators to transcribe as part of an ongoing project. Despite that, or more correctly, considering this factor, it could be said that this collection has yet to be explored in great detail.

⁶⁰ <https://www.duchas.ie/en/src?q=Lady+Gregory&t=CbesTranscript> Accessed 27 November 2019

⁶¹ <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4583316/4578987/4587893> Accessed 27 November 2019.

⁶² <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4583299/4577618/4587028> Accessed 10 November 2020

Archives

Archives provide a repository of documentation that embodies public memory. Therefore the examination of historical documents, papers and manuscripts held within archives is an integral part of any historical and memory research study. Much of this material has been donated by a person, family, or organisation to create an enduring legacy or value associated with the information contained therein. Information is often handwritten, or might consist of collected images, newspaper cuttings, pamphlets, scholarly papers, minutes of meetings, and various other collections of items considered to be important. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, limitations on entry to all institutions that have holdings of such archival material were restricted temporarily. Some items were digitised and placed on-line for use, other items were at the disposal of the available archivist or librarian. The search for information produced varying results.

National Archives

National archival investigation is an opportunity for researchers to explore what information is available, and extract the relevant material within the scope of their chosen topic of interest or research questions. The process of exploring what is often a large amount of material, be it primary, secondary, reference sources, catalogues, databases, and/or other discovery tools, should be conducted in the understanding of the scope and complexity of the project. However, it is necessary at times to re-evaluate the project based on the material available and how this is best presented. At least this was the case during the course of this study, notably, the written material regarding the agency of women was poor and fragmented, therefore forced a reimagining as mentioned above. Nonetheless, an initial archival search began with national repositories on-line digital catalogues, such as: Bureau of Military History; National Archives of Ireland; National Library of Ireland; National Photographic Archive; National Gallery of Ireland Library and Archive; Irish Film Institute (IFI) Irish Film Archive; Kilmainham Gaol Museum; Irish Traditional Music Archive; Irish Capuchin Archives; Garda Museum Archive; RTÉ Libraries and Archives, in addition to the hyperlinks provided for further information.

The National Archives of Ireland is the official repository for the state records of Ireland this includes, original documents and records from departments of state, the courts, public bodies as well as many private collections. Now located in Bishop Street, Dublin 8, the National Archives incorporates the previously named Public Record Office founded 1867 (formerly at the Four Courts), and the State Paper Office founded 1702 (formerly at Dublin Castle). This archive holds millions of records and provides researchers with insights into social, economic and political history of Ireland. However, when searching the online catalogues of National Archives of Ireland only limited results were produced for search areas under headings of ‘Galway’, ‘War of Independence’ (and variants), ‘1919–1921’, ‘Galway Women’s History’. In addition, further searches under more exact terms such as, ‘Loughnanes’, ‘Eileen Quinn’, ‘Fr Michael Griffin’, once again produced only minor results most of which were unconnected with County Galway’s War of Independence. Similarly, the National Library of Ireland holds a vast amount of records and their mission as stated, ‘is to collect, preserve, promote and make accessible the documentary and intellectual record of the life of Ireland and to contribute to the provision of access to the larger universe of recorded knowledge.’⁶³ Visiting the National Library of Ireland required planning, such as, a reader’s card and submitted requests for books or manuscripts to be available during opening times. Under similarly search requests as above, several records were requested including Colonel Maurice Moore Papers, 1841–1939 and J. J. O’Connell Papers. The latter was unavailable due to an ongoing project. However, this manuscript has since been made available online.⁶⁴ Colonel Moore’s manuscripts were to prove significant in documenting how women were treated during the War of Independence. Articles and letters sent between Colonel Moore and various others detail the ill-treatment of women and how women when arrested were treated. Additionally, some photographs used in this study were sourced from the National Library of Ireland. Also included in the inventory was one item of interest from the Richard Mulcahy Papers held in University College Dublin. This was the specific letter supposedly sent from Patrick (Padraig) Joyce that was intercepted by the IRA in Galway Town.

⁶³ <https://www.nli.ie/en/about-the-library.aspx> Accessed 15 April 2022

⁶⁴ J.J. O’Connell Papers Ms 22, 19 ‘No. 1 Sub district defence scheme’ available at <https://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000654494>

Similarly, the Irish Film Institute (IFI) Irish Film Archive was most instructive in creating context prior to and during the War of Independence. According to their website, the Institute 'acquires, preserves and makes available Ireland's moving image heritage, working to ensure that Ireland's rich and varied film history, both amateur and professional, is protected and accessible for the benefit of current and future generations.'⁶⁵ Significantly, 'The Irish Independence Film Collection' presents newsreels which are an important insight to what people were shown (or not shown) during this turbulent period by British newsreel companies such as British Pathé.⁶⁶ On the other hand, despite expectations to the contrary, the records held in the Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA) proved not to hold any reference material associated with the War of Independence in County Galway. However, a monthly series, 'Drawing from the Well' which under the auspices of the ITMA, connects artists with archival material to inspire new art did prove useful. One episode featured Lisa O'Neill and her research into the life and songs of Arthur Griffith (as referenced earlier) provided a particular insight into Griffith's opinion regarding Irish ballads and how they reflect Irish life.

Furthermore, a regular search throughout the duration of this research did yield some results, in particular, The National Archives: Women in 20th-Century Ireland, 1922–1966 and Sources from the Department of the Taoiseach. Although by and large most archives were very accommodating to this researcher, challenges were faced in trying to access some sources of information. While searching RTÉ Libraries and Archives a set of tapes 'Looking West' by Jim Fahy in 1987, listed a Mrs Mary O'Connor, Nun's Island, Galway, as delivering a dramatic first-hand account of activities while a member of the Cumann na mBan. However, a substantial fee of €84 was requested by RTÉ prior to hearing the audio clip and determining the relevance of the information. Also discussed was a further fee if the material was to be used in this study, and a larger one if published. Rather than dismiss outright, this research requested if it could be determined that the women on the tape was speaking about the War of Independence in County Galway before the fee was paid, but alas this was not permitted. Not to be defeated, a request to the Galway Local Library Archive proved successful. The staff managed to locate the material from within the Library

⁶⁵ <https://ifi.ie/archive/> Accessed 20 April 2019

⁶⁶ <https://ifiarchiveplayer.ie/independencefilms/> Accessed 12 January 2020

Service in Ireland (special collections). However, although the audio items were interesting, the woman who spoke made reference to her Cumann na mBan service in Dublin and not Galway.

It is also worth mentioning that during the height of restrictions due to Covid-19, it was difficult to access any information that was not available online. However, one very kind British archivist from the British Library was able to assist a request by sending photographs of an article via WhatsApp.⁶⁷

Local Archives

One area considered worthy of investigation, to identify local government reactions to contemporary events and post-conflict remembrances, was the archival records of Galway County Council and Galway Urban District Council. However, only limited online access to archival records was available from Galway County Council through their archivist. These did provide limited information on the overall administration of boards, decisions on Dáil support and a reversal of a widely criticised decision, known as 'The Galway Resolution'.⁶⁸ Also, another area of interest, this time associated with memory, was the naming of roads and streets; Father Griffin Road, Father Griffin Place, Sean Mulvoy Road and Seamus Quirke or streets in Mervue: Loughnane Place, Loughnane Terrace, Quinn Place and Quinn Terrace. After several attempts to locate Galway's Urban District Council's records in 2019, it was explained that they do not have an archivist to protect the integrity of the files. Hence they materials were not available for research without several layers of bureaucracy that most likely would not have succeeded.⁶⁹ Newspaper reports on council decisions also provided further information on decisions and motions passed.⁷⁰

In order to obtain further information, in August 2019, a request to view Galway Urban District Council records held at the National University of Ireland, Galway

⁶⁷ The articles in question were written by Lady Gregory under an alias, in the *Nation* (1920) archived in The British Library Digitisation Services: News Media.

⁶⁸ <http://www.galway.ie/en/services/more/archives/collections/> Accessed 2 February 2019

⁶⁹ Secretary to the Chief Executive of Galway City Council explained their limited resources to provide someone to accompany this researcher even if my request was approved which was unlikely. Some newspaper reports referred to roads being renamed, but the motivations or discussions are absent.

⁷⁰ See *Connacht Tribune*, 11 December 1920 which lays out the dire circumstances that Galway County Council finds itself without financial support from the British establishment after pledging allegiance to the Dáil.

(NUIG) was made. These included four Minute Books of Galway Urban District Council within the date range of 1899–1922. Upon access, it appeared that the information mostly referred to rates, road works and repairs, housing, however, some do briefly mention the politics of the day. Notably, one entry dated 15 April 1920 stated that:

this council desires to place on record our appreciation of the thoroughly efficient orderly and courageous manner in which the allied trades and labour bodies in Galway handled the very difficult and critical situation created by the national strike ... that the special thanks of the citizens of Galway are due to the Irish Railway and Postal workers whose patriotic action, contributed so largely to the victory of right over might. That we congratulate the noble men who were prepared to suffer death rather than yield up their principles.⁷¹

During a brief informal discussion with the archivist, Kieran Hoare, he stated that working on similar records from County Cork, he too was struck by the absence of more politically-charged comments. The possible conclusion discussed, was a reluctance to commit ‘on the record’ comments that would be later sent for review to Dublin Castle. Dialogues such as this are invaluable to researchers and help to develop ideas and relationships for further projects.

As discussed earlier a key aim is, *to use practice-based approaches to generate an original set of heritage initiatives for the general public, thus leaving behind a creative legacy for current and future generations.* Significantly, there are two such projects included in this study, *The Loughnane Brothers Heritage Trail: Go Explore the Historic Sites and Memorials* and the Loughnane Brothers ArcGIS ESRI StoryMap. Both project utilised files from another collection held in the James Hardiman Library, ‘Papers relating to the deaths of the Loughnane Brothers’ (POL4). This collection contains 38 items ranging from handmade remembrance booklets, photographs, articles, and newspaper reports ranging in dates from 1920-1981.⁷² The project ‘The Loughnane Brothers ArcGIS ESRI StoryMap was a collaboration between ATU and Galway County Council, with kind permission to include some items from Kieran Hoare, Archivist, James Hardiman Library. Throughout the term of this study, information regarding the capture and death of the Loughnane brothers was gathered. The manner in which they

⁷¹ National University of Ireland, Galway, James Hardiman Library LA4 – Minute Books of Galway Urban District Council.

<http://archivesearch.library.nuigalway.ie/nuig/calmview/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=LA4%2f3&pos=7> Accessed 10 March 2021

⁷² National University of Ireland, Galway, James Hardiman Library POL4 Papers relating to the deaths of Patrick and Harry,

were captured and the subsequent discovery of their bodies has markedly remained in public memory both domestically and internationally until the present day. As a result, this information was discussed with wider collaborators and a decision was made on the specific eleven-points listed in the guide book, *The Loughnane Brothers Heritage Trail: Go Explore the Historic Sites and Memorials* with a similar inclusion on the Galway County Heritage trails, a collection of heritage trails from around the County of Galway.⁷³

The main disadvantage to primary information held in archives, as alluded to above, is access or availability. In the case of the Galway Diocesan Archive, a building that is in disrepair, there is a part-time archivist that works mostly off-site on other projects and due to health and safety reasons (in addition to confidentiality), it is not possible to visit and peruse their records. Not all their material is catalogued, and only part of the catalogues are electronically searchable. Therefore each request must be specific and dates must be provided and yet access to material still proved somewhat difficult. The information sought was concerning Fr J.W. O'Meehan, Canon Considine and Fr Michael Griffin, each instrumental actors in the War of Independence in County Galway. However, one item belonging to Fr Griffin was eventually found when a newspaper report from an article in the *Irish Press* 1933 suggested that the then Dr O'Doherty, Bishop of Clonfert and Galway still had it in his possession at that time.⁷⁴ The item was considered a precious relic, a 'bog-stained stole' which Fr Griffin wore that last night he was killed. Photographs of the item along with locks of hair, most likely taken when Sister of Mercy nuns from the nearby convent washed and laid out his body prior to the wake, were professionally taken by the archivist and sent with kind permission for inclusion in the 'Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory'.⁷⁵ Perseverance, accurate information and patience while researching can eventually produce the desired results.

Conclusion

Although the historical method was employed throughout this study, the various

⁷³ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/72fe361f467444428fb4b36234999120> Accessed 10 April 2022

⁷⁴ *Irish Press*, 13 July 1933

⁷⁵ See Appendix 9.1

primary and secondary sources were at all times punctuated with conversations, discussions, debates and/or attendances at local talks/conferences. Investigating the threads of women's history during the War of Independence in County Galway was more challenging, mainly because of the scarcity of sources. Despite this, the publication of new research in the field and the public release of previously unavailable archival material, facilitated a reevaluation of their contribution to this conflict. However, there was some unexpected disruptions to the research process that had temporary impacts. As Level 5 restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic were put into place, physical presence at repositories, institutions of learning, and field trips were curtailed for a time. Not to be deterred, alternative ways to investigate, explore or gain access to information (such as YouTube or podcasts) did provide some interesting results. Ironically, event organisers' utilisation of social media or digital applications such as Zoom to hold talks or conferences enabled this researcher's participation when under normal circumstances attendance could have been prohibited due to high demand or inability to travel. This was especially the case with events such as the Women's History Association of Ireland Conference 2021 or Machnamh 100 hosted by President Higgins. Such events generated widespread national interest amongst the historic/heritage community. Before the pandemic, communities sometimes advertise local events only within their own networks, thus making it difficult to become aware of such proceedings. However, both national and local event organisers exploited the digital 'targeting' strategies provided by social media platforms such as Facebook, which resulted in many online commemorative or remembrance events reaching their targeted audience. Even though attending events from the comfort of one's own home was not quite the same experience, as restrictions lifted, the so-called hybrid approach (virtual and in-person), offered greater degrees of flexibility in terms of engaging with events. Notwithstanding these temporary impacts, when restrictions did ease as was the case for a period in summer 2021, it was possible to conduct field trips. One particular fieldtrip, in the company of Dr Mark McCarthy, gave rise to the ArcGIS ESRI StoryMap and guide book versions of *The Loughnane Brothers Heritage Trail*. From this researcher's point of view, the restrictions (and all unintended repercussions) had the potential to be devastating yet, in addition to attending several online events, many archival institutions laboured to provide an online presence. Archives such as the Bureau of Military History, National Library of

Ireland, University of Galway, Irish Newspaper Archive and many others responded when requested to clarify or provide further information on various important issues associated with this research.

Chapter 4. The Historical Context

The period after the 1916 Rising, which encompassed the War for Independence, the partition of Ireland and the formation of an independent Irish state, was turbulent with civil unrest. Charles Townshend captured the essence of the intended stratagem employed by Sinn Féin and the Irish Volunteers during the campaign for Irish independence when he stated, 'Victory is achieved not so much by knocking the enemy's sword from his hand as by paralysing his arm.'¹ His reflection alluded to both the political and military tactics employed by the IRA Volunteers during the War of Independence. Primarily this transpired as a constant disruption of all aspects of the British administration, while putting in place an alternative government and administration in Ireland. It is worth noting, that this period is also often referred to as the 'Anglo-Irish War' or the 'Black and Tan War', signifying the 'three combatant groups responsible for most deaths – police of all kinds, British military, and Irish Volunteers/IRA'.² In order to understand the history of the War of Independence in County Galway, it is worthwhile in the first instance to frame events in a wider national context. This can reveal not only the similarities, such as the rise of Sinn Féin nationally, but also, the contrasting engagements between Volunteers or Crown forces in various counties. Despite such inconsistencies, a chronic state of unease was felt by the people of County Galway as elsewhere, inherently heightened by the sense of trepidation, trauma and subsequent deaths of family, neighbours, and friends. David Fitzpatrick has referred to this consciousness as 'terror'.³ Therefore, an effort is made to explore how the region endured through this period of political and collective change at the outset of the War of Independence.

Galway is the largest county in the western province of Connacht and the second largest in Ireland. It is divided by Lough Corrib, a large lake of 200 square kilometres. A division of policing administrative districts into East and West Riding was established in 1837, with a separate County Inspector to oversee the two areas. Another transformation occurred in 1899, when 'the county was subdivided into urban and rural district councils, with a newly-elected Galway Urban District Council assuming

¹ Charles Townshend, 'The Irish Republican Army and the Development of Guerrilla Warfare 1916—1921' in eds G.A. Holmes, A.D McIntyre, *English Historical Review*, vol. xciv, no. 371, April 1979, 318.

² Eunan O'Halpin and Daithí Ó Corráin *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* (London: Yale University Press, 2020) 3

³ <http://www.theirishstory.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Fitzpatrick-on-Terror-part-1.mp3> Accessed 11 October 2018.

responsibility for local government in Galway town'.⁴ In the latter half of the nineteenth century, and early twentieth century, in the anticipation of pacifying Ireland, land quality and its ownership in the west of Ireland became increasingly significant when successive Land Acts were introduced.⁵ The interconnection of land issues (agrarian violence) and political desire for Irish independence continued throughout the War of Independence. The desire to acquire or expand smallholdings led certain neighbours to become enemies, as boundaries, both moral and geographical were tested. In comparison to the 'disturbances of 1918' Varley has argued that the land agitation which flared up during 1920 would leave others 'in the shade in terms of scale and intensity'.⁶ In County Galway, the powerful position of some Sinn Féin members facilitated their ambitions to become land owners or assist others in their quest. As will be seen later, this became a hindrance for Sinn Féin and Galway Volunteers alike. Instances of cattle drives or destruction of boundaries, particularly during the height of the war, contributed to the tension felt within communities as reflected in many newspaper reports of the period.⁷ Ordinary citizens whose land was coveted by others, could find themselves caught between the violent behaviour of Crown forces and the betrayal of those within their own communities, be it, neighbours, friends or indeed extended family. Nonetheless, for the purpose of this study, while those incidents or altercations that solely derive from land agitation, were considered, the focus remained or returned to those engagements related to the struggle for Irish independence.⁸ This is not to deny the importance of such cases, however, the scope of this research must remain focused upon the War of Independence.

⁴ Matthew Potter, 'Geographical loyalty? Counties, Palatinates, Boroughs and Ridings' in *History Ireland* Vol. 20, No. 5 (September/October 2012) 25; Mark McCarthy and Shirley Wrynn, 'A New History of the 1916 Rising in County Galway', Marie Mannion, ed *Centenary Reflections on the 1916 Rising: Galway County Perspectives* (Galway: Galway County Council, 2016) 70

⁵ Timothy W. Guinnane and Ronald I Miller, 'The Limits to Land Reform: The Land Acts in Ireland, 1870—1909' in *Economic Development and Cultural Change* Vol. 45, No. 3 (April 1997) 591. For more information regarding the importance of land in County Galway, within the context of political and military conflict see Chapter 'Introduction' Fergus Campbell *Land and Revolution Nationalist Politics in the West of Ireland 1891—1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 1–8.

⁶ Tony Varley, 'A Region of Sturdy Smallholders? Western Nationalists and Agrarian Politics during the First World War.' *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 55 (2003): 142.

⁷ *Tuam Herald*, 24 July 1920, *The Freeman's Journal* 23 August 1920, *Irish Examiner*, 24 August 1920, *Anglo-Celt*, 11 September 1920 and *Belfast Newsletter*, 20 September 1920.

⁸ Campbell, *Land and Revolution*, 5.

The Aftermath of the 1916 Rising

Following the 1916 Rising, the Irish Volunteers, having failed in their attempt to secure an independent Ireland, became depleted and suppressed. There was very 'little organised republican activity for the remainder of the year' because in the immediate aftermath of the Rising 'the authorities arrested 3,430 men and 79 women.'⁹ Internment, imprisonment, and a series of unpalatable executions, however, began to change the public's opinion of the insurgents and the notion of independence. Support was building for the independence movement with Sinn Féin emerging as political leaders and awakened republican sentiment amongst those who would later participate in the War of Independence. Yet, simultaneously the British administration continued to seek a solution to the Irish question. However, their priorities lay elsewhere. The war in Europe continued until November 1918, followed by lengthy peace negotiations. As a consequence, the British government failed to anticipate the significance of the social and political unrest being fostered in Ireland. In an effort to resolve some of the bubbling tensions, an initiative by Lloyd George, the Irish Convention, was convened to find a resolution to the Irish question. The assembly sat from July 1917 until March 1919 and was brought together in the 'alleged hope that the Irish could agree on a constitution for their country'¹⁰. However, without the attendance of Sinn Féin (who refused the invitation) and with conscription once again being considered for Ireland, it turned out to be a disaster and collapsed. It seemed inconceivable and ill-considered by many British politicians, despite having received advice against it, that the threat of conscription would be such a galvanising force in nationalistic Ireland. Even less so, that talks of Home Rule would no longer exact any influence on Irish nationalistic politicians as those before. Unionists, particularly in the north of Ireland, were opposed to a Home Rule from Dublin, considering it, as Lee suggests, to be a form of 'Rome rule' and preferred to determine their own future.¹¹ This was a reference to a deal negotiated by the Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, Cardinal Michael Logue over the six constituencies in Ulster to be contested in the General Election. Cracks had begun to appear in the status quo and a more robust political party taking a republican stance ready to fill these gaps would prove successful.

⁹ Marie Coleman, *The Irish Revolution 1916–1923* (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 34 and *Irish Times*, 24 March 2016

¹⁰ J. J. Lee, *Ireland 1912–1985: Politics and Society*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 39.

¹¹ Lee, *Ireland 1912–1985*, 38.

In the period between the 1916 Rising until the 1918 General Election, Sinn Féin won six by-elections, assisted by the arrests under the guise of a German plot (discussed further in this chapter). It would appear they were redressing the balance in favour of their separatist ideology. The result of the General Election in 1918 saw an overwhelming majority for Sinn Féin, winning ‘nearly three quarters of the Irish seats with just 48 per cent of the vote (65 per cent in what would become the 26 counties)’ giving creditability to their cause.¹² The momentum was building and by the time the British administration got around to suppressing the new Dáil and its supporters, the impetus had overtaken any potential action. The military wing of this new political movement had secured its place in the community and had already become a thorn in the side of the establishment. Thus began the tit-for-tat adversarial conflict of the Irish War of Independence.

While County Galway was considered a ‘hive of Sinn Féin activity [that] marked it out as one of the most unstable counties in the country’, did it, as Kenny has suggested, ever live up to this label? Or, as he also suggests, has Galway been forgotten or ‘neglected as a source of research’?¹³ To some degree, the answer to these questions are intertwined, for it is only by researching the factors that contributed to the apparent inertia of the Volunteers, that a series of contributing circumstances reveal themselves. For instance, reactivating County Galway’s involvement in the War of Independence was to the Volunteer’s mind, a continuation of what they started in 1916. Based on his map derived by plotting the addresses of those arrested and detained, William Murphy, has highlighted significant areas, such as Dublin, Wexford and Galway.¹⁴ Although, the executions were, as he states, ‘a turning point’, it was also the widespread arrests, internments and imprisonments that ‘weighed significantly upon the attitudes of hundreds of families and communities and upon wider public opinion throughout the country.’¹⁵ Imprisoned together with other Volunteers in

¹² *Irish Times*, 8 December 2018

¹³ Tomás Kenny *Galway: Politics and Society, 1910–23*. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011), 47.

¹⁴ William Murphy, ‘Imprisonment, 1915–18’ in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, edited by Crowley, John, Donal Ó Drisceoil, Mike Murphy and John Borgonovo (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017) 320

¹⁵ Murphy, ‘Imprisonment, 1915–18’ in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, 320 Also, during a House of Commons debate, Sir George Cave described in June 1917 explained the difference between internment in camp and internment in prison, ‘Internment, whether in camp or prison, is a precautionary measure taken in respect of alien enemies and of persons of enemy origin or association who are suspected of hostile designs. Such persons are ordinarily interned in camps, but internment in prison has to be resorted to in a few special cases where an interned person has abused the comparative liberty of the camp or is unfitted to associate freely with other interned persons. The conditions of internment are less stringent than those of

Britain, Wales and Scotland, afforded them the opportunity to collectively work together in what could be described as a de facto military training camp. This led to the later reference to such places as ‘Universities of Revolution’, as was seen in Frongoch, the internment camp set up in Wales after the 1916 Rising.¹⁶ In addition, William Murphy identified prisons as the ‘key site of revolutionary activity in Ireland during this period’.¹⁷ The advantage of planning various strategies, tactical communications and use of intelligence would shape their future roles in the conflict that was to come. Colonel Joseph V. Lawless stated that:

lodged together in a camp with the leaven of those who had had their blood baptism on the streets of Dublin and elsewhere, were bound to be touched by the longing to emulate the heroic deeds of those who fought; and there were those amongst us whose intellects grasped the possibilities of this situation, and strove to make the best use of the opportunity so unexpectedly provided by the enemy.¹⁸

Familiar names such as Countess Markievicz, Terence MacSwiney, Seán T O’Kelly, William T Cosgrave, Michael Collins and Richard Mulcahy alongside ‘328 men from Co Galway ... [were] arrested and deported to jails across Scotland and England’.¹⁹ Their imprisonment was spent in appalling conditions. This had a severe impact on their morale and mental health, several were shattered and mentally fatigued. Senior Volunteers, incarcerated, also quickly recognised this deprivation. In addition to preparation for renewed hostilities, they agreed that to keep spirits up, prisoners needed to engage in various activities such as sport, drama and Irish culture. They also studied military tactics, passive and aggressive disruption of authority, the Irish language, and equally as important, they established new friendships, that would later aid them in future escapades. The unrestricted intensive submersion into Irish culture and views of separatism reinforced the radicalisation of those who had ‘vague Republican sympathies before their incarceration returned to Ireland at the end of

imprisonment, which is a punishment imposed on persons convicted of crime.’
<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1917/jun/19/internment-and-imprisonment>
¹⁶ <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/1916/after-the-rising/frongoch-university-of-the-revolution-34466342.html> Accessed 21 January 2018.
¹⁷ William Murphy, ‘Imprisonment, 1915–18’ in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, edited by Crowley, John, Donal Ó Drisceoil, Mike Murphy and John Borgonovo (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017) 321
¹⁸ Colonel Joseph V. Lawless, 9 December 1954 MACBB BMH, WS No. 1043
¹⁹ <https://www.irishexaminer.com/viewpoints/analysis/galway-volunteers-became-sitting-ducks-388512.html#> Accessed 22 October 2018.

1916 with much more entrenched ideas of revolution.’²⁰

Returning to their homelife would not be easy, as many of the men came from the labouring classes, were poorly paid and had little prospects to return to.²¹ Now branded as rebels, they returned to their rural backgrounds, for many, impoverished. As one veteran recalled in 1966, “no bonfires awaited them, the Galway men returned almost unnoticed and made their way quietly to their homes”.²² Cognisant of this, Michael Collins enlisted the help of men such as Mattie Neilan of Kilcolgan, County Galway. He was ‘to meet the incoming mail-boat and identify any prisoner from his own area ... they were given a meal before being put on the train for home with a pound or two in their pockets’.²³ Despite their best efforts, those Galwaymen hoping for a warm welcome, were disappointed, others, enthusiastic to continue the fight where they left, were also soon deflated. Life in County Galway had returned to normal and after the Rising what little armaments they had was ‘cast into river, lake or sea when the adventure was over ... Worst of all was the fact that actions during the Easter Rising had shown the hand of the Galwaymen. Each rebel, each household, was now marked out for the police’.²⁴ Over the coming year, prisoners were released at periodic intervals. The leader of the IPP, John Redmond had ‘lobbied the British government in support of the releases’, arguing that by delaying the inevitable, this would allow ‘momentum’ to gather for the Sinn Féin party.²⁵ Christmas Eve 1916, saw two mail steamers arrive into Kingstown and the North Wall, carrying 430 men returning home. The large majority of these released men were returning to the south and west of the country. Diarmaid Ferriter referred to this homecoming as being a ‘low-key reception from friends and relatives’, a direct contrast to a more public celebratory display experienced by returnees six months later.²⁶ The intervening six months had seen a shift in support for a new approach that motivated the men and women of County Galway and gave hope to those returning.

²⁰ <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/diarmaid-ferriter-the-1916-prisoners-released-on-christmas-eve-1.2915580>
Accessed 24 October 2018, Graham Clifford, ‘Frongoch: university of the revolution’ *The Independent* 21 February 2016.

²¹ Martin Dolan, ‘Connacht: Galway 1920–1921’ in *The Capuchin Annual 1970*, 384.

²² Cited in Conor McNamara, “The Most Shoneen Town in Ireland”: Galway in 1916’ in *History Ireland* Issue 1, Volume 19 (Jan/Feb) 2011 37–38

²³ Dolan, ‘Connacht: Galway 1920–1921’, 384.

²⁴ Dolan, ‘Connacht: Galway 1920–1921’, 385.

²⁵ <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/diarmaid-ferriter-the-1916-prisoners-released-on-christmas-eve-1.2915580>
Accessed 24 October 2018.

²⁶ <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/diarmaid-ferriter-the-1916-prisoners-released-on-christmas-eve-1.2915580>
Accessed 24 October 2018.

This new approach began with securing all upcoming political positions (through local and national elections) in every county, a strategy that needed the support of the 1916 Rising Volunteers and the confidence of the people. Laffan describes how some senior activists, upon release, recognised that they had to consider this phase carefully, it was not possible to overcome the British army in battle. Lacking the strength of companies or battalions with little or no supplies of any description indicated pursuit of another military type rebellion as ludicrous.²⁷ It proved critical then, as this new undertaking would need the backing of the populace, and be of a bureaucratic nature, that any potential electoral candidates be selected carefully. Additionally, by engaging publicly in the political process, attempts could be made at a covert rearmament and training which would appease those who favoured a more forceful revolt. Therefore, the re-emergence of Sinn Féin appropriated the ‘experience of the politicians with the energies of soldiers who, before 1916, had never envisaged a political career for themselves.’²⁸ Although the party had never embraced a significant role in nationalist politics prior to the 1916 Rising, the two become synonymous thereafter.

Sinn Féin and the Political Process

Arthur Griffith had founded Sinn Féin in 1905 alongside a political newspaper of the same name, ‘emulating the Hungarian statesman Franz Déak, whose followers had refused to take their seats in the Austrian parliament until their national demand had been conceded’.²⁹ His policy was simply to abstain from engagement with Westminster and force recognition for Irish independence. He advocated using passive resistance and believed in a dual monarchy system. The turning point in his political strategy came with an opportunity to contest the 1917 Roscommon by-election. This was meant as a strike against Home Rule and the Redmondites or Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP). Although it was not the first election since the 1916 Rising, this one was to see a marked change in electioneering techniques. In addition, the Representation of the People Act, 1918 ensured a significant increase in voters which opened up the electorate to alternatives, a position Sinn Féin exploited. This particular by-election,

²⁷ Michael Laffan *The Resurrection of Ireland: The Sinn Féin Party, 1916–1923*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 81.

²⁸ Laffan *The Resurrection of Ireland*, 33

²⁹ Richard Davis, *Arthur Griffith Irish History Series, No 10* (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1976) 8.

according to Laffan, was most significant as it began what he describes as the 'politicisation process'.³⁰ The IPP had gone uncontested in several constituencies and were understood to be the 'lesser enemy' and an easy target to overcome, particularly in what was fast becoming a changing political landscape.³¹ Count George Plunkett, a privately-educated papal count, aristocrat and scholar was the chosen candidate for Sinn Féin. He had in reality 'little in common with the voters ... other than a burning indignation to avenge the events that followed Easter Week'.³² To rectify this, his campaigning staff produced a leaflet with six of the top reasons that qualified him as the perfect candidate. These included what they hoped would prove his affiliation to the electorate. In an emotive appeal number four stated: 'BECAUSE he is the man who sacrificed his three sons in order that your son, and every Irish father's son, should be saved from the sacrifice.'³³ This example of selfless sacrifice was a message that certainly appealed to the voters and began what proved to be a political landslide victory for Sinn Féin. His supporters, many of them suspicious of politics, had worked hard to knock on doors and individually contact prospective voters. Throughout the rest of 1917 three other by-elections were fought and won by Sinn Féin, thus strengthening this new political approach. With the war in Europe continuing to rage on, the issue of conscription in Ireland during this period was divisive. Consequently, the local influence of the clergy and women's groups, both protesting against conscription, helped to secure for Sinn Féin those voters who did not necessarily share either strong revolutionary or separatist's views but who had a desire for change.

By establishing an affiliation with influential groups holding a national opinion, such as those against conscription, Sinn Féin members succeeded in making contacts in communities that would give greater credibility to their cause. Laffan's analysis of Sinn Féin's political success certainly supports this.³⁴ He contends that the Sinn Féin members, many of whom were Volunteers from the 1916 Rising, were determined to upskill and transform from the 'military discipline' unit into the art of electioneering.

³⁰ <https://soundcloud.com/history-hub/irish-revolution-aftermath-of-the-1916-rising-and-the-1917-by-elections>
Accessed 2 February 2018.

³¹ Laffan *The Resurrection of Ireland*, 81.

³² McGreevy, Ronan, 'Out for the Count—An Irishman's Dairy on George Plunkett's North Roscommon Byelection Victory in 1917' *Irish Times*, January 31, 2017.

³³ Arthur Mitchell, Pádraig Ó Snodaigh *Irish Political Documents 1916–1949*, (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1985) 32.

³⁴ For a more in depth analysis on the rise of Sinn Féin and the changing political landscape see Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland: The Sinn Féin Party, 1916–1923*.

They quickly assimilated the principles with a good deal of competency of ‘which they would later use in founding Sinn Féin clubs, organising meetings and fighting other by-elections’.³⁵ Each victorious candidate for Sinn Féin adopted the policy of abstention and withdrew their ‘Irish Representation from the British Parliament’ in Westminster.³⁶ By spring 1918, the threat of conscription was to arise once again when a decision by the House of Commons to introduce ‘the Military Service Act’ sparked widespread fear and anger amongst civic and religious groups.³⁷ The Redmondites within the IPP had thus far succeeded in having the matter somewhat paused until the issue of Home Rule was resolved. They argued that it would be considered an affront ‘unless we have our own parliament and we vote for it ... and the guarantee that we could run our own affairs’.³⁸ The idea of Irish men fighting under a British flag against their will was indeed contentious and once again supported the notion of total self-government. Ballinasloe District Council protested strongly against the introduction of conscription. Recorded in their minutes is the resolution:

That we, the Ballinasloe District Council deny the right of England to conscript the Irish People and strongly affirm that we are not bound to obey a law passed by the brutal force of Carson's influence on the English Government. That we hereby pledge ourselves to abide by the advice of our Leaders and the Irish Hierarchy to resist by all our efforts to enforcement of this iniquitous blood tax on the Irish Nation.³⁹

Tuam and Gort District Councils followed suit. The blame directed at the leader of the Unionist Party, Sir Edward Carson, may well have been a reaction to his support of the British war effort and the Ulster Unionist domination in the North. The latter opposed three Home Rule Bills and forced the British Government to consider the partition of Ireland paving the way for Unionists to gain overall power in the circumstance. Similarly, invoking the wishes of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in Ireland provided a moral cloak of justification to this strong motion which would bode well for any up and coming local government elections. However, Ferriter points out that the *London Times* considered the initiative of conscription in Ireland as “an act of insanity” playing into the hands of dissident nationalists.⁴⁰ Senia Paseta has identified

³⁵ Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland*, 81.

³⁶ Mitchell and Ó Snodaigh, *Irish Political Documents 1916–1949*, 48.

³⁷ *Irish Times* 24 April 2018

³⁸ <https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/conscription-is-coming-to-ireland> Accessed 20 July 2018.

³⁹ Galway County Council Archives (GCCA): Ballinasloe Rural District Council Archives Collection 1899–1925 G00/6/18, 315 <http://www.galway.ie/en/SearchResults/?q=Ballinasloe+&x=0&y=0> Accessed 21 January 2019

⁴⁰ *Irish Times* 24 April 2018

the scheme as ‘the greatest and final unifying issue in pre-independent nationalist Ireland.’⁴¹ The proposal sparked a rapid expansion of Sinn Féin membership in Galway. Between May 1916 and December 1918, it rose from ‘200 members to 7,500 members.’⁴² This strength in numbers was to bring about a profound change in the party’s achievements in future elections.

The political landscape of Ireland shifted considerably in the two years following the 1916 Rising. Sinn Féin gained ground over the Irish Political Party (IPP) with a political manifesto that no longer included lobbying for Home Rule as a viable option. In effect, only a total separation from Britain and an alternative independent parliament would satisfy the demand for independence.⁴³ This new separatist ideology left Griffith’s dual monarchy system unfeasible and unworkable. In Galway, the enthusiasm was palpable on St Patrick’s Day, 1918, when an estimated 2,000 people from various areas around County Galway arrived into Athenry for a planned political demonstration.⁴⁴ Representatives from the Boy Scouts and Cumann na mBan were sent from Galway town. Portumna and Gort District Councils along with Galway District Council sent delegates. From Portumna, Thomas Abberton, J. Abbey and Jeremiah Mallon; from Gort, Martin Coen (Chairman) and Patrick Linnane and finally from Galway, Thomas Ruan (Chairman), Michael Melin (Vice-Chairman), and Patrick King. Also gathered for the rally were members of the clergy, known activists that supported the Sinn Féin cause. However, Brian Heffernan argues that prior to the 1916 Rising ‘whatever common bonds tied Irish separatists to the church, the violent means they used from time to time were never endorsed by the majority of the clergy’.⁴⁵ This began to change during 1918 especially surrounding the anti-conscription campaign as ‘signs of a rapprochement between republicanism and the church ... [when] Sinn Féin and the clergy joined forces against the British government’.⁴⁶ Amongst those present at the rally were, the South Galway Chairman of Sinn Féin, Rev. Fr John William O’Meehan, C.C., B.D. Kinvara, a well-regarded influential republican activist; Rev. Fr. Clarke C.C., Craughwell; Rev. Fr O’Farrell, Ballinakil; Rev. Fr O’Loughlin C.C., Gurteen; and Rev M

⁴¹ *Irish Times* 24 April 2018

⁴² <http://www.galwaycitymuseum.ie/revolution-irelands-1916-rising-and-galway/?locale=en> Accessed on the 29 November 2018.

⁴³ Coleman, *The Irish Revolution*, 31.

⁴⁴ *Connacht Tribune* 23 March 1918.

⁴⁵ Brian Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment: Catholic Priests and Political Violence in Ireland, 1919–21* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014) 3

⁴⁶ Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment* 3

Brennan, C.C Caltra. Some attendees marched long distances, others arrived by train, including eighty Volunteers commanded by 1916 veteran Larry Lardner (as a consequence, he was later arrested and remanded in custody for breaching regulations governing 'illegal drilling').⁴⁷ After the formal proposals were 'seconded and adopted', Fr O'Meehan stood to address the crowd. Amid shouts and cheers, he declared from the podium that:

According to the best political teachings, the consent of the people governed was the authority of the rulers' right to govern. They [Sinn Féin] believed that not for one single hour since the year 1800 had England the consent of the Irish people to rule their land [and] the hour had struck to give their country the right of self-determination, and end for ever the injustice of servitude.⁴⁸

Louis O'Dea, a solicitor in Galway town also contributed to the meeting. He said that before coming to the meeting, he was 'depressed and his heart was in his boots' because he felt that 'Irish nationality was gone from Ireland' however once he witnessed the large eager crowd his spirits were once again raised.⁴⁹ O'Dea also took the opportunity to disparage the IPP by suggesting that, having taken their seats in the British Parliament, they had relegated the Irish question to nothing more than a domestic one, rather than one of high national importance.⁵⁰ The radicalisation process during such events as this, offered for some, a welcome preoccupation. Similarly, the anti-conscription campaign proved to be a source of unification amongst every sector. This, as Joost Augusteijn has outlined, 'changed the challenge to the authorities from open defiance of large groups of Volunteers led by men who often invited arrest, to secret preparation for military conflict by a small circle of dedicated Volunteers.'⁵¹

The Labour movement held a general strike against conscription in April 1918, almost every 'branch of industry was impacted: shipyards, engineers' shops, factories, railways and tramway cars. No newspapers were published in Dublin or in the south or west of the country.'⁵² An anti-conscription pledge was signed by an estimated two million people and another demonstration 'Lá na mBan' was held with an accompanying pledge from thousands of women not to fill any roles vacated by

⁴⁷ *Connacht Tribune* 30 March 1918.

⁴⁸ *Connacht Tribune* 23 March 1918.

⁴⁹ *Connacht Tribune* 23 March 1918.

⁵⁰ *Connacht Tribune* 23 March 1918.

⁵¹ Joost Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare: The experience of Ordinary Volunteers in the Irish War of Independence 1916–1921* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1998) 85

⁵² <https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/ireland-closes-down-due-to-general-strike-against-conscription> Accessed 13 May 2019

conscripted men.⁵³ Sinn Féin had positioned themselves at the centre of this crisis, and used the momentum to further their own cause.

Sinn Féin set out to use every opportunity that arose to their advantage, this sometimes meant playing to an international audience. The rounding up and widespread arrests on the night of 17 May 1918, under dubious suspicion of a 'German Plot', played into the hands of the separatists. Amongst those arrested were, as McNamara has noted, the 'coterie of Galway's leading republicans.'⁵⁴ They included George Nicolls, former coroner and now editor of the *Galway Express*, Dr Brian Cusack (later elected for North Galway), Colm Ó Gaora, Thomas Ruane, Stephen Jordan, Michael Trayers, and Brian Fallon.⁵⁵ The charges were seditious intent under the aforementioned DORA, which provided for internment without trial for an indeterminate period.⁵⁶ Lyons has argued that this was of considerable benefit to the Volunteers' political strategy:

There is strong evidence that the Sinn Féin leaders had had advance warning that their arrest was imminent, but that they deliberately decided to let themselves be taken, partly because they well knew the effect their imprisonment would have upon public opinion.⁵⁷

The progression of public opinion did favour them. However, on 11 November 1918, an announcement that an armistice had been agreed signalling an end to the First World War was received with jubilant celebration in both Britain and Ireland. This ended the threat of conscription which had overshadowed the country since the Military Service Bill was introduced in April 1918.⁵⁸

Nonetheless, in what Foster refers to as a *coup de grâce*, the final blow to the IPP occurred when the British Government announced just prior to election day in 1918, that Home Rule would be 'withheld'.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the situation was to remain so until respect for law and order was 'restored ... [and] until this was done it was

⁵³ *Irish Times* 24 April 2018

⁵⁴ Conor McNamara, *War and Revolution in the West of Ireland: Galway 1913–1922* (Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2018), 106.

⁵⁵ McNamara, *War and Revolution in the West of Ireland: Galway 1913–1922*, 106; Michael Spillane and Michael J. O'Sullivan, 8 June 1953, Military Archives Cathal Brugha Barracks (hereafter MACBB), Bureau of Military History Witness Statement (hereafter BMH, WS) No. 862. Note that the spelling of Nicolls often appears with a 'h', however the 'h' is absent for this study.

⁵⁶ http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/first_world_war/p_defence.htm Accessed 12 July 2018.

⁵⁷ F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* (London: Fontana, 1973), 396.

⁵⁸ Alan Ward, 'Lloyd George and the 1918 Irish Conscription Crisis' in *The Historical Journal* Vol 17, Issue 1 March 1974.

⁵⁹ R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600–1972* (London: Penguin, 1989), 490.

undesirable to outline any programme for the future'.⁶⁰ This was seen as the death knell for the IPP and one that would be difficult to recover from. In the same sitting of the War Cabinet, it was also decided 'that none of those persons at present interned should be released for the purpose of election contests'. The Lord Lieutenant, Lord French, then stated that 'any relaxation [of DORA] at this moment would make it impossible to govern Ireland ... Although Ireland was superficially quiet, it was seething with discontent and rebellious intentions underneath'.⁶¹

In addition to the successful by-elections, the ranks of Sinn Féin had swelled during the anti-conscription crisis which energised their determination as they increased their focus on the December General Election. Preparations began when they started organising themselves into community groups with more seasoned and influential men and women in leading roles. Known as Sinn Féin clubs, they were given instructions on 'election procedures' from men in Dublin.⁶² Laffan makes reference to the RIC recording 'a total of 336' Sinn Féin clubs, which he adds is most 'likely to [be an] underestimate'.⁶³ Thomas Mannion, Company Captain of the Dunmore Volunteers, describes in his Witness Statement how prior to the election, Dunmore was a hub of activity. He contends that although the strength of his company was around twenty-five, there was in excess of 120 in the Sinn Féin club, some were elderly men not considered able-bodied for action. Women too added a significant energy to this election. Through the work of 'suffrage societies and campaigns', women 30 years or older had now achieved the right to vote, mothers could now stand against conscription.⁶⁴ Whilst not all women had received the right to vote, many campaigned and canvassed those who did. Two candidates, Winifred Carney in Belfast and Constance Markievicz in Dublin (the first female elected to the British parliament) brought with them a new dynamic to the canvassing. The canvassing machine was in full swing; propaganda was written and distributed (Fig. 4.1.). Sinn Féin's director of propaganda 'sent party notes and news pieces to provincial and local newspapers. These mercilessly depicted the Irish Parliamentary Party as conscriptionists and

⁶⁰ The National Archives (hereafter TNA), Cabinet Office (hereafter CAB)-23-8-War Cabinet (hereafter WC)-505-26.

⁶¹ TNA-CAB-23-8WC-505-26.

⁶² Michael Cleary, 12 December 1955 MACBB BMH, WS No. 1246.

⁶³ Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland*, 94.

⁶⁴ <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/century/century-women-and-the-vote> Accessed 17 Jan. 2019.

corruptionists.’⁶⁵

Figure 4.1. Two posters used in the 1918 General Election.

Source: Courtesy Decade of Centenaries

As can be seen in the poster the First World War ended, the French, British, and American governments officially recognised the independence of the Czech national council and the Czechoslovak Legion. This infused hope within Sinn Féin and they issued propaganda posters in an appeal to the electorate. The poster on the right indicates the expectations of those women involved in canvassing for female Sinn Féin candidates. Equality was high on their agenda.



The Sinn Féin machine seemed unstoppable. However, unaccustomed as some new voters were to the practices of elections it was seen as important to set good foundations. Some needed more persuasion than others; the farmers in particular required strong coaxing.⁶⁶

Agrarian violence in Galway escalated again during the War of Independence. As mentioned earlier, ownership of land, land distribution, soil quality and ‘the sharp rise in prices for all agricultural produce’ during World War I, made many reluctant to change political allegiance and needed the reassurance of neighbours and friends.⁶⁷ However, it has to be considered that politically, those concerns were taken into account when votes were sought; Sinn Féin needed the farming community to support their election effort. Some canvassers just enjoyed the rhetoric of self-determination and took their new responsibility earnestly. Women, having gained their right to vote,

⁶⁵ <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2018/12/11/1016527-the-most-momentous-irish-electoral-contest-of-the-20th-century/> Accessed 14 May 2019.

⁶⁶ <https://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/920-first-dail-eireann-1919/139410-an-chead-dail-1919/> Accessed 17 January 2018.

⁶⁷ Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh ‘Ireland’s Land Questions’ in *Farming and Country Life 1916: History Talks presented at Teagasc Athenry* (Carlow: Teagasc, 2016) 43

endeavoured to make use of it and involved themselves in rallies and meetings. Mannion provides a useful insight into the canvasser's methodology:

North Galway was supposed to be a great Redmondite stronghold at the time. The Volunteers and Sinn Féin clubs worked very hard. Canvassing in the Dunmore area was done mostly by Volunteers in pairs; a man from the rural area usually being accompanied by a townsman. Each pair had a copy of the register and a notebook. The name of each voter canvassed was written into the notebook and for or against placed opposite the name. The notebooks were examined carefully with the result that all the canvassers were very thorough.⁶⁸

However, in County Galway, rallies addressed by Councillor Con Kennedy, election agent for Dr Brian Cusack, quickly became a popular social gathering for many people. Opposition supporters and canvassers adopted acute staunch positions while on the campaign trail. Similarly, the contest between Frank Fahy and William Duffy (incumbent) in Galway South was at times dogged. Remarkably, on election day, Michael Healy and his comrades marched into Loughrea to protect the ballot boxes, when they were attacked by former ex-British soldiers and their wives.⁶⁹ It appears that steering the women was Duffy's wife, fully determined to defend his husband's position. This is one example that suggests not all women were in favour of an independent Ireland and they were prepared to exert physical force if necessary. For example, Fr O'Meehan, Fahy's canvasser, was also struck on the head with a stone and his car windscreen broken with bottles thrown by the women.⁷⁰ Worth noting is that in the 'priest-ridden' Ireland of that time, they were not exempt from this aggression.⁷¹ The juxtaposition at this early stage in the campaign of both the political and violent approaches was to become a pattern for the future. The interaction of canvassers was to set the ground work for what later would become a guerrilla network. For some, this was the only tactic to achieve their goal, and the distraction of speechmaking or pompous rhetoric would only delay what they saw as the inevitable physical struggle.

The General Election in December 1918 brought about a political transformation in Ireland, a change that may have been predicted by some, yet still surprised many. Sinn Féin candidates convincingly usurped the IPP to become Ireland's largest nationalist party, with a total of seventy-three seats to six. It was considered to be

⁶⁸ Thomas Mannion, 21 April 1956 MACBB BMH, WS) No. 1408.

⁶⁹ Joseph Forde, Christina Cassidy Paul Manzor and David Ryan eds *The District of Loughrea Vol 1 History 1791-1918* (Loughrea: Loughrea History Project, 2003) 651

⁷⁰ Forde, Cassidy, Manzor and Ryan eds *The District of Loughrea*, 651

⁷¹ For examples of 'priest-ridden', see Kevin Smyth, 'Priests and People in Ireland' in *The Furrow*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (March, 1958), 135-152

'one of the greatest electoral landslides in Western Europe in the twentieth century'.⁷² The results confirmed the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord French's assertion that the populace were not content, and overnight changed the political mandate away from Home Rule to total separation from Britain. As a political transformation it would be the biggest for many years to come, however, delivering on their manifesto was to prove somewhat more difficult for republicans.

The result of the election was overwhelming: out of 105 seats, 73 seats were won by Sinn Féin, 6 by the IPP and 26 by the Unionists.⁷³ Winning 48% of the votes over the entire island and 65% in what later would become the Republic of Ireland, Sinn Féin's advantage lay in the policy, first past the post.⁷⁴ In Clifden, to celebrate the election result, Gerald Bartley 'lit a bonfire on the town's monument pedestal' and was promptly arrested, others 'placed candles in their windows' to display their satisfaction with the outcome.⁷⁵ There were four constituencies covering both town and county of Galway. Pádraic Ó Máille won the seat in Galway Connemara; Liam Mellows won unopposed for East Galway (also in Meath North); Dr Brian Cusack, North Galway and Frank Fahy, South Galway. This victory did not however quell the persistent speculation about how the party was going to serve their constituents, a question that was debated north and south.⁷⁶ The *Irish Times*, a pro-unionist paper, commented further with its analysis of the result, and suggested that Sinn Féin's promises were 'utterly incapable of fulfilment', and without living up to its newly-found responsibilities, would quickly clash with the forces of law and order. The report finished with the comment that 'for the moment sober and patriotic Irishmen can only hope that their country is passing through that darkest hour which precedes the dawn'.⁷⁷ In response to increasing criticism and speculation, nine days later an invitation was issued to successful candidates to attend 'Dáil Éireann as an independent Constituent Assembly of the Irish Nation'⁷⁸

⁷² J. Coakley, 'The election that made the First Dáil', in B. Farrell ed, *The Creation of the Dáil*, (Dublin: Blackwater, 1994) 31

⁷³ <http://www.ark.ac.uk/elections/h1918.htm> Accessed 20 July 2018.

⁷⁴ *Irish Times*, 8 December 2018

⁷⁵ Patricia Kilroy *The story of Connemara* (Dublin : Gill and Macmillan, 1989) 150.

⁷⁶ See the *Belfast Newsletter*, *Kerry People*, *Fermanagh Herald*, *Sligo Champion*, *Donegal News*, *Wicklow News* and *Ulster Herald*.

⁷⁷ *Irish Times*, 30 December 1918.

⁷⁸ Mitchell and Ó Snodaigh eds, *Irish Political Documents*, 54.

New Politics in Ireland

The pinnacle of Sinn Féin's policy was reached on 21 January 1919 with the convening of the first Dáil, a day that coincided with an ambush that resulted in the deaths of two police constables en route to Soloheadbeg Quarry, Co Tipperary. Although both events were meticulously planned, albeit separately, neither could have conceived that together they would establish another military campaign for Irish independence, one that was to have bitter consequences until its conclusion.

Unlike the 1916 Rising, the Volunteer leaders now decided to change tactics and use a dual strategy of sedition and politics. After such a decisive election victory, 'considered as a retrospective democratic endorsement of the Rising', confidence had grown that they had now secured the democratically elected political wing they sought within Sinn Féin.⁷⁹ They also succeeded in dispersing this political movement into every town and village around most of the country, excluding Ulster.⁸⁰ Their election promises were straightforward, namely to abstain from Westminster, establish an alternative constituent assembly and lobby the International Peace Conference at Versailles to recognise Ireland's right to independence. Even though Laffan describes the 1916 Rising as mostly a 'Dublin affair' with only a 'skirmish in Galway', the academic research produced during the local and county commemorations in 2016 demonstrated an alternative view.⁸¹ County Galway had proven its ability and willingness to engage in conflict beyond doubt, co-operation in the political arena, however, was also required.⁸² The British establishment had other ideas and what began as deterrents and restraints soon became far more sinister.

To some extent, one of the greatest triumphs of the election in 1918, was the exploitation of the British electoral mechanism against itself, thus returning 'the members of the first republican parliament in Ireland's history'.⁸³ It was a bold statement to both the British establishment and the British and Irish electorate that this campaign for independence needed serious consideration and would not be easily

⁷⁹ <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2018/12/11/1016527-the-most-momentous-irish-electoral-contest-of-the-20th-century/> Accessed 14 May 2019

⁸⁰ Sinn Féin may have replaced the IPP in Irish nationalist politics, however, the impact in Ulster was to influence the subsequent partition of Ireland and the creation of Northern Ireland.

⁸¹ Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland*, 43.

⁸² See Marie Mannion and Jimmy Laffey, eds, *Cumann na mBan : County Galway Dimensions* (Galway : Galway County Council, 2015) and Marie Mannion, ed, *Centenary reflections on the 1916 Rising : Galway County Perspectives* (Galway : Galway County Council, 2016)

⁸³ <https://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/920-first-dail-eireann-1919/289466-the-first-dail/> Accessed 26 July 2018.

dismissed. Some candidates such as Liam Mellows in Galway East were unopposed, as were many other SF candidates around the country. Once elected, the delegates then began to play their next card in the wider campaign. Firstly, they publicly abstained from taking their seats in Westminster and announced the historic first public Irish Assembly or Dáil Éireann. Behind the scenes, the Executive Committee conducted several meetings in order to formulate a plan to maximise the effect of this extraordinary event. The wording of documents, position of delegates and even the venue was deliberated and debated until nothing was left to chance. The Round Room, in Dublin's Mansion House, was chosen as the appropriate venue. This was (and still is) the official residence of the Lord Mayor of Dublin. The independent city councillor, Laurence O'Neill held many such events in this building and was 'conscious of his responsibility towards all the citizens'.⁸⁴ And this day was no different:

On the morning of 21 January 1919, a lunch was held in the Mansion House Supper Room for 400 repatriated prisoners of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and two hours later, the First Dáil had its inaugural meeting in the Mansion House Round Room.⁸⁵

Although meticulously planned and 'largely ceremonial',⁸⁶ this opening meeting was essential from many aspects. It was considered key to demonstrate defiance against the existing political order and utter opposition to Home Rule in any guise. Likewise, with over sixty journalists, all eager for their scoop, the opportunity to initiate an international propaganda campaign was exploited. This was considered crucial, for only that morning the *Irish Independent* had reported that censorship of the Irish press was to 'be succeeded by a military censorship'.⁸⁷ The leading newspapers of Great Britain and Ireland, and special correspondents from America, Canada, France, Spain, and Belgium gathered early and all took their positions in the orderly queue.⁸⁸

A crowd also began to line the streets early. This was a well-publicised event with 1,000 tickets issued to the public. A carnival atmosphere began to spread through the crowd.⁸⁹ Somewhat curious as to why the streets were 'decorated with Union Jacks and the flags of the Allies', onlookers began to speculate. Then, with over an hour until the doors opened, and to their delight, the crowd were entertained when the

⁸⁴ Mary Clark 'First Dáil', email, 2018.

⁸⁵ Clark 'First Dáil', email, 2018.

⁸⁶ Coleman, *The Irish Revolution*, 45.

⁸⁷ *Irish Independent* 21 January 1919

⁸⁸ *Irish Independent* 21 January 1919

⁸⁹ *Irish Independent* 21 January 1919

concluding reception of expatriated prisoners from Germany with band in tow, marched out of the Mansion House, towards the centre of the city.⁹⁰ This enhanced the anticipation, the *Evening Herald* reported that:

their telephone operator calculated that up to one o'clock today there must have been at least three dozen calls from different places, all from persons wanting to know:

How are things in Dublin?
How's the Dáil Éireann going on?
How many arrested?
What's happening at the Mansion House?
Are the prisoners out? ⁹¹

Speculation on how this occasion was to end was at fever pitch. Despite many of the delegates still imprisoned or quite possibly because of this, the event was marked with many dramatic moments throughout. Once the doors opened the Round Room was 'crowded in the space of twenty minutes', stewards swiftly seated everyone in an officious manner.⁹² Journalists in one section, clergy in another and even 'two American naval officers in uniform' joined the spectators but not before saluting the enthusiastic crowd.⁹³ The backdrop had been carefully set with reserved seating for 'members of the house' painstakingly positioned.⁹⁴ Then at 3:30pm precisely, the doors opened and in walked the delegates, or at least, the twenty-nine Sinn Féin members who were still at liberty.⁹⁵ At the head of this historic procession was Count Plunkett who opened the official proceedings by proposing Cathal Brugha as Ceann Comhairle or Chairman. The Connemara representative, Pádraic Ó Máille, seconded the motion to rapturous applause. As each name was called for attendance, 27 were 'i láthair' (present), others were 'as láthair' (not present) for those who remained interned, the repeated answer was 'faoi ghlas ag Gallaibh', 'imprisoned by the foreigner' or 'in jail'.⁹⁶ Dr Brian Cusack was one of those still in Holloway prison, Mellows remained in exile in America and Frank Fahy's whereabouts for the first historic Dáil are unknown. The mention of Sir Edward Carson's name was met by some heckling. Yet, apart from a formal refusal from Sir Robert Woods, the unionists were not present having ignored

⁹⁰ *Cork Examiner* 22 January 1919.

⁹¹ *Evening Herald* 22 January 1919.

⁹² *Cork Examiner* 22 January 1919.

⁹³ *Irish Independent*, 22 January 1919.

⁹⁴ *Cork Examiner* 22 January 1919.

⁹⁵ *Cork Examiner* 22 January 1919.

⁹⁶ Brain Farrell, ed., *The Creation of the Dáil: A Volume of Essays from the Thomas Davis Lectures* (Dublin: Blackwater Press, 1994), 2; *Irish Independent*, January 22, 1919.

the invitation entirely.⁹⁷ Significantly, each item on the agenda was conducted through Irish, with translations of specific statements in French and only lastly in English.

The four documents underpinning the foundation of this new parliament were introduced, The Constitution of Dáil Éireann, a Declaration of Independence, a Message to the Free Nations of the World, and the Democratic Programme. Each document outlined the intentions of the Dáil, the role of the newly democratically-elected Teachtaí or Delegates, the entitlement to independence, and the statement that the right had been denied for 'seven hundred years':

We solemnly declare foreign government in Ireland to be an invasion of our national right which we will never tolerate, and we demand the evacuation of our country by the English Garrison.

We claim for our national independence the recognition and support of every free nation in the world, and we proclaim that independence to be a condition precedent to international peace hereafter.⁹⁸

Once again, the phrase was translated to gain the full attention of the foreign journalists who attended, many of whom also covered the Peace Conference. Next was a 'greeting' or 'call' to the free nations of the world. It was an appeal, in effect, to muster recognition for 'Ireland's national status and her right to its vindication' and her right to attend the international Peace Conference.⁹⁹ The paper announced that the Irish nation can no longer ignore 'the arrogant pretensions of England founded in fraud and sustained only by an overwhelming military occupation'.¹⁰⁰ The final document presented was the Democratic Programme. This statement referred to the social and economic ideals and values of the new parliament and was intended to address the divide in the social classes in Ireland.

This Democratic Programme, which was in the main drafted by Thomas Johnson, Secretary of the Labour Party, was never fully accepted by the Sinn Féin party. Johnson along with other Labour members had agreed not to contest the election to allow a clear run for Sinn Féin. In an effort to soothe any tensions that might arise, the party was requested to compose this social programme. However, the first attempt was somewhat diluted and later referred to by Kevin O'Higgins as largely poetry.¹⁰¹ In fact,

⁹⁷ Farrell, ed., *The Creation of the Dáil*, 2; *Irish Independent*, 22 January 1919.

⁹⁸ <http://www.difp.ie/docs/1919/Declaration-of-independence/1.htm> Accessed 20 July 2018.

⁹⁹ *Irish Independent*, 22 January 1919.

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.difp.ie/docs/1919/Declaration-of-independence/1.htm> Accessed 20 July 2018.

¹⁰¹ Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine*, 404; Emmet O'Connor, 'Neither Democratic nor a Programme: the Democratic Programme of 1919', *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 40 Issue 157 (2016); Coleman, *The Irish Revolution*

the only policy from the published document ‘that was acted upon by the Dáil was the abolition of the Poor Law, which was finally achieved by the new Irish Free State Government in 1925’.¹⁰² As dramatically as it began, once the formal procedures were completed, the assembly concluded and all of the delegates left. In total, the event that changed Irish politics lasted one hour and thirty-five minutes.¹⁰³

The Dáil’s ‘claim to represent the majority of Irish nationalists was unarguable’ considering the election result.¹⁰⁴ A number of scholars have suggested that the sharp rise in support for Sinn Féin came under the threat of conscription, in addition to aligning themselves with other social groups such as, the clergy and women’s political groups.¹⁰⁵ Laffan expands this point noting that the timing of the conscription threat enabled Sinn Féin ‘to identify itself’ with the ‘national outburst of Anglophobia’ it provoked. They had ‘ideally placed [themselves] to harness a wave of emotion which was even stronger than that which had followed the Rising.’¹⁰⁶ However, it could be argued that those objecting to conscription had a legitimate fear for their menfolk and the unreasonable compulsory risk to their lives. Especially, as the enforcer was, for many, the British oppressor. In addition, a recent study by Alan de Bromhead and Alan Fernihough Hargaden has also explored the details for the success of Sinn Féin. Utilising, census data from the 1918 electoral register, local election registers and women voters, they have concluded that ‘the primary factor in the victory of Sinn Féin and the subsequent defeat of the IPP was the changed political climate as a result of the Easter Rising and the conscription crisis of 1918.’¹⁰⁷ They also established that ‘up to 70% of women eligible to vote in 1918 did not use [their] franchise’.¹⁰⁸ The evidence to why this is the case, is unknown, but one theory put forward is paternal influence.¹⁰⁹

Having succeeded principally by opposing conscription, once this threat was

and <https://www.thejournal.ie/readme/opinion-the-democratic-programme-of-the-first-dail-was-a-truly-radical-document-but-was-dismissed-by-one-td-at-the-time-as-largely-poetry-4450863-jan2019/> Accessed 22 January 2019.

¹⁰² Coleman, *The Irish Revolution*, 47.

¹⁰³ *Irish Independent*, 22 January 1919.

¹⁰⁴ Eunan O’Halpin, ‘Dáil’s Defiant ‘Declaration of Independence’’, *The Revolution Papers 1916-1923*, No. 19, May 10, 2016.

¹⁰⁵ For more analysis see Coleman, *The Irish Revolution, 1916-1923*, Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland*, McNamara, *War and Revolution in the West of Ireland* and Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence*.

¹⁰⁶ Laffan *The Resurrection of Ireland*:

¹⁰⁷ *Irish Times*, 5 December 2018

¹⁰⁸ *Irish Times*, 5 December 2018

¹⁰⁹ A short discussion occurred at ‘Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the First Dáil’ hosted by Galway County Council, 21 January 2019 around the subject of women not using their vote. The accepted consensus favoured the idea that male members of the family may have contributed to this, although motives seem to vary.

removed, two difficulties arose. How would the party and its supporters maintain a majority vote amongst the moderate voters, and how could this new government conduct parliamentary sessions with so many of its representatives still imprisoned? Undaunted by the prospect, the following day a temporary cabinet to oversee the next phase was put in place. It was expected to act immediately. Cabinet appointments included Cathal Brugha as President, Eoin MacNeill as Minister for Finance, Michael Collins as Minister for Home Affairs, Count Plunkett as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Richard Mulcahy as Minister for Defence. This first cabinet remained in place until 1 April 1919, when the prisoners were finally released and available to take up their posts.¹¹⁰ One of those prisoners was George Nicolls, MP, Solicitor and Coroner for West Riding District of County Galway.¹¹¹ He arrived home to Galway town in March 1919. Unlike the 1916 returnees, his arrival was greeted with rapturous celebration, with torch bearers lighting the streets all the way to his home. This was viewed as a victory for the Volunteers and one they exploited. The *Irish Independent* interviewed Nicolls whilst in his car and he stated that ‘Galway, in her message of defiance ... declared that Ireland would never be satisfied with anything less than an Irish Republic—they wanted no Home Rule or any other half measure’.¹¹² During the rally Fr John O’Meehan, now the C.C in Ragoon and Fr Grogan (parish unknown) spoke to the crowd. Both were influential amongst young Volunteers and once again did not hesitate to rally support from those who wanted to join the cause. In concluding his interview with the *Irish Independent*, Nicolls claimed that he and many of his comrades would be willing to spend decades more in prison if it meant Ireland’s freedom, they could not break his ‘spirit’, or the ‘spirit of the Irish people’.¹¹³

Peace Conference

Across the North Atlantic Ocean, the President of the United States of America (USA), Woodrow Wilson, unbeknown to himself, had given this new Dáil the hope and ambition to try its luck on a different political platform, one that would put the

¹¹⁰ Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* 404, https://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Historical_Information/History_of_Government/FirstD%C3%A1il.pdf Coleman, *The Irish Revolution*, 45.

¹¹¹ Galway Advertiser, Thu, Mar 31, 2016

¹¹² *Irish Independent* 12 March 1919.

¹¹³ *Irish Independent* 12 March 1919.

Irish question on the international stage.¹¹⁴ In his fourteen-point statement on a war settlement for Europe, he stated that ‘national aspirations must be respected; people may now be dominated and governed only by their own consent. Self-determination is not a mere phrase; it is an imperative principle of action.’¹¹⁵ This statement, alongside the newly independent Czechoslovak (Fig 4.1), was interpreted by the newly-elected leaders as an opportunity, to place Ireland’s case amongst other similar small nations that strived to achieve total autonomy and full independence. Their strategy was simply to lobby the US President, to support Ireland’s recently proclaimed independence at the Peace Conference. Unknown to them, Wilson had major health issues and needed Lloyd George’s full assistance and attention on the war negotiations. Nevertheless, Britain’s Prime Minister was in Paris from the opening of the conference on 12 January until mid-February and from 5 March until 29 June. He had become preoccupied and this left little room for domestic problems. He received complaints from King George V that political matters concerning Britain and Ireland were ‘paralysed’ in his absence.¹¹⁶ At a Sinn Féin meeting the following May, Dr Cusack MP for Galway North, spoke about his confidence that America would ‘not agree to any League of Nations [treaty] until this country secured independence’.¹¹⁷ Cusack also predicted that the ‘Irish people would have to go through a great deal of suffering before freedom was achieved’ and argued that they must be prepared for this.¹¹⁸ His faith in the American President’s assistance may have been more aspirational than realistic.

Nonetheless, all endeavours to secure a hearing in Paris failed, and, ironically, were in some ways hampered by delegates from the American Commission themselves. However, they did succeed in the propaganda war to have the matter fully raised amongst the journalists, many of whom watched the Irish situation unfold with interest. They managed to ‘make the Irish cause a subject of public discussion in Paris and the United States’, a debate that would also rage throughout Ireland and Britain¹¹⁹. A representative of this new Irish government was needed in America, one that could be respected and understood by everyone.

¹¹⁴ C. Desmond Greaves *Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution* (London: The Camelot Press Ltd, 1971) 178–9.

¹¹⁵ <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/1918-timeline-1.3449998> Accessed 1 June 2018.

¹¹⁶ Ronan Fanning, *Fatal Path: British Government and Irish Revolution, 1910-1922* (London: Faber & Faber, 2013), 191–2.

¹¹⁷ *Irish Independent* 7 May 1919.

¹¹⁸ *Irish Independent* 7 May 1919.

¹¹⁹ Francis M. Carroll, ‘The American Commission on Irish Independence and the Paris Peace Conference of 1919’ *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1985), 118.

In the meantime, plots were well underway at this point by Michael Collins and Harry Boland for an audacious escape from Lincoln Prison of Éamon de Valera. The breakout was successful and ‘seen as a brilliant example of Volunteer courage, skill and efficiency’.¹²⁰ However, another extensive outbreak of the influenza pandemic that swept the globe in 1918, claimed the life of the Irish political prisoner Pierce McCann, a Tipperary TD. Thomas McInerney from Gort Battalion had been in prison with McCann and recalled him being a very devout man. He spent all his time praying or learning the Irish language, when he would find a difficult word, he would write it down and pin it to the wall until he had memorised it.¹²¹ In a decree, Galway County Council wanted to place on record ‘its sense of great loss that Ireland has sustained on his lamented death.’ He was a cultured, high-minded and patriotic Irishman who died while a political prisoner in Gloucester Prison having been detained without trial.¹²² His death quickly prompted the release of all those imprisoned under the DORA ‘German Plot’ roundup. Consequently, the next sitting of the Dáil saw fifty-two delegates attend, and a new cabinet selected. This new administration served from 1 April 1919-26 August 1921, throughout the length of the War of Independence. De Valera, now free, became President, alongside Arthur Griffith, Home Affairs; Cathal Brugha, Defence; George Noble Plunkett, Foreign Affairs; Countess Markievicz, Labour (the first female minister in either Britain or Ireland); Michael Collins, Finance; William T. Cosgrave, Local Government; Ernest Blythe, Trade & Commerce; Seán O’Ceallaigh, Minister for Irish.¹²³ All of these figures had gained a certain notoriety since the 1916 Rising.¹²⁴

Disruption to the Establishment

Despite all the pomp and ceremony at its first sitting, this fledgling Dáil had some serious issues to overcome. Several of the representatives were also Volunteers and/or members of the IRB. Leadership and hierarchy differed depending on which

¹²⁰ *An tOglach*: Official Organ of the Irish Volunteers Vol. 1 No. 12 1919.

¹²¹ Thomas McInerney 22 April 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No.1150.

¹²² GCCA (Galway County Council Archives) GCI-O3(b) 438.

¹²³ https://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Historical_Information/History_of_Government/First_D%C3%A1il.html
Accessed 10 July 2018.

¹²⁴ By 1922, the county of Galway had become one constituency and it was not until January 1922 that Patrick Hogan a Galway TD was promoted to the cabinet, in the position of Minister of Agriculture.

group was assembling.¹²⁵ Conflicting commands and priorities were apparent and a resulting ambush at Soloheadbeg, County Tipperary, discussed in more detail later in the next chapter, was one of the inevitable outcomes. Laffan states that ‘the overlap between the two bodies was so thorough as to create widespread confusion. At times the public needed to be reminded of each organisation[’s] particular responsibilities and of the principal differences’.¹²⁶ The Dáil did set out to resolve some of these issues over the following months. Some form of action was needed to curb over enthusiastic Volunteers and create confidence in the government’s policies and resolutions.

Two of the actions taken immediately were: firstly, a proclaimed peaceful boycott against many of the British administrative offices, the RIC (and their families); and secondly, they introduced Arbitration Courts to resolve disputes. The latter have been described by Laffan as ‘an independent national system of courts.’¹²⁷ The boycott or isolation of the enemy began by ostracising the police force, coastguard and lightkeepers. In reality this meant that daily supplies, of tea, eggs, milk, butter or turf/coal, could no longer be sold to any serving member or indeed any relatives of these men¹²⁸ Equally, no co-operation, professionally, socially or otherwise, would be given to the police force.¹²⁹ Furthermore, many young men home briefly on holiday, were often spoken to by the local Volunteers and coerced into resigning from the force, in some cases leaving them little choice. This had the inevitable consequence of shutting down the valuable intelligence available to the RIC and likewise of making family and work life difficult. Families that had once been the pillar of the community now were seen as the enemy. This, unsurprisingly, resulted in many seeking early retirement or some simply leaving to find work in other counties, either in Britain or as far away as Canada, and over time this caused a steady decline in the force.

In the same ways and of equal success, was the community-based system of arbitration, endorsed by Arthur Griffith. He authorised a court for every county and placed himself in the chair of the overseeing working group. Over the next year, the committee responsible produced ‘reports, schemes, suggestions, and proposals ...

¹²⁵ Darrell Figgis, *Recollections of the Irish War* (New York: Doubleday, 192?), 243. Maryann Valiulis, *Portrait of a Revolutionary: General Richard Mulcahy and the Founding of the Irish Free State* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1992), 40–43.

¹²⁶ Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland*, 196.

¹²⁷ Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland*, 310.

¹²⁸ William Sheehan, *British Voices from the Irish War of Independence 1918–1921* (Cork: Collins Press, 2007), 76, Coleman, *The Irish Revolution*, 67.

¹²⁹ Coleman, *The Irish Revolution*, 67.

[these were] mulled over, amended and withdrawn.’ Finally, twelve months later, the courts of Dáil Éireann were established.¹³⁰ Owing to the persistence of agrarian agitation in the West of Ireland, particularly in Counties Clare and Galway, and prior to the establishment of the Dáil Judicial System, an *ad hoc* tribunal system had come into place. These tribunals were colloquially referred to as either Sinn Féin or Republican courts and remained in place until June 1920 when a Decree was issued from Dáil Éireann to establish Courts of Justice. However, despite their success, violence, cattle drives and the levelling or removal of boundary walls continued. Not everyone set stock in the ways of Sinn Féin. Seán O’Neill felt uncomfortable on many occasions sitting in mass as the local P.P. ‘thundered, threatened and condemned ... the organisation of which [he] was a member’.¹³¹ He felt that everyone in Mountbellew church was pointing at him and saying ‘there he is, that fellow with the long mop of hair who works in Kenny’s’.¹³²

Despite the success of the election, there were those who still believed that physical force would be necessary to secure independence. The Volunteers had become impatient with the impasse that had developed once the gruelling pleas to Woodrow Wilson and other Allies attending the Paris Peace Conference failed. In April 1919, a lengthy piece in *An tÓglach*, the official organ of the Irish Volunteers, stated that, ‘the League of Nations which is talked about promises to be a sham or worse. In the future as in the past nations will win and maintain their freedom by the sword and the threat of the sword, by war and by readiness for war’.¹³³ The two contrasting opinions on how to obtain national independence is exemplified with the additional following sentence: ‘The nation for which no shots ring out and for which no steel is reddened will lie like a bone in a kennel.’¹³⁴ In May 1919, another statement was published, this time the message was clear and unequivocal, it stated,

Irish Volunteers have considered themselves and acted as the soldiers of the Irish Republic engaged in open warfare with the forces of the foreign usurpation. The whole Irish people have now formally and officially endorsed this attitude. They have declared by vote their acceptance of the Irish Republic as the authority claiming their allegiance; they have constituted that authority in tangible form by their election of an Irish Republican Parliament. A constitution has been adopted,

¹³⁰ Mary Kotsonouris ‘The Courts of Dáil Éireann’, *The Creation of the Dáil*, 92. See also Figure 5.1 Breakdown of the Dáil Judicial System that was implemented from June 1920

¹³¹ Sean O’Neill, 27 July 1955 BMW WS 1219

¹³² Sean O’Neill, 27 July 1955 BMW WS 1219

¹³³ *An tÓglach*, Vol.II. No.1 15 April 1919, 1

¹³⁴ *An tÓglach*, Vol.II. No.1 15 April 1919, 1.

an Executive Government appointed, and the Government and Parliament of the Irish Republic have formally recognised the existence of a state of war between the Irish Republic and the English invader. That being so, the Irish Volunteers, the Army of Ireland, becomes for the time being the most important and essential national service of the moment and must remain so until the British Army of Occupation is withdrawn or expelled from our country.¹³⁵

This show of a united front was an essential morale booster and a legitimising tactic, intended for both Sinn Féin community activists and Volunteers alike. However, Michael Collins, now Finance Minister, had a hard task ahead of him. If he and his colleagues were to sustain an alternative government and fund the administrative departments as announced, money was needed, and quickly. The two heaviest demands on expenditure throughout the period were ‘the military resources of the Irish Volunteers and IRB, plus the diplomatic resources of the Irish delegation to the Paris [P]eace [C]onference.’¹³⁶ His financial experience in London provided him with some competency, the fiscal or economic qualities he lacked was provided by others he recruited along the way. J.J. McElligott and Joseph Brennan, two of the most prominent converts from the civil service, and remained as government advisors for over thirty years.¹³⁷ Throughout the War of Independence, Collins collected money from anywhere and everywhere he could, often utilising the same network of election canvassers to collect in their areas. In Galway, this task was taken up in several parishes around the county. Colm Ó Gaora points out how Collins ‘divided each county and electoral area into various smaller sub-divisions and selected individuals for each area whose responsibility it would be to raise money on the ground’.¹³⁸ He explains how he posed as a traveling salesman to avoid suspicion, even filling a suitcase with samples. Although this did on occasion cause doubt, he still managed to raise £4,000 in six months covering North County Galway and Connemara, his two designated areas.¹³⁹ In east Galway, Sean O’Neill explains how, ‘the Dáil Loan and all the work it entailed is in full swing. Organisers, canvassers and collectors are moving from house to house and how the funds roll in, not in silver, but in bundles of notes, daily.’¹⁴⁰ Thomas Reidy in South Galway collected in his area of Duras whilst others such as Mikie Hynes and

¹³⁵ *An tÓglach*, Vol.II. No.2 15 May, 1919. 1

¹³⁶ John Considine, ‘Michael Collins and the Roots of Irish Public Finance’ (2004) *Department of Economics, University College Cork, Working Paper Series*, Number 04-03, 4.

¹³⁷ <http://www.generalmichaelcollins.com/life-times/finance/dept-of-finance/> Accessed 20 August 2018.

¹³⁸ Mícheál Ó hAodha and Ruán O’Donnell eds., *On the Run: the Story of an Irish Freedom Fighter* A translation of Colm Ó Gaora’s *Mise* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1969) 265-6.

¹³⁹ Ó hAodha and O’Donnell eds *On the Run: the Story of an Irish Freedom Fighter* 265–6.

¹⁴⁰ Sean O’Neill, 27 July 1955 MA, BMW 1219, 66.

Padraig Kilkelly collected in Kinvara.¹⁴¹ In Dunmore the Dáil loan was repaid within the year, Tommy Mannion recollected that the funds, £120, were subsequently handed over to the parish church for repairs.¹⁴²

With agrarian agitation at such a height, the funding of a new Land Purchase Scheme was seen to be of critical importance. Early in 1919, Sinn Féin was anxious to curb this ever-growing land movement in order to keep the focus on the political struggle. A National Land Bank was formed to aid the landless gain access to a purchase scheme. Miss Alice Cashel and Fr O Meehan were elected Parish Justices for Connemara. The latter once again proving his commitment to the struggle. They were tasked with settling a land dispute with a local landowner in Clifden, Toby Joyce. Once the case was agreed, she travelled to Dublin to see the Manager of the Land Bank. After she put her 'case before him', Cashel managed to obtain 'the necessary thousands to buy the land from Joyce.' In turn, they 'bought the estate, stripped the land, and transferred the land to the tenants.'¹⁴³ This was an added incentive in the west and several Co-operative Farming Societies were set up in Galway in areas such as Woodlawn, Kilconnell, Clifden and Headford.

The Volunteers around Galway mobilised in an efficient manner. Seán O'Neill, Adjutant of the Tuam 1st Western Battalion later recalled, 'official receipts are issued and accounts are kept. More concerts and ceilidhe are run for the Volunteer Arms' fund. We all have a busy time (see B30).'¹⁴⁴ A short film entitled 'The Dáil Bonds Film 1919' was produced as a propaganda piece.¹⁴⁵ It depicted Collins and several prominent republicans or 'notabilities' receiving bonds, across the block upon which Robert Emmet lost his head in 1803 with the backdrop of St Enda's, Rathfarnham. The propaganda department used familiar republican faces such as the mothers of Patrick Pearse and Michael Hanrahan, the widows of Galway-born Éamonn Ceannt, Tom Clarke and The O'Rahilly, and several others to encourage others into contributing to the loan. The film also depicted a letter from Bishop Michael Fogarty of Killaloe which stated:

Dear Mr. secretary, I beg to apply for £100 of Irish Loan and herewith enclose

¹⁴¹ Thomas Reidy 19 November 1956 MA, BMW 1555 8

¹⁴² Hubert Birmingham *Dunmore A History* (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 2012) 292

¹⁴³ Alice Cashel, 6 February 1950 MACBB BMH, WS No. 366.

¹⁴⁴ Seán O'Neill, 27 July 1955, MACBB BMH, WS No. 1219

¹⁴⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5CfrkvE7_hs Accessed 22 August 2018, <http://www.tcd.ie/irishfilm/print.php?search=keyword&q=dail&> Accessed 22 August 2018.

cheque for 75 per cent of that amount. This Loan will rapidly fill its object appeals to every man that wishes Ireland well. Now is the time to give proof of the faith that is in us. We must not in this national enterprise fall behind our great American friends, it will be a shame to do so ... Every certificate taken will be a stone in that grand edifice which honest men all over the world desire to see erected; it should be the pride of every Irishman to hold one of these certificates.¹⁴⁶

Fogarty was a firm supporter of the republican position and insisted that Irish nationalists 'had only to remain steadfast to win a united Ireland'.¹⁴⁷ The register of bond certificates was issued in units of £1, £5, £10, £20, £50 and £100. Twenty-five percent was to be paid initially, the next twenty-five by the 1 August 1919 and the remainder the following November. With an initial sharp impetus, the bond sale was a success and commended by the acting President, Arthur Griffith, to be 'one of the most extraordinary feats in the country's history'.¹⁴⁸ This indeed was an astonishing success. While Collins may have fronted the idea and oversaw its execution, as mentioned earlier, subscriptions came in from every constituency. One of the reasons for the success of the bond sale was that some of the funding raised went to both the courts and the Land Bank, both of which were needed in the subsequent months, particularly in County Galway.

The court system was to prove highly successful in its work when it came to mediating resolutions amongst disputants and its undermining of British authority, at both the regional level and in the powerful administration offices of Dublin Castle. On several occasions even local landowners resorted to utilising the courts and in some difficult cases, even had RIC escorts to protect them. In addition, the most remote areas had access to a Republican court. Agrarian agitation continued to cause issues in County Galway. Frank Fahy speaking at one of his election rallies in 1918, justified the land seizures as 'historical retribution for post-Famine clearances'.¹⁴⁹ However, he moderated this in light of the clerical presence on stage with the caution, that he did not condone the 'indiscriminate seizure of farms'.¹⁵⁰

Many farm labourers and small landowners in County Galway initially used the soft approach of the Sinn Féin policy in acquiring land to their advantage. Then over time

¹⁴⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5CfrkvE7_hs Accessed 22 August 2018,

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.dib.ie/biography/fogarty-michael-a3307> Accessed 14 February 2022

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wNzSY-cUh20&t=111s> Accessed 22 August 2018.

¹⁴⁹ McNamara, *War and Revolution in the West of Ireland Galway 1913–1922*, 110.

¹⁵⁰ McNamara, *War and Revolution in the West of Ireland Galway 1913–1922*, 110.

the possibilities of owning land became a real likelihood. Intimidation and force against neighbours became commonplace. During the Galway Spring Assizes in March 1919, Sir William H. Mahon, an active unionist made the following announcement:

At Menlo, near Galway, there have been several threatening notices, and at Tuam a threatening notice was sent to Mr. Comerford, the District Inspector, in which the threat was a to repeat Tipperary in Tuam ... In the West Riding there are three people who require constant police protection. There are still 37 people who have to be protected by police patrols ... In the East Riding there were two people requiring constant police protection, and there are still 212 people who require patrols for protection.¹⁵¹

The successive Land Acts had not been able or capable of appeasing everyone, and this included elected members of Sinn Féin, many of whom were involved in the land agitation. This was not about independence or the republic, it was simply about the acquisition of land. Campbell, quoting from the 'monthly reports', states that in County Galway, 'in the seventeen months between May 1916 and December 1918 the membership of Sinn Féin in Galway expanded from 200 (in one branch) to 7,530 (in eighty-four branches).'¹⁵² Many of the new members had been associated with the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Tom Kenny's secret society. The demand for land was, for some, at the core to their politics and agitation. Campbell continued that 'the extraordinary expansion of Sinn Féin in Galway can be attributed largely to the party's involvement in agrarian agitation during the spring of 1918.'¹⁵³ As intimidation was at the core of feuds, it was not until 1920, that the Dáil courts were considered fully utilised by all social classes.

In September 1919, Dáil Éireann was finally banned and forced underground, alongside other dissident groups. Its meetings became so sporadic and TDs met so rarely, that some complained it felt like they had abstained from both Dublin, and Westminster alike.¹⁵⁴ In Galway, as in other areas, the rural district councils (Ballinasloe, Gort, Galway Loughrea, Mountbellew, Tuam, and Clifden) and Boards of Guardians were now controlled by Sinn Féin. And although they pledged their allegiances to the Dáil, this had the consequence of a sharp decline in their budgets. Collection of rates was proving difficult and the Dáil simply did not have the financial resources to compensate or support the many responsibilities held by the councils,

¹⁵¹ *Irish Times* 27 March 1919.

¹⁵² Fergus Campbell, *Land and Revolution* (Oxford: University Press, 2005), 222.

¹⁵³ Campbell, *Land and Revolution*. 222

¹⁵⁴ *Irish Independent* 12 December 1919

including Galway. In addition, the War of Independence was causing huge damage and affecting the lives of the ordinary citizens, together with personal injury. Roads, bridges and housing blown up or destroyed by fire required repair and or recompense, none of which could be met by the now financially depleted councils.¹⁵⁵

An essential consideration to note is that while the War of Independence raged, the restrictions on movements was arduous for everyone. Nevertheless, the Dáil and its administration survived. With constraints on everyday life, including sporting events, such as GAA fixtures (an anticipated event in every rural town), the ordinary civilian had to keep constant vigilance for fear of breaking some law or directive. Despite all of this, the alternative nationalist administration made up of officials, clerks, rate collectors, secretaries, finance advisors and many more ordinary men and women managed underground in sometimes total secrecy, to provide just that, an alternative.

Conclusion

The time period that spanned the arrest and imprisonment of Irish Volunteers post 1916 Rising, the General Election of 1918 and the early months of the War of Independence, in essence, laid down the foundations for what developed into a guerrilla war. As matters transpired the initial struggle was not conducted on a battlefield but rather through civil disobedience, the creation of an alternative government, and strikes by Volunteers (ambushes, sabotage, hit and run tactics). Notably, the widespread arrests, internments and imprisonment of Volunteers during this period, pre-War of Independence, presented opportunities not only to continually defy the British authorities but to exploit the growing sympathy of the public. It was shortly after the First World War had ended, when a general election was called in Britain and Ireland for December 1918. The timing was perfect for the newly- invigorated Sinn Féin party. Having established themselves amongst many rural and urban parishes during the organisation's rapid expansion, Sinn Féin went on to win the overall majority in Ireland and declared that they now held a mandate from the people. They understood this election success as validating the introduction of a provisional government.

¹⁵⁵ Coleman, *The Irish Revolution*, 63.

However, whilst politics was not always seen by the 1916 veterans as the desired method for gaining Irish independence, it was while contesting each by-election and the Sinn Féin 1918 election victory, that progressed and crafted their negotiating skills within their home parishes. Their success is indisputable. The door-to-door canvassing, social functions, and the Dáil loans drive, maintained an energy that continually fostered the impetus to forge ahead with the nationalist campaign for independence. However, discord over agrarian issues, had at times escalated in the west, especially County Galway. This demonstrates that not all Volunteers had national interest at the heart of their campaign, but proved to be opportunists.

Land disputes and cattle drives in County Galway were commonplace and at times violent. This became an added complication when situations went awry. Nonetheless, Sinn Féin also derived support from those involved in land agitation. Yet, due to the scope and limitations of this study, it is not possible to include a comprehensive account of this subject here.¹⁵⁶ It is, however, important to acknowledge the mistrust and anxiety that resulted from the actions taken by local Volunteers. Land ownership, poverty, landlords and redistribution which Campbell has referred to as national, provincial, county and village politics, all contributed to agrarian conflict.¹⁵⁷ Yet, it is important to recognise that Sinn Féin needed to attempt to resolve the various disputes to gain the collective support from those involved. Hence the *ad hoc* arbitration courts, a system that was introduced in the West initially, and included a locally-sourced Volunteer police force with assigned areas for incarceration. Gradually the arbitration system gained a foothold and soon became the mediation choice for many disputes, even amongst the landed gentry. This was a significant turn of events as Sinn Féin steadily embedded itself within the foundations of every community in County Galway. Later, when Volunteers were forced to go underground, it was within these communities that they sought shelter.

Similarly, once the British Prime Minister Lloyd George announced that he was calling a general election for December 1918, Sinn Féin seized the chance to exercise their new found alliances and achieve a victory. Its electoral success was overwhelming and changed the political landscape of Ireland. They had been provided with the

¹⁵⁶ The various nuances are, however, intertwined in other historians work such as Ó Tuathaigh, McNamara, Varley, Fitzpatrick and Guinnane. Their works are crucial to understanding the complex nature of land disputes.

¹⁵⁷ Campbell, *Land and Revolution*, 3

democratic endorsement to establish Dáil Éireann and proclaim a republic. As their mandate had promised, MPs refused to take their seats in Westminster and convened the First Dáil Éireann on 21 January 1919. Newspapers from all four provinces wrote about the dramatic events. The *Irish Times*, influenced by its pro-unionist ideology, speculated how this disrupted assembly could continue with so many of them still in gaol. The *Irish Independent* reported that a special correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* in Dublin had ridiculed the assembly and referred to it as ‘window dressing’ and ‘ways will be found to deal with it’.¹⁵⁸ Encouraging such public discourse was intended. There seemed little point in staging such events if interest in them was confined to their own supporters. Consequently, the propaganda tactics directed towards the domestic and international audience had flourished and the media scrutiny was now directed at what would the Members of Parliament do in response. Sinn Féin’s democratic political stance was formed and with it a certain legitimacy amongst the public.

However, in County Tipperary, the other incident that happened on the same day, the shooting of two RIC policemen, was to also create reverberations throughout the country. Speculation provided by reporting newspapers captured the event as another strike on the path to Irish independence. Furthermore, this deliberate attack by Volunteers sent a signal to Sinn Féin and its members that not everyone had non-aggressive intentions. It was a direct prompt to other Volunteers, such as those in Galway, to begin their campaign.

Likewise, quite quickly it was apparent that this new Dáil would urgently need to be funded. Consequently, by utilising their existing Sinn Féin clubs, a process began whereby Dáil bonds were sold in the same parishes they canvassed. Additionally, in County Galway, fundraising concerts and ceildhe were held with many neighbouring communities attending to offer support. This would continue throughout the period of the War of Independence, developing relationships that would later explain how easily they interacted and shared resources required for raids. At this point, the rural district councils in most of the country were under Sinn Féin control and had pledged allegiance to the new Dáil Éireann, despite the financial difficulties they faced with the ongoing war. Now that the anti-establishment tactics of boycotting and passive resistance had taken effect, the British government had no alternative but to introduce

¹⁵⁸ *Irish Independent*, 21 January 1919

counter measures to try and subdue the growing tensions. The next two chapters will further explore these strands and seek to uncover the local histories of the War of Independence in County Galway in two phases from, 21 January 1919–20 March 1920 and from, 21 March 1920–11 July 1921.

**Chapter 5. Local Histories of the War of Independence
in County Galway 21 January 1919–20 March 1920**

On 21 January 1919, a small group of local IRA Volunteers in County Tipperary made the unsanctioned decision to ambush a consignment of explosives in mid transport to the local quarry in Soloheadbeg. Two of the police escorts were killed. The same day, Irish candidates who had been elected in the General Election of 1918, refused to recognise the Parliament in Westminster and instead assembled as a revolutionary parliament called Dáil Éireann. These two events mark the onset of the War of Independence in Ireland and also signify the two distinct strategies that impacted the subsequent struggle for independence. As noted in Chapter 1, the *first aim of this study is to furnish new local histories of the War of Independence in County Galway, from 1919–1921*. In addressing this aim, this chapter utilises a broad range of sources, to examine key episodes in the history of the War of Independence in County Galway from 21 January 1919–20 March 1920. Furthermore, presenting relevant events as they unfolded in other areas of the country provides an emphasis on what occurred in County Galway. Specifically focusing on occurrences in Galway during this period affords the opportunity to contextualise and chronicle this conflict in relation to the wider national narrative. For instance, did the repercussions of the ambush at Soloheadbeg reverberate in County Galway? Sinn Féin had entered the political arena with what could be deemed as resolute electoral promises, once they pledged to ‘abstain from Westminster and create a constituent assembly in Dublin, how did Volunteers in Galway react?

Understandably, simmering under the political ambitions of several activists was also an ambition to reignite the passions of rebellion. Inextricably linked with the bitter aftermath of executions and imprisonment, this sense of yearning also lingered from the aborted opportunity of participation in the apparent failure of the 1916 Rising. Some of the Volunteers returned from their various prisons reinvigorated and ready to forge ahead, others returned broken and despondent. Despite any reservations and motivated by the overwhelmingly successful election, the more militant Volunteers probed their next fomentation of discontent. Only this time, the strategy demanded a total separation from the British administrative establishment with no more promises of the half measures implicit in Home Rule, a political settlement that was never delivered.

Notably, amongst the Volunteers that returned to County Galway, many encountered a disorganised and depleted organisation in ruins. Somewhat more

troubling for some was this 'change in sentiment', which meant they would also have to embrace the new political agenda.¹ In reality, their incarceration period had prepared them to engage in a more aggressive role. However, it was not too long before they began a twofold campaign, firstly, to collect whatever guns and ammunition was available to them and secondly, to sign up new Sinn Féin members. Many of the early attacks on RIC barracks in 1919 reflected the strength of Volunteers and strong Sinn Féin membership such as that in the south and east of County Galway. These were established areas of high activity prior to the 1916 Rising and returning veterans had pre-existing networks that still possessed arms. They developed a ruthless campaign against the RIC that proved very effective, and before long police numbers decreased rapidly. Boycotts, harassment, intimidation of families and generally threatening behaviour was widespread throughout the country.² Recruitment had almost stalled. This depletion of police strength and morale forced the British establishment to seek recruits amongst those returning from the war, many from mainland Britain.³ Those outsiders and their orders to suppress the IRA, furthered a change in the course of the War of Independence in Ireland and contributed to a phase of guerrilla warfare that neither side could have predicted.

A Return to Conflict

Many of the veterans of the 1916 Rising who returned from British prisons, were resolute in their ambitions to continue the fight and vigorously sought opportunities to engage once again in Ireland's struggle for independence. Some were totally committed to a political agenda, others needed to be convinced. Many felt that building a fighting army was ultimately the only way to achieve their goal and pursuing a political agenda would only delay matters. However, having previously displayed their rebellious characteristics, some Volunteers were immediately placed under surveillance when they returned from detention. Likewise, owing to his stand in Galway during the 1916 Rising, Liam Mellows was forced to flee to America unable to return for fear of execution. As a result, a new leader was required in County Galway to re-organise the men and women and those under close watch would have to curtail any overtly

¹ Marie McNamara and Maura Madden *Beagh: A History & Heritage* (Athlone: Temple Printing Ltd, 1995) 114

² W. J. Lowe, 'Who Were the Black-and-Tans?' *History Ireland*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Autumn, 2004) 47

³ Lowe, 'Who Were the Black-and-Tans?', 47

sedition behaviours. Larry Lardner, a prominent Volunteer during Easter 1916, would have been an obvious choice as he was perceived as a strong leader. However, he was still imprisoned in Wormwood Scrubs at this time. Therefore it fell to three prominent Volunteers, Eamonn Corbett, Pat 'the Hare' Callanan and Mattie Neilan to gather the fragmented companies under one battalion, at least until strong leadership could be put into place.⁴ Martin Dolan commented that:

Reorganisation began immediately with Pat Callanan of Killeeneen and Pádraig Fahy of Kilbeacanty doing trojan work in persuading the returned prisoners to take up their weapons again, and in enlisting others who had not previously taken part. Contact was made with Gort and Galway and two other battalions came into existence, while the movement spread slowly but surely throughout the country.⁵

One of the first meetings was held in Keane's public house (see AI), home of Joe Howley in Oranmore after his release in 1917 and it was agreed to gather whatever battalions still existed into one brigade under Seamus Murphy OC.⁶ Murphy was a veteran of the 1916 Rising and was considered by Dublin GHQ to be a good replacement for Liam Mellows, at least while he remained in exile. Lardner, although still imprisoned, was appointed Vice OC with Mattie Niland as Brigade Adjutant, Séan Broderick, as Brigade Quartermaster and finally Joe Howley became Director of Communications and Intelligence.⁷ Also, despite the deportation order which instructed him to 'take up residence within five miles of the town of Portadown in the County of Armagh, Pat (the Hare) Callanan was appointed Brigade Chief of Scouts.⁸ Unfortunately, Murphy soon became an unpopular commander, he was considered too conservative and too cautious. He refused to authorise many of the initiatives put forward by company leaders, citing several unworkable restrictions. The Volunteers became frustrated, as every plan put forward was rejected on some grounds. Even orders that had come directly from leaders in Dublin GHQ were subjected to rigorous scrutiny and the opportunity of surprise was quickly lost. Commandant Gilbert Morrissey, a well-respected officer openly criticised Murphy when addressing a body of men prior to a planned raid. His criticism lay in the conditions that were put forward

⁴ Martin Dolan, 'Connacht: Galway 1920–1921' *The Capuchin Annual* 1970, 386.

⁵ Dolan, 'Connacht: Galway 1920–1921', 386.

⁶ Brenda Furey, *Oranmore Maree: a History of a Cultural and Social Heritage* (Galway: Brenda Furey, 1991) 64

⁷ Patrick Callanan, 26 October 1950, MACBB BMH, WS No. 448 Mattie is also spelled Matty or Martin in some Witness Statements, however, here the spelling will stay as Mattie.

⁸ Patrick Callanan, 26 October 1950, MACBB BMH, WS No. 448 Deportation was used as an alternative to detention to prevent known militant Volunteers from staying in their community.

by Murphy. He claimed that Murphy's restrictions regarding the attack, 'were so impossible that he could not see his way to carry on with it'.⁹ Some of these impractical conditions remained in Daniel Kearns' mind many years later when he recorded them in his Witness Statement:

(1) The attack was to be commenced at midnight and concluded not later than 12.25 a.m.

(2) The Battalion O/C. was to be held responsible for any casualties suffered by the attacking party.

(3) All the attacking party were to be masked.¹⁰

The criticism continued, and was exacerbated by the 'German Plot' arrests in May 1918, when experienced leaders were picked up. Dr Brian Cusack, a committed republican, was one of those arrested along with at least thirty others. He recalled that twelve of them were eventually taken to Birmingham prison where the conditions were not good.¹¹ Life was miserable and one prisoner, Count Plunkett, felt his mind was beginning to wander in such a dire environment. George Nicolls on the other hand had a strategy to keep up his moral:

Whiskey or spirits were not permitted to be taken into his Majesty's Prisons, but wines and beer was. I wrote to a friend of mine, a very fine character in Galway and who was afterwards shot by the Auxiliary Police. His name was Michael Walsh. He replied to my letter and stated that he was sending us on some wines I asked him to include some of the sherry that Nicholls was fond of. A small case duly arrived with a covering letter and one of the bottles was masked "Sherry – Olorosa" This was whiskey and I can assure you was much enjoyed by Count Plunkett and Nicholl.¹²

The prisoners knew to hold their nerve; several sympathisers on the outside were arduously campaigning on their behalf. Likewise, Marie Coleman asserts that, if 'the German plot arrests represented an act of revenge by the [British] government on Sinn Féin for the humiliation of conscription, the long-term effect was counter-productive'.¹³ The arrests, exacted by the Crown forces, in reality only bolstered the Volunteers' intent and revitalised their belligerence towards local community policemen. Despite being an unintended consequence, the government did succeed in one thing, according to Ronan Fanning, 'the way was now clear for a draconian policy

⁹ Daniel Kearns, 9 March 1955, MACBB BMH, WS No. 1124.

¹⁰ Daniel Kearns, 9 March 1955, MACBB BMH, WS No. 1124.

¹¹ Dr Brian Cusack, 9 October 1952, MACBB BMH, WS No. 736. Also, there are several variations of the surname Nicholls, Nichols and Nicols, for this study Nicolls will be used.

¹² Dr Brian Cusack, 9 October 1952, MACBB BMH, WS No. 736

¹³ Marie Coleman, *The Irish Revolution, 1916-1923* (London: Routledge, 2014) 40

in Ireland.’¹⁴

Although republicans suppressed the urge to instigate a more aggressive approach during the period between 1918 and early 1919, they concentrated substantial efforts on establishing and stabilising their political platform. Efforts to secure a widespread public mandate from the people inevitably delayed the reconstruction of the military side of the Volunteers. In as much as they held ‘tremendous regard for the intelligence, clear-sightedness, integrity and zeal’ of leaders in Sinn Féin, some Volunteers in reality were highly sceptical that a political process would work.¹⁵ However, nationalist leaders were given some hope during a prominent visit from the American Commission on Irish Independence in April 1919, and their report reflected this.¹⁶ Conversely, as Marie Coleman contends, the report only resulted in annoying both the British and American Governments and ‘destroyed any chance of the Sinn Féin delegation being received in Paris.’¹⁷ *The London Times* ‘adjudged [the commission] to “have done more political harm in one week than British statesmanship can expect to undo in many months”.’¹⁸ The Volunteers’ scepticism in making Ireland’s case for independence ‘to the post-war Paris Conference transpired to be true, as the delegation failed to even present their case. Efforts to secure an audience with President Woodrow Wilson, was according to C. Desmond Greaves, deemed a ‘fiasco’.¹⁹

Discouraged at being unable to secure a hearing in Paris, Seumus Robinson, reflected that this ‘removed the likelihood of a peaceful resolution to Irish independence aspirations’ and thereby paved the ‘way for an armed republican insurrection’.²⁰ The scepticism regarding any peaceful resolution served to entrench many of the diehard Volunteers’ commitment to an armed struggle, including Michael Collins. Once any notion of success at the Peace Conference was closed, de Valeria left for the United States leaving Arthur Griffith to take his place. He duly returned to

¹⁴ Ronan Fanning, *Fatal Path: British Government and Irish Revolution 1910–1922* (London: Faber and Faber, 2013) 185

¹⁵ Seumus Robinson, 16 March 1959, MACBB BMH, WS No. 1721.

¹⁶ <https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/american-commission-delivers-damning-report-on-british-policy-in-ireland> Accessed 20 April 2020

¹⁷ Coleman, *The Irish Revolution, 1916-1923*, 49

¹⁸ Coleman, *The Irish Revolution, 1916-1923*, 49

¹⁹ C. Desmond Greaves *Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution* (London: The Camelot Press Ltd, 1971) 178–9.

²⁰ Arthur Mitchell, ‘Making the Case for Irish Independence’ in *Atlas for the Irish Revolution*, edited by John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil and Mike Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017), 271.

the business of Sinn Féin.²¹ Meanwhile in Galway, the number of ambushes increased, from the occasional altercation with the RIC, to a more organised considered plan. In the December 1918 issue of *An t-Óglach*, the official organ of the IRA, an article appeared that reminded the Volunteers that, now the distraction of the election was over, it was time 'to resume to the full military activities.'²² It continued by stating that 'organising and arming' the Volunteers should be the primary objective from here on. The article went on to reiterate that 'the creation of a strong armed, and efficient Army was the one essential element in the work to secure our independence'.²³ Such a statement left those already smouldering in various areas around the county, in no doubt as to their position and objectives. Included in the publication was a report by the Volunteers' Director of Organisation from the officer's convention in 1918. It reported an increase in its affiliated companies from 390 to 1,200 on the previous year. Patricia Kilroy produced an interesting list of the Connemara Volunteers' various occupations as, smith, butcher, baker, shepherd, engineer, shoemakers and so on, which reflected the shared importance of their membership.²⁴ Although the growth in membership was attributed to the conscription crisis, it served to prompt a surge of encouragement and reassurance in the leaders. Despite the result of the election demonstrating a mandate for political Sinn Féin, the parallel military wing had no such validation. On the other hand, such was the overwhelming win for the politics of Sinn Féin, was there an assumption, as Daithí Ó Corráin suggests, 'that the Dáil's Declaration of Independence had given the Volunteers absolute legitimacy'.²⁵ Furthermore, it is also likely that the expectation of a standing army to defend the new Dáil's constitution and serve the people, would be the role of Volunteers or a newly-established Irish Republican Army (IRA). As a result, the republican campaign that developed in 1919 inevitably reverted back to their aggressive confrontational actions in order to combine civil resistance in addition to strategies to destabilise the British establishment.²⁶ When these two actions, the First Dáil and Soloheadbeg, occurred on the same day, hours apart, it was to unwittingly seal the start of the War of

²¹ Greaves *Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution*, 178–9.

²² *An t-Óglach*, 16 December 1918, 1.

²³ *An t-Óglach*, 16 December 1918, 1.

²⁴ Kilroy *The Story of Connemara*, 160

²⁵ Daithí Ó Corráin 'The Soloheadbeg Ambush' *The Revolution Papers 1916–1923*, No. 19, May 10, 2016.

²⁶ Charles Townshend, *The British Campaign in Ireland 1919-1921 The Development of Political and Military Policies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975) 16

Independence.

The Onset of the War of Independence, 21 January 1919

Despite some political violence after the Rising of 1916, the mass arrest of Sinn Féin activists in early 1918 and the increased militancy of the Volunteers during and after the conscription crisis, the incident at Soloheadbeg is marked as the onset of the War of Independence. During this period, police reports and intelligence gathered over time regarding many Galway Volunteers, resulted in their movements becoming closely monitored once a state of unrest began to resurface again. Furthermore, many were involved with aggravated agrarian issues and had been questioned by the police. Yet they remained hesitant and awaited instructions from central GHQ in Dublin before taking action. Predictably, frustration was constantly bubbling under the surface. They were not alone.

The ambush on a transportation cart in Soloheadbeg, County Tipperary, was a consequence of this eagerness and caused ramifications that were felt throughout the country.²⁷ Although other strikes had happened prior to this, something about its 'ruthlessness distinguished it from the attacks of the previous year'.²⁸ The incident also exemplified the difficulty central that GHQ had controlling Volunteers outside of Dublin at this point. Yet, no amount of planning could have prepared them for what transpired or the subsequent notoriety bestowed on those Volunteers who participated in the attack. As a consequence of their actions, two RIC constables James McDonnell and Patrick O'Connell lost their lives in the ambush. They were later hailed as ordinary, respectable Irishmen, doing a job to feed their families. After the incident, the *Irish Independent* in one of their reports, claimed that McDonnell, some days prior to the ambush, had 'jokingly said to a Sinn Féin member, 'Do you think the Sinn Féiners would shoot me? I don't think they would'.²⁹ This would suggest that local police at this stage did not believe they were in any danger. Nevertheless, Martial Law was enforced within days of the killing of the two policemen and was widely condemned locally and nationally. For many, the War of Independence had begun, and this single

²⁷ *An tÓglac*, Vol. 1 No. 4 14 October 1918; Aoife Whelan 'A Turning Point in Irish History', *The Revolution Papers 1916–1923*, No. 19, May 10, 2016

²⁸ Townshend, *The British Campaign in Ireland 1919–1921*, 16

²⁹ *Irish Independent*, 24, January 1919.

act ignited the flame for further military action by a force which now styled itself as the Irish Republican Army, or IRA. In reality, this unsanctioned incident did not, as Coleman reveals, 'spark off an immediate military confrontation between the IRA and the Crown forces. The escalation of military activity during 1919 was gradual'.³⁰ Soloheadbeg did, however, indicate how rural IRA members acted in the absence of clear directions and commands in the early part of 1919. Meanwhile, the IRA Volunteers in Galway remained under heavy surveillance, and consequently their actions somewhat stalled. In spite of this, the IRA did continue to intimidate court officials and RIC, thus marking them as legitimate targets. Some used the incident in Soloheadbeg to emphasise what could happen to those who did not comply with their demands. Under the circumstances an atmosphere of disturbance prevailed.

Arbitration, Republican, Sinn Féin Courts

Whilst the British government and its people were still processing the fallout from the First World War, the established institutions of law and order in Ireland tumbled into chaos. The ongoing anti-establishment policy extended into areas other than the boycotting of police, this is especially true in western areas. Many living in rural communities throughout County Galway lived in dire poverty. They had little mechanisms that would address the inequitable distribution of land and had seemingly no influence over landowners. Accordingly, land agitation was not only used to redress this imbalance but had also gained widespread acceptance as a method to secure future prospects. Equally, secret societies, such as the Irish Republican Brotherhood, that had existed prior to the War of Independence had 'provided political and practical support' to those involved in coercion and agrarian violence.³¹ As mentioned earlier, no longer satisfied with the existing courts, the *ad hoc* system that was shaped to address disputes in the west needed to also concentrate on what had now become an entrenched method of securing land. Furthermore, any person, particularly landlords, who continued to support the British court system was consistently harassed and threatened, until it became impossible to pursue a case. This prompted a public

³⁰ Coleman, *The Irish Revolution*, 67

³¹ Other groups include United Irish League and Irish Parliamentary Party. For more information see Conor McNamara, *War and Revolution in the West of Ireland: Galway 1913–1922* (Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2018) 36

response from the court officials to the situation. For instance, the *Irish Times* reported from the Galway Spring Assizes to which Sir William H. Mahon in his address made a comment on a threatening notice that had been received by Mr Comerford, The District Inspector.³² The threat implied a 'repeat [of] Tipperary in Tuam'.³³ Mahon stated that such threats 'are not pleasant things in a community, and so long as they exist neither you, as inhabitants of the county, nor I, as Judge of Assizes, can be congratulated.'³⁴ Somewhat credulously, given the threat notices, Mahon mentioned the diminishing number of cases from the previous year, a situation that he attributed to 'the raiding for arms having disappeared.'³⁵ Even so, the judge also remarked that 249 people in both the East and West Riding still required regular police patrols to assist them in the daily running of farms or business and five others who required 'constant police protection'.³⁶ The people he referred to were local landowners or their employees. Notably, in the same sitting, the judge heard of threats received by Thomas Blake, a local landowner and several of his employees, to intimidate him into selling his land to the Estates Commissioners.³⁷ This was not a hollow warning, the following February James Ward, Blake's herdsman, was shot dead standing at the gate lodge. In another land dispute, Florimund Quinn, of Duras House, Kinvara, was in deep discussion with his herdsman Thomas Diviney, when they were shot at from behind a wall at close range.³⁸ Both men survived but local speculation as to why the incident took place was centred on a man named Quinn who acquired possession of a farm once owned by Patrick Nolan of Gort.³⁹ These land disputes were a direct result of the economic disparity in many communities around Galway. Poor land and the resultant impoverishment remained rife, while the landed gentry preserved the majority of profitable farms. As noted by Tomás Kenny, this meant that they 'reaped the benefits of a virtual monopoly on agricultural trade with Britain.'⁴⁰ Meanwhile, the majority of small farmers lived just above the poverty line on land that was 'too small

³² *Irish Times* 27 March 1919

³³ *Irish Times* 27 March 1919

³⁴ *Irish Times* 27 March 1919

³⁵ *Irish Times* 27 March 1919

³⁶ *Irish Times* 27 March 1919

³⁷ The Wyndham Act established a body known as the Estates Commissioners within the Land Commission to administer land purchase in Ireland.

³⁸ The mansion was formally owned by Comte de Basterot who in the 1870s owned over 350 acres in county Galway.

³⁹ *Irish Times* 25 April 1919

⁴⁰ Tomás Kenny, *Galway: Politics and Society, 1910–23* (Dublin: Fourcourts Press, 2011) 27

to provide a reasonable standard of living for the occupier.⁴¹ With no clear prospect of increasing their holdings in order to generate a better living (other than force), it was essential to get these land disputes under control within communities.

The uncontrolled violent nature of these land agitators caused confusion as the conflict evolved. Despite popular beliefs about the unfair distribution of land, the IRA needed to be perceived as the law makers. Campbell mentions a story in the *Connacht Tribune* of 3 April 1920. It is worth repeating as it clearly describes the position and indeed the mood in the west:

The land agitation ... is sweeping through the West like a prairie fire ... Whatever we may think of the means, the object aimed at [land redistribution] is being secured with a rapidity that all the British land laws of the past hundred years never attained ... [T]he landless men of Ireland are proceeding by rough and ready methods to settle the [land] question for themselves.⁴²

Well respected men within communities were offering 'their services as mediators' in an effort to resolve disputes.⁴³ Other roles opened up for the Volunteers too, some became clerks, republican policemen and prison guards. The types of cases before the courts varied from, debt recovery, fishing rights, rights of way, conacre and grazing, matters that were 'daily fare in farming communities'.⁴⁴ The location of courts was also variable throughout the county, some in community centres or parish halls. In Beagh, most sittings took place in private homes, with John Forde from Cregg as judge.⁴⁵ Police work at this point entailed 'collecting fines, transport, upkeep and guarding the prisoners'.⁴⁶ Quite quickly these courts took hold and began to gain a reputation for fairness and successful outcomes, even amongst the employees of landed estates such as land agents. Although the IRA members were not precisely forbidden to participate in agrarian agitation, 'an order of the 2 March made clear that they did so only in a strictly personal capacity. This was an effort to keep the national conflict separate from land disputes and from members becoming over familiar as agitators within communities.'⁴⁷

⁴¹ Fergus Campbell, *Land and Revolution: Nationalist Politics in the West of Ireland 1891–1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 229

⁴² As cited in Campbell, *Land and Revolution*: 226

⁴³ Mary Kotsonouris, *Retreat from Revolution: The Dáil Courts, 1920–24* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994), 12.

⁴⁴ Marie O'Neill 'The Republican Courts in Tuam' in *Glimpses of Tuam since the Famine*, edited by John A Claffey (Tuam: Old Tuam Society, 1997) 204–9

⁴⁵ McNamara and Madden eds, *Beagh A History & Heritage*, 115.

⁴⁶ McNamara and Madden eds, *Beagh A History & Heritage*, 115

⁴⁷ Greaves *Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution* 143

By June 1919, on the strength and success of *ad hoc* courts in the west, the Dáil decided to introduce a more organised system of parish, district and circuit courts, overseen by a supreme court at a national level (Fig. 5.1). This was an effort to validate the system and augment public order and opinion despite ongoing issues.⁴⁸

Figure 5.1. Breakdown of the Dáil Judicial System that was implemented from June 1920.⁴⁹

Dáil Judicial System (June 1920–July 1922)				
Type	Administered by	Sittings	Types of Cases	Limit of Awards
Parish Courts (Parish Boundary)	3 Elected Judges	Weekly	Small Civil and Criminal Cases	£10
District Court (Parliamentary Constituency)	5 Judges (elected by parish Judges)	Once a Month	More important Civil and Criminal Cases Appellate from Parish Courts	£100
Special Sessions	4 Districts 4 Circuit Judges	3 Times a Year	Unlimited Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction Appellate Tribunal	Unlimited Jurisdiction
Supreme Court Unlimited Jurisdiction	3 Members Appointed for 3 Years	Sitting in Dublin	Unlimited Jurisdiction Appellate Tribunal	Unlimited Jurisdiction
<p>Note: Each court had a Registrar and clerks in attendance. Owing to the resistant agrarian agitation in the West of Ireland, particularly in Counties Clare and Galway, and prior to the establishment of the Dáil Judicial System, an <i>ad hoc</i> tribunal system had come into place. These tribunals were colloquially referred to as either Sinn Féin, Parish or Republican courts and remained in place until June 1920 when a Decree was issued from Dáil Éireann. In addition, a republican police force was formed to execute the rulings issued at the various courts.</p>				

The violence and intimidation that formed an integral part of agrarian agitation had caused both widespread difficulty and protestation, which arose from several quarters of society. Cattle drives with ‘crowds of a hundred persons or more (sometimes including women and children) assembled’, causing wilful destruction of boundary walls, removal of gates, assaults and pilfering, were now brought to the attention of

⁴⁸ ‘Revolution Chronicle’ in the *Revolution Papers: from rising to Independence - a unique collection of Irish Newspapers 1916–1923* (Hereafter RP) (June 1919) No. 22 31 May 2016.

⁴⁹ This table has been compiled using several sources including, Marie O’Neill ‘The Republican Courts in Tuam’ in *Glimpses of Tuam since the Famine* edited by John A Claffey (Tuam: Old Tuam Society, 1997) 204–9, Mary Kotsonouris, *Retreat from Revolution: The Dáil Courts, 1920–24* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994) and James Casey, ‘Republican Courts In Ireland 1919–1922’ in *Irish Jurist* Vol. 5, No. 2 (1970) 321–342

these parish courts.⁵⁰ Women, as shown in this circumstance, were not genteel bystanders. They were as eager to secure their future, be that as a wife, daughter or sister and were willing to accept the consequences of their actions. The most compelling evidence of this was reported by the *Tuam Herald*, whereby five local women, Margaret Curley, her daughter also called Margaret, Margaret Philbin, Ellen Lynskey and Norah Martyn were brought before the magistrate for ‘unlawful assembly’ or cattle driving.⁵¹ The incident occurred in Ironpool, Kilconly, a small rural village near Tuam in April 1919. The women mentioned above and others (including Annie Meehan who could not attend court because she was feeling unwell) used sticks to drive livestock from a field out into the road where at least fifteen men were waiting. When the owner of the livestock tried to stop the women, they surrounded him and began beating him with sticks. The women had stated that they ‘wanted to take possession of the farm’ and only after Sergeant Bruen, using his revolver, threatened to ‘make a hospital job’ out of them, did they desist.⁵² It was clear from the tone of the report and the evidence supplied by the RIC that these women lived in dire circumstances and wanted the magistrate to take this into account when bail was sought. Galway women were also becoming a feature of police reports.

With a deliberate rejection of the British system, these courts had quickly overtaken all other systems of justice and before long even major landowners were resorting to local Sinn Féin courts. Policing by the IRA had also almost completely replaced the RIC. Consequently, this almost inevitably meant that investigations into petty crime sometimes led to punishments. For some, the sentence was a short imprisonment. Joseph Stanford OC of Galway Brigade, explained what this entailed: ‘the prisoner was transported by night to a distant Company area and guarded by our men in some big house not then occupied.’⁵³ Other prisons were sheds, barns, and ruined castles, generally abandoned buildings or easily concealed from prying eyes. He elaborated by mentioning the last British quarter session held April 1919 in Gort and how the aforementioned Sgt Elliot took the only case of the day. No defendants turned up, leaving the police and court officials with little to do.⁵⁴ It was not until June 1920, a year

⁵⁰ Tony Varley, ‘Land, Revolution and Counter-revolution in the West’ in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* edited by John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil and Mike Murphy (Cork: University Press, 2017), 495.

⁵¹ *Tuam Herald*, 10 May 1919

⁵² *Tuam Herald*, 10 May 1919

⁵³ Joseph Stanford, Date Unknown MACBB, BMH, WS No.1334.

⁵⁴ Joseph Stanford, Date Unknown MACBB, BMH, WS No.1334.

later, before this new Dáil Judicial System would be in place.

The Search for Arms

Throughout 1919, the IRA continued to raid for arms and prepare attacks on whatever RIC barracks they considered vulnerable. As smaller ones were abandoned, they were quickly looted and burned. Abbeyknockmoy, Ballinasloe, Ballygar, Barna, Brookeen Castlehackett, Castlegrove, Claregalway, Kiltomer, Kinvarra, Loughgeorge, Loughrea and Monivea, were attacked and closed. In contrast, Dunmore barracks was too strong and remained open until 1920 with 'one District Inspector, one Head Constable, two Sergeants and 10-12 Constables'.⁵⁵ In Connemara most of the barracks were closed and burned including, Letterfrack, Cleggan, and Ballconneely.⁵⁶ However, Maam Barracks is remembered as being too difficult to attack. It was,

built on a hill close to Lough Corrib and was heavily fortified with steel shutters and barbed wire. It could not be attacked from any direction, as there was no cover to get close enough to place a demolition charge. Thus, it was never attempted.⁵⁷

Another attack on a small barracks in Derrybrien, a townland in the civil parish of Killeenadeema, forced three constables and one sergeant to withdraw.⁵⁸ Although not much damage was done, the barracks was considered vulnerable and prone to attack not only due to its isolation but also the hostile local environment. Those responsible were the Gort Battalion. They had remained tenacious in their approach and actively increased their strikes by raiding several local homes in search for arms. The Gort Battalion area comprised eight Companies: Ballindereen; Ardrahan; Kinvara; Kilmacduagh; Gort; Kilbeacanty; Beagh and Derrybrien, stretching from Clarenbridge to East Clare border. The officers were: Thomas McInerney, O/C; Peter Howley, Vice O/C; Paddy Piggott, Adjutant; and Michael Trayers, Quartermaster. This area was known as an independent Battalion, taking its orders from G.H.Q. directly.⁵⁹

From an intelligence perspective, the geographical spread of men, matched with the sprawling landscape, proved difficult for authorities to police. However, raiding for

⁵⁵ Hubert Birmingham *Dunmore: A History* (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 2012) 292

⁵⁶ Patricia Kilroy *The Story of Connemara* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1989) 152.

⁵⁷ John King, 31 January 1958 MACBB, BMH, WS No.1731

⁵⁸ Kenny, *Galway: Politics and Society*, 27.

⁵⁹ Joseph Stanford, Date Unknown, MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1334

arms became less successful as the conflict advanced, much of the public (farmers and local landowners) had already given up whatever guns and ammunition they possessed or were requested to hand over to the local RIC barracks.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, with ongoing hostilities, resistance to surrendering what protection they had was too much for some families, especially if they had something to either protect or hide. An example of this can be found in two separate Witness Statements, from Thomas Hussey and Michael Higgins, both members of Sylane Company in North Galway. They each give a similar account of a man called Duffy who was determined to hold onto his rifles and protect his family. Hussey and Higgins state that when they arrived at his home, he immediately opened the window and fired on the party. It transpired that two of Duffy's sons were members of the RIC and two younger sons were living at home. When the raiders started to knock at the door, 'the Duffy family began immediately to barricade doors and windows.'⁶¹ Having tried to get the family to open the door, even shooting some rounds in the air, they eventually left empty-handed. Unknown to them, a neighbour overheard the ruckus and rode the family horse as quickly as possible into the nearest barracks to seek help for the family. The raiders had just departed the scene when the local RIC arrived. The fact that Duffy had a contingency plan for this raid knowing that his family might come under threat by the local Volunteers, prompts the question that although neither Volunteer admitted it, having two sons in the RIC could have triggered the attack. Even at this early stage of the war, those within communities who had lived peacefully with their neighbours were beginning to feel vulnerable and somewhat defenceless. This was a notable shift in allegiances. No member of the IRA or their families would communicate in any way with the police. The restricted communications within communities resulted in rendering the RIC intelligence completely defunct.⁶²

Demoralised and socially ostracised, the total boycott on their day-to-day activities had the desired impact on the local constabulary. Yet, Fitzpatrick provides another insight when he states that, although police intelligence was seen as vital to Dublin Castle's comprehension of what was happening on the ground, 'their advice was

⁶⁰ Michael Reilly 28 February 1956 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1358

⁶¹ Thomas Hussey, 29 September 1955, MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1260; Michael Higgins, 13 September 1955, MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1247.

⁶² Joseph Stanford, Date Unknown, MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1334.

frequently disregarded.’⁶³ A consequence of this neglect from the higher echelons, combined with community scorn, rendered a career in the RIC no longer the respectable occupation it once was. Women were warned against collaborating with any member of the constabulary even if the relationship had previously existed. They too were ‘shunned at all social functions’ with the constant threat of hair being shorn for any interaction.⁶⁴ What previously had been seen as a socially desirable occupation with prospects, had now become one that promised total despondency and utter misery. Fitzpatrick explains that:

their sources of information dried up; their attempts to execute government policy were thwarted; and worse of all, their right to participate in Irish society was strenuously challenged ... Crown servants could not sidestep the campaign directed at them. Except by resignation, desertion or treachery, they could not escape responsibility for the execution of policies over which they had no control.⁶⁵

To a large extent, the gathering of intelligence from within the community was inoperative. However, once they became the targets, especially those whom the IRA deemed hostile or antagonistic, the nature of the conflict altered. Sergeant William Elliott of the Ardrahan RIC, was considered such a target, he had harassed the people of Ardrahan and was considered ‘a bad weed’.⁶⁶ In early 1919 ‘two or three attempts’ were made to shoot him, each failing for logistical reasons. Then an order was sent from the Brigade Headquarters in Galway that no attacks were to be made on any RIC patrols and ‘Galway was to be kept quiet for a purpose’. The purpose was unknown. Peter Howley began to speculate and ‘thought that perhaps arms were to be landed here’.⁶⁷ The true reason for the command never came to light. The following August, shortly before taking up a senior post in Ennis, Sergeant Elliot was shot close to Castletaylor Woods on a pathway between his family residence and the barracks. Two Volunteers, Ryan and Coen, fired two rounds into his body and without checking their victim, made off into the woods leaving him to die. Elliot managed to summon the strength to blast his police whistle loud enough to summon help and although he spent months recovering in hospital, he was ‘never able to resume duty’.⁶⁸ Attacks such as

⁶³ David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life 1913–1921* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017), 4

⁶⁴ Joseph Stanford, Date Unknown, MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1334.

⁶⁵ Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life 1913–1921*, 4.

⁶⁶ Daniel Ryan, 12 September 1954, MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1007

⁶⁷ Peter Howley, 22 March 1956, MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1379 and Joseph Stanford, date unknown, MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1334.

⁶⁸ Joseph Stanford, Date Unknown MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1334.

this, along with large scale resignations amongst the RIC, now forced the British to reconsider policing in Ireland.

The Black and Tan Recruitment in Britain and Local Elections

With the RIC now vulnerable and the formation of the First Dáil realised, the focus could now turn to local government. However, the British government was never going to be easily defeated. They considered it necessary to put into place some radical measures to counteract their susceptibility and limit their loss of control to areas around Galway. The closure of smaller vulnerable rural RIC stations was already underway, as was the reinforcement of a 'more-easily defensible barracks' against the rebels.⁶⁹ Following this the re-issuing and familiarisation in small arms, rifles and grenades was essential for constables, especially in those communities in which constables needed to cast off the image of the amiable local policeman.⁷⁰ Yet, a steady diminution of the force still took place during 1919; recruitment was needed and, although some Irish still enlisted, the deliberate ban imposed by Sinn Féin ensured that numbers were very limited. Such was the decline that by December 1919, the need for new recruits had become critical. By Christmas 1919, the situation led to the circulation of an order authorising recruitment from Britain. Major Cyril Fleming, a County Inspector, was appointed to organise the campaign from his office at Great Scotland Yard, Westminster.⁷¹ The offer of steady wages and a pension brought about two new forces to support the existing RIC. The Black and Tans were the first special reserves to arrive, so called as a result of insufficient police uniforms. Many of the new recruits had to blend the khaki and black, army and police uniforms because supplies depleted quickly. Most of the men were recruited from the returning British army after the First World War and were initially brought in to reinforce larger barracks around the country. Their experience of war and weaponry coupled with their apathy towards the community, certainly brought a different dynamic to Irish policing. However, sanctioned somewhat primarily by the need to suppress any militant activities, their arrival signalled a more ruthless approach towards the rebels. Meanwhile, as the British

⁶⁹ David M. Leeson, 'The Royal Irish Constabulary, Black and Tans and Auxiliaries' in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* 373.

⁷⁰ Leeson, 'The Royal Irish Constabulary, Black and Tans and Auxiliaries' 373.

⁷¹ Leeson, 'The Royal Irish Constabulary, Black and Tans and Auxiliaries' 374.

were reinforcing the ranks of the RIC, the Irish militants were equally putting measures in place to consolidate and unify Sinn Féin, and the IRA.

In August 1919 Cathal Brugha, as the Minister for Defence, proposed measures to formalise the association between the IRA and the Dáil in the form of a pledge of allegiance. The pledge was adopted by 30 to 5. Based on similar wording by persons who aspired to become American citizens, the oath read:

I, A.B., do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I do not and shall not yield a voluntary support to any pretended Government, authority or power within Ireland hostile and inimical thereto, and I do further swear (or affirm) that to the best of my knowledge and ability I will support and defend the Irish Republic and the Government of the Irish Republic, which is Dáil Eireann, against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same, and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, so help me, God.⁷²

The procedure to administer the oath was simple, yet swiftly executed. An executive provincial member would oversee delivery to each brigade officer, who would deliver to each battalion, and onto the company officers who in turn would administer it to the men in each company.⁷³ Although the term IRA was now extensively used instead of Irish Volunteer, it was after administering this oath that the name was officially adopted. However, individuals were still referred to as Volunteers.⁷⁴ In County Galway, as elsewhere, the oath was adopted quickly despite the expanse of the county. John Feehan, Leenane, member of the West Connemara Brigade and PJ McDonnell his OC went to meet Richard Mulcahy, IRA Chief of Staff, in a small hall on the Leenane to Westport road three miles from Westport. Mulcahy had requested that officers from West Mayo and West Connemara would meet him there to take the oath of allegiance.

The oath had to be given by a G.H.Q. officer to officers in the area, and those officers could give the oath to officers and men in their own areas. It meant a lot of work for we had to cycle, to company parades throughout West Connemara to give the oath to all the companies in the area.⁷⁵

Mulcahy was a frequent visitor to Connemara and would later return to Leenane to recuperate after an illness. It was whilst there that he discovered the true nature of the animosity and frustration of these officers while under the command of Seamus

⁷² <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1919-08-20/12/>. Accessed 20 January 2019

⁷³ Richard Walsh, 26 June 1950 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 400.

⁷⁴ In this study, the term Volunteer is used to retain consistency with many Witness Statements, Newspaper Reports and documentary evidence available.

⁷⁵ John Feehan, 29 October 1957 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1692.

Murphy. Despite securing allegiance from the IRA, politically the next step was to establish control over local government, another transfer of power, this time by winning local elections.

Two local elections took place in 1920, it had been six years since the last one. Apprehensive after Sinn Féin's success in the 1918 General Election, the British government decided to reform the voting system by introducing proportional representation. The reason for this was the government's belief that the 'first past the post' system had contributed to the Sinn Féin landslide.⁷⁶ In addition, the elections were divided into two separate stages, cities and towns were held in January 1920 and the rural areas in June 1920. The first January local elections were somewhat disastrous for Sinn Féin, suppression of the Dáil, fear of arrest and the launch of a new voting system may account for the poor return. Unable to gain a majority, their share of seats fell drastically, only 'forty-two of eighty seats from Dublin Corporation, in Cork thirty of fifty-six, in Limerick twenty-six of forty, in Waterford nineteen of forty, and in Galway ten of twenty-four'.⁷⁷ This result was rectified in June when Sinn Féin won almost every seat in the county and rural councils in Connacht. The voting share was ninety-seven percent Sinn Féin, one percent Nationalist, Labour and other each.⁷⁸ The final tally results were, as listed by Michael Laffan: out of 263 county council seats in 'Munster and Connacht, Sinn Féin won 258 and its Labour ally 5; in Leinster the figures were Sinn Féin 192; Labour 37 and others 24; and in Ulster the Unionists won 81, Sinn Féin 79, Nationalists 26 and Labour and independents 2 each'.⁷⁹ Remarkably, Alice Cashel, an ardent nationalist and Cumann na mBan activist, was elected as vice-chairman of Galway County Council on 19 June 1920, one of the few political roles accessible to women (see A34 and C5). As a result, upon the arrest of George Nicolls she became chairman. Cashel was outspoken in respect of her views towards independence and was kept under close surveillance by the local RIC. Subsequently, she was threatened by Black and Tans, which forced her on one occasion, to sleep out in the hills near her home before escaping to Dublin. In June 1920, the Dáil's local government department issued instructions to all local bodies to pass resolutions

⁷⁶ Michael Laffan *The Resurrection of Ireland The Sinn Féin Party 1916–1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 323

⁷⁷ Laffan *The Resurrection of Ireland*, 327

⁷⁸ Joost Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare: The Experience of Ordinary Volunteers in the Irish War of Independence, 1916-1921* (London; Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1998) 264

⁷⁹ Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland*, 329

declaring their allegiance to Dáil Éireann and refusal to communicate with the agency of the Dublin Castle administration, the Local Government Board.⁸⁰ In Galway, Councillor Colm Ó Gaora proposed:

That this council of the elected, at a duly convened meeting hereby acknowledge the Authority of Dáil Éireann as the duly elected government of the Irish people and undertakes to give full effect to all decrees duly promulgated by the said Dáil Éireann in sofar as same effect this council. That copies of resolution be forwarded to the Republican minister for foreign affairs for transmission to the governments of Europe and to the President and chairman of the senate and house of representatives of the USA.⁸¹

These elections symbolised the height of Sinn Féin's political power in Ireland during this period. The elected representatives were predominantly members of either the IRA or the secret society, Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB).⁸² Their majority in County Galway instilled confidence in their ability to forge ahead.

Guerrilla Warfare

In IRA headquarters in Dublin attacks on the 'Crown Forces were finally officially sanctioned' in January 1920, a year after the Soloheadbeg ambush.⁸³ Consequently, the emergent guerrilla warfare tactics executed by the IRA escalated significantly and in direct response, the Crown forces enforced strict military control. Coverage in newspapers of violent incidents was becoming more widespread, which placed further pressure on both the local police and the wider administration. The nationalist paper *The Freeman's Journal*, an advocate of the IPP until the 1918 election, reported 'Bands of Masked Men Active in the Provinces', a headline that would strike fear into many homes that retained firearms.⁸⁴ The same edition also posted that the Galway kennels located in Craughwell, and two publicans in Loughrea and Kiltartan, were invaded, the raiders left with only four guns in total.⁸⁵ Michael (Mikie) Hynes, a Kinvara Gaelic Leaguer, was later arrested in connection with another raid this time in the Abbey (Loughrea) district.⁸⁶ He was subsequently released as witnesses failed to identify him.

⁸⁰ See Local Government Archivists and Records Managers, *Democracy and Change: The 1920 Local Elections in Ireland* (Department of Planning, Housing and Local Government, 2020)

⁸¹ Galway County Council Archives, Galway County Council GC1/3b 892

⁸² For a more in depth study see Laffan *The Resurrection of Ireland* 323–9; Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare* and Tom Garvin *The Evolution of Irish Nationalist Politics* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2005)

⁸³ Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare*, 122

⁸⁴ *The Freeman's Journal* 16 January 1920

⁸⁵ *The Freeman's Journal* 16 January 1920

⁸⁶ *The Freeman's Journal* 16 January 1920

Possessing such limited arms and ammunition meant looting such as this occurred frequently during this time.

In much the same fashion as the Galway IRA targeted vulnerable police stations, they also pursued the police themselves, a tactic intended to further isolate outlying police stations. One strike on Castlehackett RIC Barracks began in the early hours of January 1920. Although the attack was originally fixed for 6 January, to circumvent any criticism it was 'suggested that [as] it was Little Christmas night and not a nice thing to have an attack on that holy night' the raid should be deferred.⁸⁷ Rescheduled for 8 January, Castlehackett Barracks came under attack from thirty-five IRA men from both Sylane and Barnaderg Companies.⁸⁸ Accompanying them was one of Galway's key Volunteers, Michael Moran, home from college on Christmas leave at the time. In a well calculated attack, they began by cutting the telegraph wires to impede communication. Unexpectedly, dire weather descended, it was cold 'with showers of hailstones.'⁸⁹ The men separated into four parties to provide cover front and rear. Included in the party were the three engineers authorised to lay explosives and mines in order to force entry through a gable wall. It is worth noting that, although these men were assigned as explosives engineers, it was on early attacks such as these that many cultivated their rudimentary bomb-making skills. Their attempts met with varying results. On this occasion, two policemen were inside at the time of the attack, namely Sgt Higgins and Constable Gormley. As the men burrowed into the gable foundations, the Sgt opened the shutter windows to see what the noise was, whereupon Volunteer Thomas Hussey, opened fire on him causing him to fall backwards and shout 'oh my God!'. The broken glass had shattered close to his face.⁹⁰ Shouts of 'Will you surrender now' were heard by the two policemen, before the attack began in earnest and continued for several hours into the night.⁹¹ Although gelignite and homemade grenades were used there was relatively little damage done to the barracks. The attack only ceased when, quite by chance, two RIC constables, passing en route to Tuam, took up positions and started to fire at the attackers from the rear. The next day, Hussey, the same Volunteer that took the pot-shot at Sgt. Higgins the night before,

⁸⁷ John (Dick) Conway, 28 June 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1201.

⁸⁸ North Galway (Tuam) Brigade, MA/MSPC/A/28

⁸⁹ John (Dick) Conway, 28 June 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1201.

⁹⁰ Thomas Hussey, 28 September 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1260.

⁹¹ *Freeman's Journal*, 10 January 1920

turned up in his role as the local postman and delivered a telegram to the Sgt. He confidently made his way through several blockades only to be regaled with the events of the previous night before being escorted around by Constable Meaney to survey the damage. The barracks was abandoned the next day and the police withdrew to Tuam.

Over the next few months this pattern continued and was covered in several newspapers including the *Connacht Tribune* which reported a litany of incidents the same month (Fig. 5.2). Notably, many of the Galway IRA were, as Campbell has demonstrated, 'born into families with strong radical agrarian traditions' that cultivated their grievances in this direction. The organisation was an amalgamation of classes, 'small farmers, labourers, artisans, as well as a smattering of middle-sized farmers, small businessmen, and students.'⁹² Despite this, many of the members of Galway IRA came from impoverished rural areas, a coalition, Campbell contends, 'of the poorer classes in Galway society, who were looked down upon by the more prosperous elements of the nationalist community'.⁹³ Small wonder then, as the IRA gained strength, that some felt justifiably entitled to avail of opportunities to improve their living standards. However, tensions emerged in communities that no longer could rely on the protection of the now dwindling local RIC officers. Not all attacks were necessarily politically motivated. For instance, the barracks in Roundstone received notoriety in an English paper when 'two ex-soldiers ... in the company with three other men stoned ... the police barracks, only desisting when a volley was fired at them'.⁹⁴ The paper had to retract the headline of 'siege' when it became clear that one John McDonagh, a local IRA Volunteer, had some drink taken, and decided that the barracks was the cause of some annoyance to him (a frequent occurrence when he was in this condition).⁹⁵ It was clear that the RIC were having difficulties in remote areas that reinforcements could not easily reach.

There were two distinct standpoints exhibited by priests in Galway during this period. Outwardly, as seen in Fig. 5.2, attacks were condemned from the pulpit. But as Campbell has shown, those still involved with secret organisations, such as the IRB, 'believed that the Catholic Church did not have the right to intervene in political or

⁹² Campbell, *Land and Revolution*, 261

⁹³ Campbell, *Land and Revolution*, 261

⁹⁴ Dolan, 'Connacht Galway 1920–1921', 387.

⁹⁵ Dolan, 'Connacht Galway 1920–1921', 387.

agrarian matters' and blatantly disregarded these reprimands.⁹⁶ Also, many of the younger more militant priests such as Rev. Fr John William O'Meehan, Kinvara, Rev. Fr. Clarke, Craughwell, Rev. Fr O'Farrell, Ballinakill and Rev. Fr O'Loughlin Gurteen, as mentioned earlier, had vigorously encouraged the campaign for independence. Their stand on the 'active' agrarian agitation is not clear, but O'Meehan in particular, was known to associate with many of these agitators. Brian Heffernan established that, 'priests in rural parishes were often in the confidence of all sections of the population, including Volunteers and constables.

Figure 5.2. Extracts from articles from the *Connacht Tribune* dated 28 February 1920.

<p>Cattle Maimed and House Fired Into Shots were fired into the dwelling house of John Boyle, Cahermacnally, Headford and the tails of three cattle were cut off.</p>	<p>Kinvara Occurrences Priests Condemn Shooting Affair On Thursday night last the house of Mr. Michael Mannion, Boherbue, Kinvara, was fired into but fortunately the occupants escaped unhurt. The outrage was strongly condemned by the Rev. M. Fahy, P.P., and the Rev. John Keely, C.C. at both the Convent and Parish Churches on Sunday. The walls of Mr. Michael Kearney's farm at Carrowkileen, Kinvara, were levelled to the ground during the week. Mr Kearney lives in Carron, Co Clare. Rumour is rife with the report of other shooting outrages near the town during the week</p>	<p>Khaki Policemen English Recruits in Galway English ex-soldier RIC recruits were seen for the first time in Galway on Tuesday evening, when a party of them arrived on the 6p.m. train as an escort to the prison with Michael Ward, of Boyle, who was arrested for having alleged, a rifle and ammunition on his premises. The new police, who were, it is stated, drawn from the depot, were in khaki uniform but wore the policeman's long black coats and black caps. They carried khaki haversacks.</p>
<p>Another Barrack Closed Kiltomer (Ballinasloe) police barrack has been closed.</p>	<p>Lord Killanin leaves Spiddal The recent raid upon his chauffeur's house is alleged to be the reason for Lord Killanin and his household having left Spiddal and taken up residence in London. Mr. Ruttledge, the chauffeur (who has also Spiddal) was assaulted by the raiders when he attempted to prevent their search for arms.</p>	<p>Shots at Dwelling-House On Sunday, the 8th inst., about one a.m., the residence of Thomas Naughton, Cloonamorris, Woodlawn was attacked, five shots being fired at the windows and doors of the house.</p> <p>Oranmore Arrest Shots at Dwelling House The house of John Neilan, near Oranmore, and of a man named Burke, of Cartron, were fired into this week.</p>
<p>Eight Shots Queenfort House Fired into at Night Servants Narrow Escape 'Abominable Outrage' says the most Rev. Dr. Gilmartin. Motorcars are alleged to have been used in an attack on the residence of Mr. Frank McCormack, at Queensfort, midway between Tuam and Dunmore. Shortly after midnight on Friday night eight shots were fired into the dwelling-house. The windows of all the bedrooms in the house were shattered and Miss Kelly the cook, had a narrow escape.</p>		

Both belligerent camps realised that 'if priests could be persuaded to pass on information about the other party, the clergy could be of invaluable assistance to their intelligence efforts.'⁹⁷ Later, Fr John Fahy, Loughrea, would become one of Galway's

⁹⁶ Campbell, *Land and Revolution*, 180

⁹⁷ Brian Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment: Catholic Priests and Political Violence in Ireland, 1919–21* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014) 148

most radical republican and agrarian activists.⁹⁸ Nonetheless, these attacks from around the country did provoke an unusual appeal to the general members of Sinn Féin from Rev. Fr Dalton, CC, St Mary's Carrick-on-Shannon:

[D]id people believe the raids on police barracks were doing any good to the country[?] If he thought they were, he would be the first to say, 'Go ahead'; but he could not say so. If the police were cast aside, the scum of the English towns would be brought over to take their place. No matter what were the faults of the police, they were their own flesh and blood and were as good Irish men as those who were shouting. He asked Sinn Féiners, as sensible men, to be true to the principles of Sinn Féin and not blacken the country.⁹⁹

Despite Dalton's foresight, his appeal was left unheeded. Nonetheless, other reports recount increased pressures being placed upon those attending British courts, rendering them effectual. In one sarcastic heading, 'Crimeless Kinvara', the *Connacht Tribune* derided the lack of attendees at the Court of Petty Sessions. In contrast, a more triumphant report regales the lands of nine imprisoned Sinn Féin members from Menlough ploughed by about a hundred horses. After the day's work 'all the horses were mounted and decorated with national emblems and formed a procession through the village'.¹⁰⁰ These ongoing incidents and neighbourhood disputes, mostly land related, resulted in County Galway being one of the first areas to mark the arrival of the newly-recruited Black and Tans in February 1920. Meanwhile, confidence was growing amongst the Volunteers.

After the incident at Castlehacket, Sylane Company increased their numbers substantially and were ready to initiate another attack. The opportunity came soon after when once again, Michael Moran from Tuam led a large group that targeted the barracks at Castlegrove at the end of March. This engagement featured over forty Volunteers from various companies such as Sylane, Cortoon, Barnaderg and Caherlistrane. The barracks was situated on the main Tuam to Ballinrobe Road approximately six miles from Tuam. Caution was still evident. Thomas Hussey from Sylane remembered that, after conducting a 'test mobilisation', which had proved successful, and therefore operational, the men could proceed with the attack.¹⁰¹ The companies were once again divided and given specific roles, such as scouts, guarding

⁹⁸ See Jim Madden, *Fr John Fahy 1893-1969: Radical Republican and Agrarian Activist* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 2014)

⁹⁹ *Connacht Tribune* 28 February 1920,

¹⁰⁰ *Connacht Tribune* 28 February 1920,

¹⁰¹ Thomas Hussey, 28 September 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1260.

and creating road blockades, planting incendiary devices and the remaining Volunteers were encouraged to open fire into the barracks when required. Castlegrove barracks, as described by Hussey, was a 'large two storey building' with several windows. Inside was one sergeant and eight policemen on duty.¹⁰² Once the roads were secured, an order to cut the telegraph wires was issued, and finally the incendiary devices were triggered. The explosives at one gable caused a split in the brick and the 'chimney collapsed as a barrage of gunfire was opened up on the building', the policemen inside quickly responded by returning fire through the broken windows.¹⁰³ The shootout lasted for several hours during which numerous shouts for 'surrender' directed at the garrison received the response, 'Never!'¹⁰⁴ Eventually the order to retreat was issued and the Volunteers withdrew. Despite the number of shots fired, no casualties were inflicted on either side.¹⁰⁵ As was the case after previous attacks, the following day, the policemen from Castlegrove Barracks were evacuated to Tuam.

Attacks on police stations continued, mostly to render the buildings useless but also in an attempt to procure much needed weapons. Even bicycles could be sold for cash which could be used to buy weapons. Castlehacket, Loughgeorge and Bookeen, all suffered a similar attack to Castlegrove. However, inexplicably the IRA did not inflict or receive any casualties. The attack on Castlegrove also gives an example of the verbal miscommunication that sometimes occurred between dispatchers. After the event, the two Volunteers involved in setting the charges, Michael Ryan, and Michael Walsh, discussed their attack on Castlegrove both were questioned as to the reason why only one gable was set with explosives. It emerged that a mix-up had been made and instead of putting two charges in separate places, in this case on either gable end, the message received was to 'put two detonators and two fuses in one charge so that in the event of the failure of one detonator the other would operate successfully'.¹⁰⁶ The misunderstanding in this case was directly attributed to the messenger. Although Castlegrove was a large-scale attack with over a hundred Volunteers participating, from this point on, a reinforced police force with a more determined attitude began to fight back.

¹⁰² Thomas Hussey, 28 September 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1260.

¹⁰³ William Henry, *Blood for Blood: The Black and Tan War in Galway* (Cork: University Press, 2012) 38.

¹⁰⁴ Thomas Hussey, 28 September 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1260.

¹⁰⁵ Michael Ryan, 19 December 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1320.

¹⁰⁶ Michael Ryan, 19 December 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1320.

Such was the extent of these attacks, innocuous as they appeared in some cases, it triggered a countywide evacuation of all small barracks to the larger stations. Leeson has illustrated that in 'January 1920, 415 police were spread out among 46 stations in west Galway: by March 1921, 408 police would be crowded into just 19 barracks.'¹⁰⁷ It appears that some stations were attacked on more than one occasion and this appeared to cause confusion in later Pension Applications as to when the first attacks happened. However, one consistency that appears is the deliberate mass destruction of several barracks simultaneously to commemorate events of Easter 1916. On Easter Saturday 1920 the burning of the RIC barracks' at Barnaderg, Abbeyknockmoy, Cumber and Castlehackett, a hut at Kilbeacanty, a barracks at Tubber and Crusheen in mid Clare took place.¹⁰⁸ A combination of paraffin oil and straw was used to ignite the buildings. The Volunteers made sure to remove any useful equipment before setting the fire. Castlegrove was to have been burnt on the same night but, once again, a misunderstanding amongst the IRA Volunteers meant that it was not destroyed until a week later. Interestingly, later in the same year a notice in *An tÓglach* warned those burning abandoned stations to look out for booby-traps such as mines or grenades left by the police.¹⁰⁹ The Brigade Reports from Galway clearly show a marked increase in attacks of various kinds from the start of 1920.¹¹⁰

Attacks on the police barracks, as suggested earlier, served to increase the supply of ammunition and firearms. However, such attacks also increased the Volunteers' public approval within their communities. The IRA could no longer rely on gathering any rifles or shotguns in their immediate vicinities, as these had already been exhausted, but increasingly they needed community support in a myriad of other ways, including the provision of food, shelter, medicine or help for their homesteads. In addition, the IRA and their supporters needed to come up with ways to raise funds for the purchase of much-needed arms. Eventually, concerts, raffles and ceilidhe were organised, many Volunteers from other neighbouring areas lent their support to these events and they

¹⁰⁷ Leeson, 'The Royal Irish Constabulary, Black and Tans and Auxiliaries' 41. See also Conor McNamara 'Galway' in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, edited by John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil and Mike Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017) 615

¹⁰⁸ *Irish Independent*, 10 January 1920; Dolan, 'Connacht Galway 1920–1921'; Thomas Hussey, 28 September 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1260; Joseph Stanford, date unknown, MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1334; Michael Ryan, 19 December 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1320.

¹⁰⁹ George Staunton, 27 November 1950 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1597

¹¹⁰ <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/brigade-activities/>

also quickly became popular social gatherings. It was also seen as an opportunity to liaise with members from other companies to converse about their covert operations, along with sharing knowledge on different techniques or intelligence about a target. In some cases, those companies that did not have sufficient weaponry, negotiated temporary procurement of small arms for a particular operation from other companies in their area. As the war escalated, the IRA had become targets for the Black and Tans, so the fundraising was mostly conducted by the women of Cumann na mBan, an influential women's group who had, according to Cal McCarthy, 'its origins in two powerful forces that were driving transition in Ireland: feminism and Irish nationalism.'¹¹¹

Cumann na mBan

On 2 December 1917, the members of Cumann na mBan changed their constitution to reflect a shift in social, political and republican attitudes along with the Volunteers and the reorganised Sinn Féin party. The constitution stated that:

Cumann na mBan is an independent body of Irish women pledged to work for the establishment of an Irish Republic, by organising and training the women of Ireland to take their places by the sides of those working and fighting for a free Ireland.¹¹²

Although generally 'barred' from the combative or 'fighting' side of the War of Independence, a situation that would not be rectified easily, Cumann na mBan were determined to at least contribute their duty correspondingly.¹¹³ It could be argued that their role was just as, if not more dangerous than some Volunteers. Responsibilities involved transporting arms, explosives, and dispatches. Cumann na mBan was originally formed in November 1913 after a public meeting in Wynn's Hotel, Dublin as an auxiliary to the Irish Volunteers. Its role was critical during the Rising in 1916 and in its aftermath. It was these women who 'spread the doctrine of Republicanism throughout the country during the period when the men were interned'.¹¹⁴ However,

¹¹¹ Cal McCarthy *Cumann Na mBan and the Irish Revolution* (Cork: The Collins Press, 2014) 5.

¹¹² Cumann Na MBan, Its Constitution, Policy for 1917–18, and Organisation, National Library of Ireland (herein NLI) MS 49,918/4 <http://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000648668/HierarchyTree#tabnav> Accessed 12 June 2018

¹¹³ Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc, 'Cumann na mBan Fatalities in the War of Independence and Civil War: The Women Who Died For Ireland' in *History Ireland*, Vol. 26, No. 5 (2018), 36

¹¹⁴ Sinéad McCool *No Ordinary Women: Irish Female Activists in the Revolutionary Years 1900–1923* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2016) 60

by 1917 they sought to undertake a more active and equal role in forthcoming activities and not just those conforming to traditional roles of carers. According to Cal McCarthy, 'it was important that the guarantee of gender equality given by the 1916 proclamation was honoured'.¹¹⁵ With recent historical work published on several members of this women's group and their associates, it is no longer viable to ignore or downplay the feminist intentions behind Cumann na mBan's work. They endeavoured to encourage members to take up positions in public life not usually available to females. Altogether, branches were to equip members with all procedures required in any public role.¹¹⁶ Cumann na mBan members were determined to fulfil this aspiration and become role models for other women to follow. As Samantha Brandal has argued, 'to ignore the feminist undertones which were built into the very foundation of Cumann na mBan, from the organisation's history to the role its members played both during the Easter Rising and after, is to paint an incomplete picture of both the lives of Cumann na mBan members.'¹¹⁷

Equally, yet examined in more detail further in this study, despite their efforts, the role of women in 'the Irish revolution was largely ignored or marginalised by historians until recently'.¹¹⁸ However, this is improving, prominent female historians are determined to correct the gaps in the historiography and improve access to the narrative of women during this conflict. Research on the agency of women during this period has been greatly enhanced with the release of Bureau of Military History (BMH) archive in 2003 which contains 150 Witness Statements. Also, in May 2018, an additional 603 women pension applications files were released bringing to nearly 1,500 the number of female applicants whose activities are now detailed at the MSPC web pages.¹¹⁹ Regrettably, very little documentary evidence remains on the role Galway women played in the War of Independence. Nevertheless, their role, as mentioned in other Witness Statements from County Galway, places their contribution on the

¹¹⁵ McCarthy *Cumann Na mBan and the Irish Revolution* 106

¹¹⁶ Cumann na mBan. Circular About the Cumann Na MBan, Its Constitution, Policy for 1917–18, and Organisation National Library of Ireland (herein NLI) MS 49,918/4
<http://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000648668/HierarchyTree#tabnav> Accessed 12 June 2018

¹¹⁷ Samantha Brandal, 'Short Skirts and Revolvers: Cumann na mBan and Irish Republican Feminism'
<https://digitalcommons.ithaca.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1912&context=whalen> Accessed 27 March 2022

¹¹⁸ Marie Coleman, 'Violence Against Women During the Irish War of Independence, 1919–1921' in *Years of Turbulence: The Irish Revolution and Its Aftermath* edited by Diarmaid Ferriter and Susannah Riordan (Dublin: UCD Press, 2015) 137

¹¹⁹ Coleman, 'Violence Against Women During the Irish War of Independence, 1919–1921'
<https://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/views/analysis/military-archives-pension-files-highlight-role-of-women-in-irish-wars-and-iras-1922-massacre-842179.html> Accessed 2 June 2018

highest level. Joseph Sandford referred to his sister Rita and Annie Ryan on several occasions, but one reference in particular underscores their significance:

We waited as usual for our two Cumann na mBan girls who were constant visitors every Sunday and who had all the information about raids and movements of enemy forces. These two were Annie Ryan, sister of Dan's, and my sister, Rita. They arrived about 2 p.m. and had a very urgent message, not alone for us in our own area but of equal importance to all the men in East Clare, having met our chief Intelligence Officer, Henry Shaughnessy, a shopkeeper, who lived about a hundred yards from the barrack and who had information from two old R.I.C. men. He also had access to the wires to the barrack through two telegram boys, named Joe Quinn and Luke Shinnors. His information on that Sunday was that a large-scale round-up was to start at midnight on that night, taking in our 1st Battalion and embracing East Clare out to Killaloe. This was to be taken in three circles. So accurate was this man's information that it gave the exact area to be enclosed each day for the three days, the number of cavalry, the number of foot soldiers and R.I.C. taking part. This information was brought correctly, by word of mouth, by our two girls, as it would be dangerous for all concerned if it had been by despatch.¹²⁰

Notwithstanding the caveat on total reliance on WS as evidence, these vignettes that can be found scattered throughout the archive, are invaluable in understanding the role of Galway women during this period. Notably, amongst the seventy-three that were arrested in the 1918 'German Plot' three were women activists, Countess Markievicz (Chairperson of Cumann na mBan), Kathleen Clarke and Maud Gonne MacBride. They were all released by March the following year and Markievicz, whilst still in prison was elected as the first female member of the British Parliament, a seat she also refused to take.¹²¹ In the local elections in 1920, 43 women were returned. However, it was not until the summer of 1920 that Alice Cashel was co-opted onto Clifden District Council and elected vice-chair with George Nicolls as chairperson.¹²² Cashel was a committed Cumann na mBan activist, she travelled around several counties and organised meetings and rallies, often risking arrest.¹²³ She was also a Court Justice alongside Fr O'Meehan in Connemara. Under constant surveillance, eventually Cashel was arrested for what she recalled was an 'innocuous paper, a letter from a priest in Athlone, whom I did not even know about Holy Q Wells.'¹²⁴ After spending some time in solitary confinement she was released. A spell in prison became more and more common for many activists, including women, for the duration of the

¹²⁰ Joseph Stanford, Date Unknown, MACBB, BMH, WS No 1334.

¹²¹ McCoole, *No Ordinary Women*, 68

¹²² Galway County Council Archive, Galway County Council GCI/36 847

¹²³ Alice Cashel 6 February 1950 MACBB, BMH, WS No 366.

¹²⁴ Alice Cashel 6 February 1950 MACBB, BMH, WS No 366.

war. For many prison was difficult as the subsequent Pension Applications outlined, any comfort or aid was welcomed.

Fundraising for prisoners and their families was essential for them to survive. The Irish Volunteers Dependents' Fund (IVDP) and the Irish Nationalists' Aid Association (INAA) were merged together to form the National Aid and Volunteers Dependents' Fund (NAVDF). Kathleen Clarke was president, Áine Ceannt vice-president, Michael Collins later became Secretary and used the IRB contacts to his advantage.¹²⁵ The raising of funds was a task the women of Cumann na mBan had undertaken. Fundraising was conducted alongside their other duties, such as carrying dispatches, hiding guns and ammunition, in addition to sourcing food and tobacco for men on the run and the laundry.

Prison visits and first aid were also an important part of their function within the wider community especially, as the war progressed. Margaret Broderick-Nicholson (see B4) described in her Witness Statement that having organised and participated in several concerts she was well known 'to the different officers in each area.'¹²⁶ She attributes this as the reason she was asked to take up intelligence work, which 'consisted in keeping an eye out for RIC patrols and the carrying of dispatches'.¹²⁷ Later she carried and distributed bundles of *An tÓglach* as she travelled. This was a risky task as it was a serious offence if caught. Minnie Lenihan, a member of the Galway City branch of Cumann na mBan since 1917, 'was primarily involved in getting vital information in and out of prisons.'¹²⁸ She had become a regular visitor to Galway gaol and was well liked. She had portrayed herself to be a pacifist and this allowed her to be inconspicuous and enabled her to come and go freely. Here she explained her visits to Renmore Prison, whereby she met:

men from the Connaught Rangers who gave her information on movement of troops, IRA men who were in danger of death and those who were to be arrested. She also got important intelligence from her brother-in-law O'Toole who was a driver for Meldon (a local solicitor) and his friend Cruise (D.I. of the Royal Irish Constabulary/RIC).¹²⁹

¹²⁵ McCoole *No Ordinary Women*, 61

¹²⁶ Margaret Broderick-Nicholson 27 September 1957 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1682

¹²⁷ Margaret Broderick-Nicholson 27 September 1957 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1682

¹²⁸ <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/en/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/military-service-pensions-blog> Accessed 20 September 2018.

¹²⁹ Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection (MSPC) blog, 'Women in Intelligence – Part 3: Minnie Lenihan', 12 July 2018, <https://militarypensions.wordpress.com/2018/07/12/women-in-intelligence-part-3-minnie-lenihan/> Accessed 20 August 2018

Minnie also mentions Seamus Murphy, OC Galway, in her pension application. Whilst documenting her activities surrounding the war, she was asked two specific questions regarding the delivery of information. The context of these questions was that she had obtained intelligence about arrests and raids on Volunteers as she moved about. The questions began by asking did she pass the information to Murphy? Secondly, and more directed at his conduct, did he 'delay in sending the message and the arrests were made[?]' Minnie replied 'Yes' to both questions. It appears that, once again, Seamus Murphy's behaviour during this period cast doubt on his leadership. In probing Minnie regarding Murphy's actions, it becomes clear that his procrastination had created frustration and resentment amongst the Volunteers in Galway.¹³⁰ However, as the War of Independence escalated so too did the role of women and Cumann na mBan. However, as women they were also subjected to and targeted in what was reported at the time, as the 'terrors' or 'outrages' of war.¹³¹ This theme is further considered in more detail in the discussion on memory in Chapters 7 and 8.

Continued Agrarian Unrest

During the Spring of 1920, there was a continuation, and later an escalation, of agrarian violence in the West of Ireland. McNamara notes that in Galway:

agitation was concentrated in the southeast of the county and centred on the Kilconnell-Ahascragh-Woodlawn districts. Over previous months, the *Galway Express* claimed that 300,000 acres had been cleared of stock with 30,000 sheep and cattle dispersed ... a list of twenty-nine landowners had been targeted.¹³²

Increased reports of cattle drives and sheep stealing was a continuing complaint received by the now fully operational parish courts. Several agrarian disputes had erupted throughout the previous year with two fatalities ensuing from the ongoing threats: James Ward, as previously mentioned, and then Frank Shawe-Taylor in March 1920. Shawe-Taylor, a prominent land agent and landowner in Galway, was murdered on his way to a fair.¹³³ Two men stood out from behind cover and fired shots at him and his driver. The driver was injured but Shawe-Taylor did not survive the attack. Arrests were made but because of the lack of evidence, nobody was ever prosecuted.

¹³⁰ Minnie Lenihan, Military Service Pension (herein MSP) MSP34REF12121

¹³¹ Contemporary newspaper reports and questions in Westminster all refer to attacks on women and the general population as 'Terror' or 'Outrages'.

¹³² Conor McNamara, *War and Revolution in the West of Ireland Galway 1913–1922* (Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2018) 173

¹³³ *Tuam Herald*, 6 March 1920

Kevin O'Sheil, Special Judicial Commissioner to the Dáil put forward his theory for the increase in these land disputes. He contended that there were four main reasons: Firstly, the congestion of small tenant farms, which were uneconomic landholdings and had long awaited the Land Commission's division of neighbouring estates. Secondly, as a result of the ban on migration during the war, many young men that would have forged a life abroad now needed a place to settle and raise a family. Thirdly, the war had driven prices on agricultural foodstuffs upwards and many viewed this as an opportunity to improve their circumstances. Finally, the depleted RIC, under huge pressure themselves, were no longer able to protect many of the landlords or their land and some took advantage of this.¹³⁴ As has already been mentioned, not all IRA Volunteers were 'agrarian agitators and vice versa, but overlaps existed' and in County Galway, increasingly, it may have been difficult for some to tell the difference.¹³⁵ It is not clear if those Volunteers that engaged in land disputes joined specifically to reinforce their intimidation, or took advantage while members. Either way, the situation was becoming intolerable for those on the receiving end of the confrontations.

In West Connemara sheep stealing was prevalent throughout the area and as the RIC were no longer able to commit resources to investigate or recover the animals, it was left to the IRA police. They could, in some cases, be investigating themselves. The situation left many farmers discontented and frustrated at the lack of social order. Attempting to rectify the situation, John Feeney explained how the local IRA co-ordinated a force of Volunteers and farmers over the area of the Twelve Pins and rounded up all the stray sheep.¹³⁶ The sheep were placed into one pen to allow farmers to gather and collect the stolen sheep. In comparison to the apparent indifference of the RIC to solve this issue, this action garnered respect amongst the farming community and was reflected in later collections for arms. Feeney contended that this one action 'was very effective and it wiped out sheep stealing in the district as they were afraid of the Volunteers'.¹³⁷ Correspondingly, the farming community acquiesced in the decisions of the Republican courts.

¹³⁴ Kevin O'Sheil, Date Unknown MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1770.

¹³⁵ McNamara, *War and Revolution in the West of Ireland: Galway 1913–1922*, 172.

¹³⁶ John Feeney, 29 October 1957 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1692.

¹³⁷ John Feeney, 29 October 1957 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1692.

Re-organisation of the Galway IRA

By early 1920, as the new Black and Tan police reserves became more active in County Galway, so too did the IRA, yet frustration at the dearth in leadership became an issue throughout the county. This discontentment and infuriation at the senior IRA leadership, specifically Seamus Murphy, was having a chaotic effect on the structure and morale of Volunteers in County Galway. However, it appeared that Murphy himself was not only feeling the strain but had been ill with pneumonia for some time.¹³⁸ He complained that communication surrounding each manoeuvre was 'difficult' throughout such a large county and by the time permission was sought and granted 'conditions had changed, and the ambush was no longer practicable.'¹³⁹ Feeling the mounting pressure, he requested to be relieved of his command and asked for a reorganisation of the county. At this juncture, everyone involved felt that it was time that someone from Dublin HQ be sent to determine the future of the IRA in Galway. The request was partially denied; a restructure did transpire, but Murphy was ordered to remain.

Richard Mulcahy, IRA chief of staff, had returned to Connemara, not as hoped to discuss the issue, rather he needed to recuperate after an illness. Pádraic Ó Máille had offered his home in Kilmilkin in Maam Valley. Whilst there, however, the issue was unavoidable. Mulcahy was careful with whom he consulted. Eventually, he spoke with P.J. McDonnell and they discussed the lack of activities in the county. The situation would have to be rectified before the entire county became despondent. Subsequently, Michael Collins, Richard Mulcahy and Gearóid O'Sullivan had a meeting with Murphy and twenty of his officers in Vaughan's Hotel to discuss the situation. They decided on the restructure. Dolan observed how Galway was finally divided:

[Galway was to] be divided into four brigades, with Galway city as an independent unit...Richard Mulcahy organised Connemara into West Connemara brigade, (OC—Peter [P] or Petie] McDonnell) and East Connemara brigade, (OC—Micheál Ó Droighneáin) Seamus Murphy became OC of Galway city unit...his health broke down and he returned to Dublin, John [Séan] Brod[e]rick, Vice OC became acting OC. East Galway was divided into two brigades. The north-west brigade had Con Fogarty as brigadier but on his arrest, Paddy Dunleavy became acting OC. The south-east brigade was commanded by Laurence Kelly. Later, both of these brigades were sub-divided. The brigades were divided into battalions according to their size, e.g. West Connemara brigade had four

¹³⁸ Geraldine Dillon, 14 September 1950 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 424 and Dolan, 'Connacht Galway 1920–1921', 390.

¹³⁹ Dolan, 'Connacht Galway 1920–1921', 390.

battalions and South-east brigade had six.¹⁴⁰

The readjustment concluded that West Connemara Brigade encompassed the villages of Leenane, Rosmuc, Roundstone and Clifden and the East Connemara Brigade included Spiddal, Moycullen and Inverin. It is not so easy to comprehend the changes in other areas. For example, East Galway seemed to have had several changes in its structure up until 1921 but confusion between what is meant by brigade and battalion makes it difficult to sometimes understand these changes.¹⁴¹ However, what does become clearer when researching the Witness Statements is that the geographical boundaries of local companies was not always adhered to. Discussions on ambushes or attacks was sometimes decided based on the accessibility or availability of handguns, or indeed who was available at that time. Clarification on the re-organisation, however, is further obscured by the fact that a company in Clare and a battalion in Mayo at times appeared under the control of some Galway units. However, as Ó Comhraí and O'Malley point out, the more conspicuous brigades with corroborating statements during the War of Independence period are Mid-Galway, Tuam, Ballinasloe, South-west Brigade and South-east Brigade.¹⁴² Once again, the concentrated IRA clashes and attacks were also in these areas. McNamara has attributed this pattern based on participation during the 1916 Rising. However he also points to the 'economic circumstance with the IRA being more effective in the better-off east than in the poorer, western parts of the county'.¹⁴³ The topography of the county would have also been a factor with greater ease of movement east of Lough Corrib, for both the Crown's forces and the IRA. As mentioned above, taking into account the various inconsistencies throughout the Witness Statements, Pension Applications, and Brigade Reports, Fig. 5.2. is the breakdown of the IRA companies as recorded by July 1921.

Although there was confusion, as mentioned above, the exception to this is Gort Battalion. Formed during 1916 under Pádraig Ó Fathaigh as brigade secretary and Thomas (Tom) McNerney as brigade scout, this battalion (referred to as company in files) remained focused, disciplined, and consistent. Tom McNerney replaced Ó Fathaigh as OC in 1917 and continued in this position until July 1921.

¹⁴⁰ Dolan, 'Connacht Galway 1920-1921', 390.

¹⁴¹ Cormac Ó Comhraí and K.H. O'Malley eds, *The Men Will Talk to Me, Galway Interviews by Ernie O'Malley* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 2013), 42-3.

¹⁴² Ó Comhraí and O'Malley eds, *The Men Will Talk to Me*, 43.

¹⁴³ McNamara, 'Galway' 614

Figure 5.3. Breakdown of IRA Companies sourced from various Witness Statements, Pension Applications and Brigade Reports

Brigade	Battalion	Companies
North Galway Brigade Total 767	1 Battalion 376 all ranks	Barnaderg, Tuam, Cortoon, Sylaune, Corofin, Abbeyknockmoy, Milltown, Belmont, Gardenfield, and Kilconly
	2 Battalion 391 all ranks	Dunmore, Kilterna, Williamstown, Kilcroom, Glinsk, Kilbegnet, Kilkerrin, Clonberne, Glenamaddy, and Pollredmond. Active Service Unit (Caherlistrane)
I Brigade (I Western Division) South East Galway Total 774	(Mountbellew) 190 all ranks	Menlough, Caltra, Newbridge, Ballymacward, Gurteen, Skehanagh, Ballinamore and Mount Bellew.
	(Loughrea) 98 all ranks	New Inn, Closetoken, Kilnadeema, Loughrea, Bullaun, Kilrickle, Kilchreest and Mullagh.
	(Ballinasloe) 252 all ranks	Cappatagle, Aughrim, Ballinasloe, Clontuskert, Kiltormer, Laurencetown and Clonfert.
	(Portumna) 234 all ranks	Portumna, Tynagh, Tiernascragh, Ballinakill, Kilmeen, Leitrim, Duniry, Woodford, Abbey and Killimor.
Galway No 1 Brigade/Mid Galway Total 758	(Castlegar) 469 all ranks	Castlegar, Galway Town, Derrydonnell, Newcastle, Cregmore, Cussaune, and Monivea
	(Claregalway) 154 all ranks	Claregalway, Annaghdown A, Annaghdown B, and Kilcoona

	(Headford) 135 all ranks	Clooneen, Claran, and Caherlistrane.
2 Brigade South West Galway Total 1,297	1 Battalion (Gort) 466 all ranks	Peterswell, Kilbracanty, Beagh, Derrybrien, and Gort.
	2 Battalion (Ardrahan) 370 all ranks	Kinvara, Ballinderreen, Ardrahan, Kilmacduagh, and Kiltartan
	3 Battalion (Athenry) 461 all ranks	Athenry, Craughwell, Maree/Oranmore, Kilconieran, Killimor Daly, and Clarenbridge.
3 Brigade West Connemara Total 1,304	1 Battalion 367 all ranks	Leenane, Cornamone, Cloughbrack, Finny, Lettergesk and Kilmilken
	2 Battalion 256 all ranks	Rossmuck, Carraroe, Lettermore, Tiernea, Ballinakill, Lettermullen, Clynagh, Camus and Kilkerrin.
	3 Battalion 367 all ranks	Roundstone, Carna, Cashel, Recess and Calla.
	4 Battalion 314 all ranks	Clifden, Cleggan, Ballinakill, Boffin Island, Tullycross and Letterfrack.
4 Brigade East Connemara Total Total 686	1 Battalion (Spiddal) 245 all ranks	Barna, Furbough, Spiddal, and Knock.
	2 Battalion (Inverin) 127 all ranks	Rossaveal, Tully, Minna & Inverin and Cornarone.
	3 Battalion (Moycullen) 314 all ranks	Moycullen, Oughterard, Killanin and Bushypark.
Total 5,586	Population of County Galway - 1911 Census 182,224 ¹⁴⁴ (No census was taken in 1921, because of the War of Independence)	

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-1916/1916irl/people/population/> Accessed 27 April 2022

The battalion reached the status of brigade during the restructuring in 1920 and McInerney was ordered to report directly to Dublin GHQ instead of GHQ Galway. The reason for this is unclear, except that he, in addition to the rest of his brigade, was regarded highly amongst the Dublin leaders. As matters transpired, South Galway became one of the most active regions in the war and participated in many of the incidents recorded. Following the reshuffle, a more organised approach was taken and a distinct change in tactics ensued. When Seamus Murphy's illness finally forced him to return to Dublin, the remnants of dissatisfaction were soon replaced with determination as the IRA refocused on the war.¹⁴⁵

However, despite the reorganisation, the constant drilling and training, some units seemed unable to engage their targets. The reasons behind this seem to vary, from either disorganisation amongst the commanders, to scarcity or absence of correct weaponry, such as, bombs, rifles or revolvers. Even dependence on other companies for back-up was an issue. Some Volunteers simply did not show up, or, in some cases, a straightforward change of route by the RIC thwarted the IRA Volunteers. The lack of adequate guns and rifles for particular stakeouts or operations was also exasperating. Despite repeated efforts to procure weapons for Galway, circumstances consistently thwarted their moves.¹⁴⁶ Considering the continued collection of arms and money, and the bomb-making that continued throughout the term of the war, this was damaging to morale. In some cases, Volunteers enlisted in other companies with better access to armaments in order to play a more active role.¹⁴⁷

By early 1920, the IRA campaign had carried out systematic attacks on '30 courthouses, 343 vacated RIC barracks, 12 occupied RIC barracks and caused damage to a further 104 vacated and 24 occupied police barracks.'¹⁴⁸ The police abandoned ordinary patrols as they were under constant threat of attack and this began to take its toll on morale and may have had a bearing on the severity of incidents, reprisals and beatings later in the war. Also, once the Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries arrived in Ireland, almost at once, under orders, these new reserves adopted a hard-line

¹⁴⁵ There were several re-organisations of Galway Brigades during 1920. Michael Brennan also modified companies when he became OC. Companies continued to alter and adapt over the period of the war and were recorded as above by July 1921. See MA/MSPC/A/36, MA/MSPC/A21 (3), MA/MSPC/A/28, MA/MSPC/A/20, MA/MSPC/A21 (1), MA/MSPC/A/21 (2) <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/brigade-activities/brigades/>

¹⁴⁶ John Conneely, 'The Troubles' in South Galway', *Trácht* 1988

¹⁴⁷ See Michael Hynes, 26 May 1955, MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1173

¹⁴⁸ Coleman, *The Irish Revolution*, 69.

approach. Consequently, '[t]he scene was set for 18 months of full-scale guerrilla war'.¹⁴⁹ McNamara records the 'List of Casualties in County Galway' in 1920 as being twenty-six persons, thirteen of which were killed by Crown forces and seven by IRA.¹⁵⁰ The communities of Galway had crossed the rubicon. IRA decisions at a national level had secured the attention of people home and abroad. However, this would ultimately stimulate or entice perilous strategies on both sides that unleashed a torrent of heated engagements.

One incident that was a catalyst in the escalation of violence and was to set the propaganda machine into overdrive was the killing of Sinn Féin Lord Mayor of Cork, Tomás MacCurtain. He was a strong republican supporter and commanded the IRA in Cork city. After winning the local government elections in January 1920, MacCurtain was elected to Cork Corporation for the North-West Ward and became the first Sinn Féin Lord Mayor. No longer on the run, MacCurtain used his office to promote both his administrative role and the political agenda simultaneously. It had been thought that his death 'was in retaliation for the murder, earlier that day, of Police Constable Murtagh on Pope's Quay.'¹⁵¹ He was set to investigate the IRA Volunteer accused of the killing when, in the early hours of 20 March, he was shot dead in his bedroom by a disguised policemen. His distraught wife, prevented from defending her husband by the intruders, later suffered a miscarriage.¹⁵² The killing shocked not only the people of Cork but many international observers and condemnation came from several quarters.¹⁵³ The inquest that followed, which many of the summoned jurors attended, agreed a verdict of wilful murder against Lloyd George and certain Inspectors of the RIC. Once again the international press were on hand to report the verdict which reached the House of Commons.¹⁵⁴ Michael Collins plotted revenge on the RIC officers alleged to have been involved in the assassination.¹⁵⁵ One of those named was Inspector Oswald Swanzy. Under threat, he was subsequently transferred to Lisburn,

¹⁴⁹ Coleman, *The Irish Revolution*, 69.

¹⁵⁰ McNamara, *War and Revolution*, 221–2.

¹⁵¹ <https://mylesdungan.com/2015/04/17/on-this-day-17-4-1920-inquest-verdict-tomas-maccurtain-murder/>
Accessed 10 May 2019

¹⁵² <http://dib.cambridge.org.ezproxy.gmit.ie/quicksearch.do?sessionId=5659C9D82ACC89819D7FAEF1F0DE0F96>
Accessed 7 December 2018.

¹⁵³ <http://homepage.eircom.net/~corkcounty/maccurtain.html> Accessed 15 May 2019.

¹⁵⁴ House of Commons Debate 22 April 1920 vol 128 cc534-5 <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1920/apr/22/murder-of-alderman-maccurtain> Accessed 9 September 2020

¹⁵⁵ <https://mylesdungan.com/2015/04/17/on-this-day-17-4-1920-inquest-verdict-tomas-maccurtain-murder/>
Accessed 10 May 2019

County Antrim. However, he was hunted down and killed the following August by two IRA Volunteers.¹⁵⁶ Myles Dungan refers to this as ‘a highly symbolic act’, as, ‘MacCurtain’s revolver was used to shoot Swanzy dead’.¹⁵⁷ Thirteen months after that first Dáil and ambush in Soloheadbeg, Co Tipperary, the killing of a Lord Mayor, in what appears to be a reprisal was yet another significant moment in this war. The normal restraints of law and order appeared broken, and would not be easily repaired. In this context, the people of Galway were about to experience a terror that would envelop the entire county, a circumstance they could never have predicted.

Conclusion

The key aim of this chapter was to explore the local histories of County Galway during the War of Independence between 21 January 1919–20 March 1920. Yet, it is important to view this within the context of the national situation. For instance, the reorganising of Sinn Féin led to significant change in the political landscape, marked by the assembly of the First Dáil and equally, a political and military shift that rejected any pro-British opinion, while pursuing a more pro-Irish nationalist attitude. Meanwhile, as Laffan has shown, Sinn Féin had become strong political leaders and now controlled the councils.¹⁵⁸ Likewise, the Irish Volunteers had established themselves within communities and were eager to return to a more active role in the pursuance of independence. However, before long the British establishment adapted, and their counter-insurgency campaign to regain control had begun in earnest by spring of 1920 with the arrival of special constables, the Black and Tans.

Significantly, it was the returning 1916 Rising veterans that determinedly reorganised themselves and reactivated another militant campaign despite the risk of imprisonment. Especially after partaking in some training during imprisonment and constituted themselves in a more military fashion. Hopkins and Coleman have both alluded to the intergenerational membership of secret societies as the motivation of many Volunteers to continue.¹⁵⁹ In County Galway, this included the inherited bitter

¹⁵⁶ *Irish Times* 23 August 1920, 6

¹⁵⁷ <https://mylesdungan.com/2015/04/17/on-this-day-17-4-1920-inquest-verdict-tomas-maccurtain-murder/>
Accessed 10 May 2019

¹⁵⁸ See Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland*,

¹⁵⁹ See Coleman, *The Irish Revolution*, 31–44 and Michael Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence*, (Dublin: Gill Books, 2004) 11–21

struggle for land. Both McNamara and Campbell have discussed the instances in detail that bear this out.¹⁶⁰ Yet, some of these incidents, as shown here, ultimately caused a chaotic misapprehension amongst the very community the Volunteers wished to ingratiate themselves with. Although activity varied throughout the country, research into the various documented local histories in Galway confirms that the return of the 1916 veterans and their need to re-engage in conflict, was well planned and became critical early on. Despite reservations from the more militant Volunteers, they began to recognise that they were indeed building a successful network which became pivotal during the collection of the Dáil loan and republican courts. The establishment of republican courts initially arose out of the widespread agrarian unrest in the west, in addition to the resentment at wealthy people such as local landlords, their stewards, land agents and even big farm owners dominating the sector. The system of land ownership aggravated many local Galway communities and they sought alternative means in the form of illegal land seizures. Yet once political canvassing began, it was key for Sinn Féin to distinguish between the national conflict and local land issues and how they dealt with these disputes. As Campbell has demonstrated, although Arthur Griffith was in favour of land redistribution he opposed direct action. Therefore, those involved in both were requested not to use their influence as Volunteers to determine an outcome, a situation that was difficult to manage. Yet, this form of gangsterism with its intimidation or violence needed to be eradicated and the confidence of the people assured. Nevertheless, there was a noticeable shift in allegiances to these courts as the conflict developed and the breakdown of law and order continued.

Of equal frustration for the county's Volunteers had been the ongoing command issues surrounding Seamus Murphy. His request to relinquish his command spoke of his deficiencies as a leader, albeit through ill health. Richard Mulcahy, also recovering from illness, was to later gain respect from the Volunteers for his reorganising efforts. The war in County Galway had been virtually stagnant as no plans or ideas could pass Murphy's reluctance or inability to make a decision that mattered. Nevertheless, this was only one reason: others include, complete scarcity of armaments, lack of co-ordination between activists, and in areas such as Connemara, extreme poverty was a major issue.¹⁶¹ Also worth mentioning is the fact that most of the returning 1916

¹⁶⁰ See McNamara, *War and Revolution in the West of Ireland* and Campbell, *Land and Revolution*

¹⁶¹ O Malley and Ó Comhraí eds *The Men Will Talk to Me*, 39

veterans in Galway had been marked by the RIC and were arrested on several occasions for various offences under Defence Against the Realm Act (DORA). Yet, the constant attacks on outlying police barracks was producing a result, and confidence amongst the younger Volunteers was improving. The situation began to change once the Black and Tans arrived in County Galway. More experienced Volunteers were prepared for the inevitable confrontation with the new recruits. Nonetheless, one important factor is that none of this would have been possible without the support of the Cumann na mBan.

Nationally, the contribution of the Cumann na mBan to this conflict did not enter into the historiography of the period in any significant way. Until recently it had been difficult to find narratives that included the role or agency of women. Female historians, such as Margaret MacCurtain, spent their academic life trying to rectify a dearth of historic accounts. Early accounts such as those by Coyle and Conlon, and later Cal McCarthy's *Cumann na mBan and the Irish Revolution* in 2007, all contributed greatly to the understanding of who these women were and what motivated them to step outside the social order of gender specific roles, into a life which brought them into such danger. Margaret Ward's, legacy is that she introduced unique insights into the experiences of these women during episodes of conflict. In particular, she discussed the experiences of Cumann na mBan members during the period of the War of Independence. However, it still remains a difficult challenge to research those women from Galway, and more so to fit their accounts neatly into a chronological historical narrative. Nevertheless, women did contribute in many areas, such as local government, intelligence, and dispatches. Galway women were also prepared to risk imprisonment in order to take possession of land illicitly. Equally, Galway women that disagreed with Sinn Féin policies did not hesitate to make their feelings known by attacking the priest that delivered speeches which promoted the Sinn Féin line. Overall, despite the limitations of sources, their activity has been established.

Notwithstanding these issues, by March 1920, Sinn Féin clubs throughout County Galway were at the height of their strength and almost all communities had local branches with IRA Volunteers now operating on various levels. Their activity included officiating during local court sittings, military drilling, raiding houses for arms, intelligence gathering, and deliberately disrupting the RIC in all aspects. This was in

addition to focused attacks on barracks. RIC numbers diminished rapidly, forcing the British to recruit special reserves to compensate for this decline. These Black and Tans, enforced the counter-insurgency tactics, which brought about another change in the conduct of the war. The newly-recruited Black and Tans intensified the arrests of known insurgents, increased the searches of homes and businesses and provided security to those whose land and lives were considered in danger. As a result, the aggressive approach of Volunteers was also escalated. This level of violence is explored in more detail in the next chapter, which documents the intensification of the War of Independence in County Galway and key incidents that formed part of the widely reported term 'terror'.

**Chapter 6. Local Histories of the War of
Independence in County Galway 21 March 1920–11 July
1921**

From the spring of 1920, a more violent struggle was to engulf the island of Ireland as the War of Independence continued to escalate. In this chapter, the key aim once again is, to *furnish new local histories of the War of Independence in County Galway*, in this instance, from the period 21 March 1920 until the Truce, 11 July 1921. This is a significant phase of the conflict. By establishing the various events which affected the lives and everyday routines of the local population, utilising scholarly sources, documentation and archival records, it is possible to uncover new insights into this period. The first part of this chapter considers how County Galway was one of the first regions to receive the special reserve constables, or Black and Tans. This was to curb the ever increasing land disputes which had also become violent. Some IRA Volunteers used the cover of the independence struggle to pursue their own land campaigns, a practice that was discouraged by IRA leaders. At the same time, the attacks on barracks and RIC continued and before long, extensive arrests of IRA Volunteers began. Consequently, many others, fearing capture, were forced to move away from their homes and go on the run. This existence was to cause untold hardship not only to those Volunteers concerned, but also their extended families. The strongest, more competent Volunteers, formed smaller groups to achieve their objectives. As shown throughout the rest of this chapter, the repercussions would be brutal. Whilst ordinary civilians went about their daily lives they became involuntarily embroiled in the conflicts. Also discussed in detail is the more frequent episodes of reprisals inflicted by the Crown forces on those civilians living in towns and villages around County Galway. Many stemmed from IRA attacks on police. For instance, attacks at Merlin Park and Oranmore brought about reprisals in the days that followed, with civilians assaulted and buildings burned. The ever-increasing violence became a topic of debate in both the House of Commons and the American Commission on Conditions in Ireland as calls for these reprisals to cease fell on deaf ears. With no vested interest in the communities they served, did the new recruits conduct these aggressive violent episodes under orders, or were they reacting to the ambushes in the only way possible? Regardless of the reasons, the situation was not sustainable, and a solution was needed. Both sides had to compromise to solve it.

The Arrival of Crown Forces in County Galway 1920

If the arrival of the Black and Tans in Ireland was intended to subdue any escalation of guerrilla warfare, an enormous miscalculation was made. Their tactic was to purposely break the rebels and instil fear into anyone who helped or harboured them. In an attempt to understand their brutality towards ordinary civilians, Lowe describes how folk memory often defines them as being violent ex-prisoners, others thought of them as war damaged returnees.¹ Henry highlights ‘a deep legacy of hatred, equalled only by the Cromwellian wars of the seventeenth century.’² Their contribution to what was quickly labelled the ‘terror’ was marked by the barbarity and willingness to inflict suffering indiscriminately. The term ‘terror’ as used here, was coined in newspapers nationally and locally and also applied by British Pathé in their newsreels to highlight the ‘daily terror’ experienced in Ireland during the War of Independence.³ However, it is necessary here to clarify exactly what is understood as the ‘terror’ that was felt by the people of Galway and elsewhere around the country. David Fitzpatrick in his Introduction to *Terror in Ireland 1916–1923* gave the following working definition that is also employed within this study:

Terror, apart from being a state of mind, may be defined as a conscious attempt to create an acute fear of violence against the person or property, which may affect individuals, groups or the population at large. *Terrorists* are those who perpetrate any form of terror, for any purpose. *Terrorism* implies a sustained and systematic attempt to generate terror.⁴

It could be said that the surrounding communities of Galway experienced this terror from several sources, including the Black and Tans, depending on which community of people they are part of. For instance, those group of landowners who were intimidated by land agitators most certainly experienced terror, or even the families of RIC men shunned and ostracised by their neighbours. In addition to their property or livestock being damaged, daily news reports from all over the country recounted incidents of RIC members being shot or killed. It is therefore not surprising that several primary resources refer to the term terror, in order to denote the emotional state of those affected following violent incidents both nationally and throughout County Galway during this period.

¹ See W. J. Lowe, ‘The War Against the RIC, 1919–21’, *Éire-Ireland* 37 (2002), 79–117

² William Henry, *Blood for Blood: The Black and Tan War in Galway* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2012), 51

³ <https://ifiarchiveplayer.ie/terror-in-ireland/> Accessed 10 February 2020

⁴ David Fitzpatrick, ed, *Terror in Ireland 1916–1923. Trinity History Workshop* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2012), 5

Those expressions of terror that are described in primary resources, such as newspaper reports and Witness Statements, generally follow key incidents during the period. As seen from a simple online search in the Military Archives Witness Statements, the term ‘terror’ is used over 138 times.⁵ When ‘terror’ is searched alongside the term ‘Galway’ a result numbering 458 is returned (Galway providing the greater return).⁶ Of these, Geraldine Dillion, James (Seamus Bawn) Duggan, Henry O’Mara and John C King all mention scenes of terror or experiences of terror in County Galway.⁷ As seen later, O’Mara gives his account of two key incidents, the ‘Murder of Mrs. Malachy [Eileen] Quinn, Gort, in Nov. 1920 and the Loughnane Bros. of Shanaglish, Co. Galway, also in November, 1920’.⁸ Incidents such as these also received attention from an international audience, through newspapers such as *Le Petit Journal*, based in Paris and *Tribuna Illustrata*, Rome.⁹ However, Witness Statements along with newspaper reports must be interpreted with caution as it is important to bear in mind the possible bias within them. Nonetheless, reports in numerous newspapers during this period lead with terms such as ‘Echo of Terror’, ‘Night of Terror’, ‘Terror in Co. Galway’, ‘Night of Terror in Co. Galway’ and ‘Terror in Tuam’.¹⁰ These reports in themselves must have caused fear. Such reprisals were seen as revenge by Crown forces for attacks on local police, such as the killing of Constable Foley and the injuring of two colleagues. This report went on to claim that ‘many residents fled to the mountains in terror, and pandemonium reigned until seven o’clock in the morning’.¹¹ Furthermore, one paper described how the officers from the ‘local Flying Corps’ rushed to aid the community in Oranmore to help quench the many fires threatening to burn the village.¹² Henry, also refers to incidents or events in chapters entitled ‘Night of Terror’, ‘Terror Stalks the Streets’, ‘Terror on Both Sides’ and ‘Terror in the Terrace’.¹³ The expression of terror was also used to denote the intimidation and fear directed at members of the RIC. Brian Hughes in his chapter

⁵ <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/bmhsearch/search.jsp?querystr=Terror> Accessed 27 March 2019.

⁶ <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/bmhsearch/search.jsp?querystr=Galway+terror> Accessed 27 March 2019

⁷ Geraldine Dillon 28 September 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1260, James (Seamus Bawn) Duggan 25 June 1953 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 875, Henry O Mara 22 April 1954 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1652 and John C King Date Unknown MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1731.

⁸ Henry O Mara 22 April 1954 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1652

⁹ *Irish Times* Jan 3, 2019

¹⁰ See examples from, *Tuam Herald* 24 July 1920, *Irish Independent* 23 August 1920, *The Cork Examiner* 24 August 1920, *The Liberator* (Tralee) 24 August 1920, *Anglo-Celt* 11 September 1920, and *Connacht Tribune* 30 October 1920, *Freeman’s Journal* 4 March 1921.

¹¹ *The Cork Examiner* 24 August 1920

¹² *The Cork Examiner* 24 August 1920

¹³ Henry, *Blood for Blood*.

'Intimidation Coercion and Communities During the Revolution' explains:

This form of terror, [was] consisting of a general boycott and regularly enforced by intimidation and aggression ... Its common features were anonymous threatening letters, proclamations, forcefully administered oaths, raids, and damaged property aimed at inducing members of the RIC to resign.¹⁴

It is important to remember that RIC members were in many cases married, and these threats also included their immediate families. Jeremiah Mee, a constable in Kerry stood in protest against what he perceived was an injustice against the people. Later, his family home in Glenamaddy was burned by Black and Tans. In contrast, IRA Volunteers were told to avoid it, in spite of the fact that his two brothers were also constables. What was seen prior to the War of Independence as a prominent respectable career, quite soon became intolerable. As the violence escalated throughout the county, very few communities were immune to its effects. Social order had descended into total chaos and this state of terror was not sustainable. Those in authority seemed unable to control or reinstate order.

Nonetheless, the escalation in violence perpetrated by those who had been entrusted with keeping the peace was unprecedented in modern times, and ordinary members of the public had to endure the brunt of this horrid acceleration. This situation was sometimes hard to bear for a local community policeman. As noted by W.J. Lowe:

The Black-and-Tans had a reputation for violent indiscipline that could be very dangerous to Irish civilians and even other policemen. Members of the 'old' RIC had very mixed reactions to their presence and violent behaviour that not all officers were able to restrain. Black-and-Tans were thought of as 'gun-happy' and the Auxiliaries' ferocity was reputed to be fuelled by heavy drinking. Even officers who regarded the Black-and-Tans as effective assets against the IRA acknowledged that the strict disciplinary system in the RIC Code had not anticipated a large number of men who were not trained as policemen.¹⁵

Equally, the RIC County Inspector's report for June 1920 painted a grim picture of what Leeson referred to as the increasing 'social war being waged against the Royal Irish Constabulary' in Galway at the time.¹⁶ The report tells of how both the Petty

¹⁴ Brian Hughes, *Defying the IRA?: Intimidation, Coercion, and Communities During the Irish Revolution* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016) 22

¹⁵ W.J. Lowe, 'Who Were the Black and Tans', *History Ireland* Vol. 12, Issue 3 (2004) 50.

¹⁶ D. M. Leeson. *The Black & Tans: British Police and Auxiliaries in the Irish War of Independence*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 42

Sessions and police had been 'set aside' in favour of the Sinn Féin courts and policing by the Volunteers, a situation that went unchallenged. With a total boycott directed against the RIC, it was becoming more difficult for them to procure any provisions. They were under constant attack even when off duty, consequently, they began to patrol in large numbers. Road blocks erected by the IRA restricted their travels and the increased risk of ambushes remained acute. Their working conditions in the barracks were appalling 'with light and air shut out by sand bags, shell boxes and steel shutters'.¹⁷ Leeson also notes, that life was 'very irksome and disagreeable'.¹⁸

The difficulty of residing within a cramped dark barracks was exacerbated by a state of chronic unease and the fear of attack at any moment. Communications, particularly those sent by mail cars, were either held up or destroyed by the Volunteers and all travel by rail by police had virtually ceased. The Inspector recounted how nine police were delayed in Athenry train station traveling from Galway to Tuam and how there had been no train functioning since. What is more, the railway staff at Athenry station and others around the country, refused to work on any trains that carried armed policemen or indeed their ammunition. The boycott continued for over four months. Trains travelling to Limerick, Sligo Clifden, and Claremorris had ceased to function.¹⁹ The report finished by stating: 'The old form of police control is practically beaten to the ropes and it is as well to recognise the situation.'²⁰ Morale was at its lowest ebb, 'life in crowded, isolated stations (including attempts to impose discipline), boredom and community hostility diminished the appeal of good pay.'²¹

By mid-1920, regardless of the frustrations or provocations around the structure or leadership of the IRA in Galway, their anti-establishment efforts had begun to take effect, and could ultimately be seen as their greatest achievement. Trust in their ability to provide an alternative to the local police was rising. Local landowners found themselves with no alternative but to defer to these procedures to resolve differences with suppliers or tenants particularly over land disputes. Lady Augusta Gregory was the youngest daughter of the Anglo-Irish gentry family Persse and widow of Sir William Henry Gregory, who served as Member of Parliament for County Galway. She wrote

¹⁷ Leeson, 'The Royal Irish Constabulary, Black and Tans and Auxiliaries' 42

¹⁸ Leeson, 'The Royal Irish Constabulary, Black and Tans and Auxiliaries' 42

¹⁹ Martin Dolan, 'Connacht Galway 1920-1921', 388.

²⁰ Leeson, 'The Royal Irish Constabulary, Black and Tans and Auxiliaries' 42

²¹ Lowe, 'Who Were the Black and Tans', *History Ireland*. 50

several observations during the period in her diary and in a small periodical. Diarmaid Ferriter described her (depending on which of her letters are read) as a ‘republican, a unionist, a woman of the people, but also a self-interested landlord.’²² The entries on both 3 July and 5 July 1920 mentioned how local Volunteers under Sinn Féin took ‘things in hand’ at the Ballaghadereen Races. No police were present and yet strict controls were put into place, the ‘public houses were opened from 11 to 12 and closed for the rest of the day.’ She quoted Curley the Piper as saying ‘Only one poor publican allowed to sell porter on the course – no whiskey – and you might die for want of a drink in the evening’.²³ One of her staff, Mike, returned from Gort and told her that he had been speaking to ‘some real Sinn F[é]iners and that they intend trying to get back the chimney-pieces and other things stolen from Ballinamantane and to arrange the grazing would be let.’²⁴ The house referred to was one on the Coole estate that was occupied by guests of Lady Gregory. Yeats and his family stayed there whilst his residence at Thoor Ballylee was undergoing renovations. Sometime previously it was broken into and many items including floor boards were stolen. The distrust and resentment that had arisen was not always directed at the local constables but against the Crown forces brought in to supposedly defeat the IRA.

The IRA’s constant harassment of the police had led to a multitude of attacks on RIC barracks, including Glenamaddy, Cummer, Kilkerrin, Woodlawn, New Inn, Looscaun, Salthill, and several police huts at Clonboo, Mace, and Inch. Local IRA knowledge of these barracks would have informed these attacks. One report in the *Connacht Tribune* outlined the vulnerability of stations, in addition to the planning and execution of the strikes. It described how in the early hours of the morning seven policemen in a station, were rescued in ‘the nick of time’ from a ‘siege’ that lasted for over two hours. The remote garrison was Bookeen, in the parish of Killeenadeema, six miles from Loughrea off the main road to Athenry, the only other building of note being the country church:

On Thursday night the customary preparations were made for attack, trees being felled to blockade the approaching roads, and walls being built across them. About midnight the station was attacked by rifle and revolver fire, and an attempt was made to blow it up and set it on fire. The seven policemen

²² *Irish Times*, 27 December 2014.

²³ Lady Gregory, *Lady Gregory’s Journals, 1916–1930*, ed. Lennox Robinson, First Edition (Dublin: Putnam & Company Ltd, 1946), 131.

²⁴ Gregory, *Lady Gregory’s Journals*, 131.

stood to arms, and replied with vigour, hurling hand grenades in the direction from which the fire of their invisible assailants came, but they were hampered by their surroundings and could not make an effective defence. Meanwhile, Verrey lights were sent up for help, and these with the sound of the high explosive rockets and the detonations of the bombs, made a deafening din. The calls for assistance were seen at Loughrea and elsewhere, and after some delay bodies of military converged on the besieged station, but their progress was considerably impeded by the blocked roads. When ultimately the Loughrea relief party got within sight of the burning station, not a trace of the attackers was to be seen, and the building was on the point of collapse. The little garrison with arms intact was rescued, and during the remainder of the morning the military patrolled the adjoining roads without result.²⁵

The use of trees as blockades was widespread, and as many Black and Tans were unfamiliar with the locality, this had slowed down the arrival of reinforcements.

Many of the stations were subsequently burnt, this prevented them being used again. Once the IRA succeeded in forcing the police into larger stations, they turned their attention to stopping and searching all mail deliveries, including the mail train. More than ever, they needed to gather as much intelligence as possible to continue thwarting and disrupting the authorities. Often, they would only confiscate the letters or reports to and from the relevant police or army barracks. However, through their intelligence network they carefully monitored all mail sent and received through the post office. Joe Togher and Jim Walsh, both worked the nightshift, albeit on different rotas, in the Galway Post Office. They passed any letters addressed to Black and Tans officers to the network of operatives around Galway town and then to the IRA leaders.²⁶ Using the intelligence gathered, the Volunteers increased their campaign of disruption. Equally, there was an upsurge in other activities such as, ambushes, cutting telegraph lines to further hamper communication, and the IRA intimidation tactics of contacting potential jurors to dissuade them from attending any British courts or inquests. The IRA's intention was to suffocate beyond use, any mechanism by which the British establishment could function. However, in contrast to local RIC, the Black and Tans had no community attachment to the areas they worked in or indeed the people who lived there. Therefore, any surge in attacks by the IRA only served to heighten their belligerence as the Black and Tans began to direct their fury at the nearest community.

It was just such an operation that preceded the events of what became known as a

²⁵ *Connacht Tribune* 10 June 1920.

²⁶ Thomas Hynes, 17 July 1952 MACBB BMH, WS No. 714

night of 'terror' in Tuam in July 1920. This particular night followed what the *Connacht Tribune* referred to as a 'fiasco', and Leeson has denoted as a 'breaking point', that was the summer assizes in Galway in 1920.²⁷ It began many days before whereby despite heavy security, the IRA managed to contact many of the jurors warning them to boycott the proceedings. The message sent was explicit, 'you are requested not to attend as a juror at the coming British assizes at Galway ... no decent Irishman can do so without acting traitorously towards the nation'.²⁸ They even positioned themselves on the routes of jurors to confront those who did not heed their warning. Similarly, on the platform of Athenry train station the names of all jurors were called, once grouped together, a vigorous request to return to their homes was 'complied without demur'.²⁹ The request, according to the *Connacht Tribune*, was enforced by the threat of being shot at.³⁰ With no protection from the forces of the Crown, many of the cases had to be adjourned, despite the threat of fines against the jurors who failed to attend. It was impossible to conduct the courts under these circumstances. Leeson reveals the extent of intimidation on the Galway jurors, noting that on 'Monday only 52 out of 480 jurors attended. On Tuesday only 27 jurors attended ... the overall result was clear: the British government could no longer enforce its laws in West Galway.'³¹

Later that evening, the Captain of Cortoon Company, Thomas Wilson, had been ordered to monitor the movements of jurors when he was then re-ordered to gather whomever he could and travel to Gallagh. He was only able to assemble ten of the company at such short notice and they made their way in single file so as not to draw attention. There was approximately twenty-five men from various companies, including Cortoon, Tuam and Barnaderg, under the command of both Con Fogarty Brigade OC and Michael Moran, Battalion OC. The duo had collaborated on several ambushes in the past and worked well together. The order was to 'ambush a party of RIC ... returning to their barrack in Dunmore from Galway'.³² Whilst returning to the barracks that evening, Sergeant Betty and Constables Burke, Carey and Brennan had no idea what lay in wait for them. Constable Burke was driving a police vehicle, when

²⁷ *Connacht Tribune*, 24 July 1920 and Leeson, *The Black and Tans*, 43

²⁸ Leeson, *The Black and Tans*, 43

²⁹ *Connacht Tribune*, 24 July 1920

³⁰ *Connacht Tribune*, 24 July 1920

³¹ Leeson, 'The Royal Irish Constabulary, Black and Tans and Auxiliaries', 43.

³² Thomas Wilson 8 June 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No. I 183.

three miles from Tuam near Newton D'Arcy, they were forced to stop. The road was barricaded with a large tree. As the motor vehicle slowed and stopped, a volley of shots killed Constable Burke instantly as he attempted to jump for cover, Carey was wounded and died shortly afterwards. After a short ten-to-fifteen-minute shoot out, both Betty and Brennan were forced to surrender as their ammunition ran out. Fleeing the scene with only three carbines, a .45 revolver and no casualties, the IRA men quickly dispersed fearing capture.³³

News of the ambush travelled quickly and many of the outlying Black and Tans all descended on Tuam. They searched high and low for anyone in the immediate area. Returning empty-handed to Tuam after midnight, the police began to wake their colleagues. However, at some point later, incensed by their deaths and possibly fuelled by alcohol, the Black and Tans raged terror on the town of Tuam as never seen before (see A13). Public houses and grocers were smashed, and the contents pillaged. Some of the townspeople were looking out their windows trying to ascertain where the ruckus was coming from, only to have shots fired through their upper windows with shouts of 'get back or be shot'.³⁴ With much of the same frenzy, the Town Hall was burned to the ground, which coincidentally had held its first Sinn Féin court the previous week. In a dramatic escape over the rooftop, the local draper, his wife and children narrowly avoided death as their home and business were set alight. Incendiary devices were indiscriminately thrown through the remaining homes and shops in what seems to be an attempt to inflict as much damage as possible. Homes were raided, and any suspicious young men were taken out and beaten in order to gain any information on those who had ambushed the policemen. Only the swift intervention of Head Constable Boules and Constable Colleran prevented the killing of several known young Sinn Féin members. Both men had a good rapport with the community of Tuam and were concerned and shocked with the lack of discipline of the Black and Tans.³⁵ The terrifying events lasted for several hours until finally, Tuam was once again quiet. Despite calls from the Archbishop Rev. Gilmartin, a powerful influence in Galway, for official enquires into the incident, none of the reservists were ever

³³ Thomas Wilson 8 June 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No.1183; Michael Clery 12 September 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No.1246; Hubert Birmingham *Dunmore A History* (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 2012) 293.

³⁴ *Tuam Herald*, 24 July 1920, 5.

³⁵ Martin Dolan, 'Connacht Galway 1920-1921' in *The Capuchin Annual* 1970, 389. Dolan suggests that Jack Neville and Ed Casey, had been rescued from harm by the two policemen.

reprimanded. He put forward a proposal to both sides in an effort to curb any tendencies towards further violence, a *tregua Dei* or Truce of God was decreed. However, according to Martin Dolan, despite his attempts at a peaceful solution, he was in turn to ‘considerably handicapped the Volunteers by his call’.³⁶ Rev. Gilmartin prayed that:

God’s justice tempered with mercy may, for the good of society and the salvation of his soul, strike the first man – whether be a policeman, civilian, or soldier – who fires a criminal shot within the precincts of this diocese.³⁷

The official statement from Dublin Castle issued later confirmed the death of the policemen and acknowledged that all ammunition had been taken and the ‘van’ burned. They also confirmed that, ‘after the murder of the two constables, a party of police and military went to Tuam, and the police got out of hand on seeing the bodies of their dead comrades. Shots were fired and houses burned. The police allege that they were fired at’.³⁸ Somewhat predictably, the inquest into the two Constables ‘fell through’ as no jurors attended.³⁹

The General Officer Commander-in-Chief in Ireland was Nevil Macready. He had been appointed as military commander the previous April. Macready believed that there were religious tensions at play in County Galway and responded to the request by Rev. Gilmartin to have an inquiry into the incident. He stated:

The resulting damage to the town that followed owing presumably, to the police being incensed at the calculated and cold-blooded murder of their comrades, is certainly to be deplored, seeing that retaliation can never be a remedy for crime. In view of the fact that from all accounts no military were involved the matter is not one within my province in regard to the sworn inquiry which you suggest should take place. I am therefore at once forwarding your letter and telegram to the proper authority for such action as they may think fit to take.⁴⁰

Subsequent to his appointment, Macready had refused to take over command of the police force. He insisted that both forces should be kept separate and advocated ‘a simple regime of Martial Law for the whole country, but this was not acceptable to

³⁶ Dolan, ‘Connacht Galway 1920–1921’, 389.

³⁷ Dolan, ‘Connacht Galway 1920–1921’, 389, <https://stairnaheireann.net/2014/01/24/1921-the-roman-catholic-archbishop-of-tuam-thomas-gilmartin-issued-a-letter-saying-that-ira-volunteers-who-took-part-in-ambushes-have-broken-the-truce-of-god-they-have-incurred-the-guilt-of-mur/>

Accessed 4 December 2018 and Brian Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment: Catholic Priests and Political Violence in Ireland, 1919–1921* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 228.

³⁸ *Belfast Newsletter* 21 July 1920

³⁹ *Tuam Herald* 24 July 1920

⁴⁰ *Tuam Herald* 24 July 1920

the cabinet'.⁴¹ In May 1920, Major-General Hugh Tudor, a personal friend of the War Secretary Winston Churchill, was appointed, firstly as Police Adviser to the Irish Government and then in November, Chief of Police.⁴² From the start of his appointment Tudor was unclear as to his role or whom he was to advise, and quickly his 'complete lack of police experience, or any clear definition of his obligations ... set him adrift both from the military and police establishment.'⁴³ Regardless of this disjointed command structure, a more uncompromising position against the insurgents was adopted. Ironically, once again those in between suffered as, 'rumours of terror generated further terror'.⁴⁴

Bloody Reprisals

Once the police began to strike in retribution against those they referred to as 'shiners', and indeed against communities accused of harbouring rebels, the public outcry began to force questions in the British parliament. It became a continuous battle to sway the press into holding a sympathetic view towards police, a situation that did not always go in their favour. As outlined by Hopkinson, there are many incidents recorded as 'burning villages and rampant Black and Tans' throughout the country, some more infamous than others.⁴⁵ This makes it difficult to uncover precisely when British counterinsurgency tactics began, however, the summer of 1920 saw a pronounced difference. Notably, not all policemen were comfortable with such blatant disregard for civilians. During the violent incidents in Tuam, Constable Hugh Roddy became so fearful for his family when the shooting began that he cycled home to check on his wife and children. He resigned and returned to his native home of Foxford, Co Mayo.⁴⁶ Further South, Galway-born Constable Jeremiah Mee served in the RIC for nine years before he was transferred to Listowel police station in 1919 (see C13). This was understood as his punishment for joining the police union. He had shared the ethos of union goals and wanted 'to improve the conditions of service and to ensure

⁴¹ F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1973), 417.

⁴² Charles Townshend *The British Campaign in Ireland 1919–1921: The Development of Political and Military Policies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 81.

⁴³ <http://dib.cambridge.org.ezproxy.gmit.ie/quicksearch.do> Accessed 9 December 2018.

⁴⁴ Anne Dolan 'The Shadow of a Great Fear' in *Terror in Ireland 1916–1923. Trinity History Workshop* edited by David Fitzpatrick (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2012) 30.

⁴⁵ Michael Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence* (Dublin: Gill Books, 2004), 79.

⁴⁶ *Tuam Herald* 24 July 1920

that eventually the RIC would be a civil rather than a paramilitary police force.⁴⁷ However, sometime in June 1920, in protest, Mee led thirteen of his fellow police officers in a revolt rather than hand over the station to the British military. His objection was over comments made by Lt.-Col. G. B. F. Smyth, whose remarks were later published in the *Irish Bulletin*, a propaganda pamphlet from the Dáil administration. Cognisant of the already depleted force, and in an effort to boost their morale Smyth told the officers:

You may make mistakes occasionally and innocent persons may be shot, but that cannot be helped; and you are bound to get the right parties sometime. The more you shoot, the better I will like you, and I assure you, men, no policeman will get into trouble for shooting any man.⁴⁸

These directives issued by Smyth, devalued the lives of ordinary innocent people who resided within strong militant communities, and for all intents and purposes sanctioned them as targets. The British authority in Ireland was collapsing.⁴⁹ In vengeance for his objection, Mee's family home in Glenamaddy was later burned by the Black and Tans in 1921.⁵⁰ Mee would later work with Countess Markievicz, organising employment for members of the RIC who had resigned in objection to the involvement of the Black and Tans in policing.⁵¹

Meanwhile, nationally, incidents similar to Tuam also occurred. In order to combat this increase in agitation, the British government introduced a temporary, paramilitary police force known as the Auxiliary Division (ADRIC) or 'Auxies' into key areas. The units were populated with former military officers with battle experience, hardened by war. The essential difference to the existing police force was how they operated. They were deployed as small 'counter-insurgency units [who operated] independent of other RIC formations'.⁵² Having received the reinforcements required, and in reaction to the deliberate boycotting, they began to make their impact felt. The RIC, in particular the auxiliaries, targeted 'the burning of public buildings, shops and factories'. Creameries attracted particular attention having been long 'regarded as recruiting agencies for the IRA' but also 'essential elements for the local economy'⁵³

⁴⁷ <http://dib.cambridge.org.ezproxy.gmit.ie/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a5783> Accessed 9 December 2018.

⁴⁸ As cited in Marie Coleman *The Irish Revolution 1916–1923* (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), 136

⁴⁹ <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/themes/nationalism-war-independence.htm> Accessed 21 July 2020

⁵⁰ Martin Ryan 15 May 1956 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1417

⁵¹ <https://www.glenamaddyheritage.com/heritage/history/jeremiah-mee/>

⁵² W.J. Lowe, 'Who Were the Black and Tans' *History Ireland*, Vol. 12, Issue 3 (2004)

⁵³ Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence*, 80.

Thereby, putting further pressure on locals by intentionally trying to sabotage their vital small farms and businesses. Several references to reprisals in the Witness Statements during the latter half of 1920 include areas such as Templemore, Belfast, Ennistymon, Lahinch, Milltownmalbay, Tubbercurry, Trim, Farranfore, Killorglin and many more. Balbriggan in County Dublin and Cork City were subjected to severe reprisals and warrant particular attention such was the level of destruction and violence.⁵⁴ However, the Auxies cruised about without the hindrance of repercussions and held little sympathy for ordinary citizens that stood in their way. This caused great alarm and fear amongst communities, which inevitably led to an escalation from both sides. Further questions were raised in the British parliament concerning their behaviour.

This pattern also continued in County Galway, with similar outcomes. According to McNamara, 'Twenty-six people were killed by Crown forces in Galway between October 1920 and May 1921.'⁵⁵ Despite reorganisation and the ever-tightening powers of the Crown forces, the Galway IRA continued to exercise a tactic of strike-and-run at every opportunity available to them. Companies such as Sylane, Barnaderg, Tuam, Caherlistrane and others continued to plan and execute attacks, some successful, though others proving fruitless.⁵⁶ In August 1920 the situation changed. Neither the British Government nor Macready favoured a declaration of Martial Law at this stage, yet more power was needed to be placed in the hands of the police under the worsening circumstances. In an attempt to restore law and order in the country and after a lengthy debate, the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act was passed at Westminster on 9 August 1920. The deliberation amongst the Lords was robust, much of their concern was over the introduction of Court-Martials, Lord Morris envisaged that this act would 'perpetuate the troubles':

Where the mistake is made is that too many think that the Irish, and those who represent them, ask for something very novel and very new. As a matter of fact they are asking only for what the Nationalist Party, which stood for Nationalism and Home Rule for Ireland by constitutional means, asked for, and for something that this country twice decided that they should have, and

⁵⁴ For more information on the Burning of Cork <https://www.rte.ie/radio1/doconone/2011/0304/646642-radio-documentary-the-burning-of-cork-ireland/>

⁵⁵ Conor McNamara, *War and Revolution in the West of Ireland: Galway 1913–1922*, 140.

⁵⁶ See Michael Higgins 13 September 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No.1247,

which this Chamber—I think on more than one occasion—voted against.⁵⁷

The debate concluded with a comment from a Privy Councillor standing on the steps that hold the Sovereign's Throne: 'If you pass t[his] Bill you may kill England, not Ireland' and concluded with a guillotine motion amidst cries of 'Order, Order' from speaker.⁵⁸ It had consequences for all involved. An extension to the existing Defence of the Realm Act, permitted a court-martial to replace the trial by jury and military courts of enquiry to replace Coroners' inquests (in addition to intimidation of jurors, this was to prevent any more British forces being found guilty in local jurisdictions). The powers also allowed them to 'enforce the death penalty and internment without trial'.⁵⁹

Michael Buckley from Kilcreest was one of the first to be tried under this new Act. On 2 August the district Court-Martial heard evidence that Buckley was stopped and searched by a patrol near his home in Kilcreest at 1.20 am on 14 July. He was found to have a five chambered revolver 'in his breast pocket; it was loaded in one chamber'.⁶⁰ The accused, who refused to 'recognise the Court, was found guilty and sentenced to 18 months imprisonment, with hard labour.'⁶¹ Although many such cases were held, the extreme measures did not prevent Martial Law being proclaimed in December 1920, initially confined to counties Tipperary, Cork, Kerry and Limerick, and later extended in early 1921 to include Clare and Waterford.⁶² Arrests of Volunteers increased substantially and forced those not already doing so, to go on the run. The rest of 1920 proved to be difficult for the Volunteers in Galway. They did not function as they once had, arrests, informers, and the constant threat of floggings by the police hampered their efforts. Families too found the situation difficult; many farmers were dependent on their sons for heavy field work. The difficulty was also in enduring the constant forced entries by the Black and Tans, often late at night when families were at their most vulnerable. Thomas McInerney's family was subjected to such an attack. His father was the local blacksmith and served the community, including

⁵⁷ <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1920/aug/09/restoration-of-order-in-ireland-bill> Accessed on the 27 August 2018.

⁵⁸ <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1920/aug/09/restoration-of-order-in-ireland-bill> Accessed on the 27 August 2018.

⁵⁹ <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/themes/nationalism-war-independence.htm> Accessed 20 July 2020

⁶⁰ *Irish Times*, 13 August 1920.

⁶¹ *Irish Times*, 13 August 1920.

⁶² *Kerryman*, 18 December 1920

local police, on several occasions. The soldiers and police forced their way into his home at the end of July 1920 searching for Thomas. Unable to find him or his whereabouts they proceeded to set fire to the home.⁶³ The family somehow managed to flee to the cart shed, however they and neighbours were unable to save the house. Several other houses around Kinvara were burnt during the same night as the search for local Volunteers continued.

Merlin Park Attack and Oranmore Ambush

Unease around the entire county of Galway had taken root from August 1920 amid an ever-growing rise in violence. As each attack on the Crown forces took place, an expectation of reprisal was placed on those in the surrounding communities in its wake. One such attack by the IRA targeted six Constables from Oranmore:

Representatives of the various Galway companies of the IRA met at Michael Newell's forge in Brierhill. Those present included Brian Molloy, Thomas 'Baby' Duggan, Maurice Mullins, Michael Flaherty, Sonny King, Paddy King, Tom and John Mulryan, Dan, Bernard and John Fallon, and Ned and Pat Broderick [sic].⁶⁴

The police usually journeyed early on a Saturday morning from Oranmore to Galway. Michael Newell had tracked their movements for some time, and it was decided to attack close to the railway bridge near Roscam (See A14). Volunteers were positioned along intervals on both higher and lower ground to maximise advantage and prevent the police from retreating. According to Henry, both Sergeants, Mulhearn and Healy, 'the latter in charge, and Constables Brown, Patrick Doherty and Martin Foley' arrived at the location after midday.⁶⁵ Without waiting for the police to reach the ambush position the men on the bridge and 'contrary to orders opened fire on the last man' and caused some confusion.⁶⁶ The Volunteers, unsure of what was happening, opened fire. Constable Foley was shot and mortally wounded. The others took cover and opened fire to hold off the ambush. However, they eventually managed to escape 'although two of them were wounded.'⁶⁷ The entire incident lasted only several minutes. Constables Brown and Doherty who managed to escape on foot discharged

⁶³ As told to this researcher by Thomas's son, Michael McInerney

⁶⁴ Henry, *Blood for Blood*, 73.

⁶⁵ Henry, *Blood for Blood*, 74.

⁶⁶ Henry, *Blood for Blood*, 74.

⁶⁷ Padraic Ó Laoi, *History of Castlegar Parish* (Galway: Padraic Ó Laoi 1998), 143.

their weapons in the direction of the ambushers as they fled. Brown, after being hit through the sole of his foot eventually fell outside a Mr Leech's house. Leech was the Town Clerk and it was his daughters that managed to alert the British commander at the scene of his whereabouts.⁶⁸ Sometime later he was brought by ambulance to the hospital. Clearly agitated by the incident, the large group of heavily-armed 'soldiers, police and Tans' warned two young girls 'not to spend too long in the town, as Oranmore ... was to be sacked by police that night.'⁶⁹ Pleas for calm from the clergy went ignored and later that evening Dominick St became an area to be avoided. The *Connacht Tribune* reported disturbances in several areas of the town, with police barricades stopping all cars and two men, named as Higgins and Kavanagh, falling foul of the police and receiving beatings.

Oranmore was to experience a reprisal that would forever remain part of the communal memory. The first police and Black and Tans arrived after 11pm that night and quite soon they were joined by many others, all set for revenge. Their first port of call was to Mrs Keane's premises in search of her son Joe Howley. They were heard to shout 'Where is Howley? Let the coward come out now!'⁷⁰ This was quickly followed by the sound of explosives and shots amid shouts and cheers. Because of the wool and furniture stored there, the house and shop were soon in flames. Despite efforts by the local Flying Corps from the nearby aerodrome, to put out the fire, it raged until nothing was left but ash. Helping themselves to the contents of the bar in Keane's, they used the furniture to act out their vengeance. Quite soon, however, they returned to terrorise the townspeople. Thomas Lee had to run into a nearby field to avoid the series of bullets raining into his home. The bombings, shootings and burnings continued for several more hours, with reinforcements arriving periodically. Shouts of 'this is only the beginning; Castlegar will get it the next night' were heard as a frenzy of men ran up and down the streets.⁷¹ Mrs Kate Coen, a woman of little means, explained to the reporter from the *Connacht Tribune* about her night of terror. She lived next to the church opposite Keane's public house and also adjoining the Sinn Féin band-hall (her husband being the keyholder):

About 4 o'clock a motor car from Galway arrived, and the police who were

⁶⁸ Henry, *Blood for Blood*, 75

⁶⁹ Henry, *Blood for Blood*, 76.

⁷⁰ *Connacht Tribune* 28 August 1920

⁷¹ *Connacht Tribune* 28 August 1920

at Keanes's went up to meet it ... They shouted at us to get out quick, and my husband tried to drag out some bedding. I tried to get out with my screaming children by the front, but policemen with rifles stopped me, telling me to go back. Meanwhile the band-room was in flames and our own was catching fire. I got the little ones out by the back ... and we all got in safely to a vacant house.⁷²

Mrs Coen's experience was extremely frightening and left her in no doubt as to the value of her or her children's lives in the hands of these men. It was soon apparent that the county was at odds with the district police. The recounting of such violent behaviour would have spread quickly through the county and the consequences would reverberate quickly. For instance, the local inspector of Athenry had to intervene the next day when a number of young lads on bicycles shouted 'up Oranmore' when passing a group of policemen. In turn the police were agitated and ready to engage when the inspector interjected. This incident could have ended in tragedy except for his intervention.⁷³ In an effort to explain their desperation, County Inspector Rutledge wrote in his monthly report that 'they have to take the necessaries of life by force. Their wives are miserable, and their children suffer in the schools and nobody cares.'⁷⁴

Terror in Galway Town

Lady Gregory's sister Arabella Persse lived in Dominick Street in Galway town. She wrote to her sister at the end of August with news of disturbances going on around her:

At 11 o'clock last night the maids heard shots at a distance. They say it was the police attacking Lee's pub[lic house] over the way which is decorated with a line of Sinn Féin colours, and that they knocked at the door, (besides firing at windows) and Miss Lee who was alone in the house, her brother sleeping elsewhere, (to hide, possibly) had to come down in her nightdress to let them in, they then helped themselves to drink. I hear the bullet marks are there but have not heard the other side yet. Probably they got some provocation, in any case it was a savage act.⁷⁵

Arabella wrote to Lady Gregory on several occasions during that month with similar accounts of what was happening in the town, with raids on Queen's College, *The Galway Express* office, Deasy's Fish shop, Brennan's Drapery, Walsh's pub and Lee's

⁷² *Connacht Tribune* 28 August 1920

⁷³ *Connacht Tribune* 28 August 1920

⁷⁴ D.M. Leeson 'The Curious Case of Constable Krumm' in *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Fall/Autumn 2010), 118.

⁷⁵ Gregory, *Lady Gregory's Journals, 1916–1930*.

pub once again.⁷⁶

Another such round of violence was the ‘curious case’ of a Black and Tan named Constable Edward Krumm, that sent the police storming into Galway town and a night of horror began.⁷⁷ Krumm, was a newcomer to Galway, and had the reputation for being unfriendly. He was also known to drink and get rowdy. The mail train was due into Galway station around midnight on 9 September. Many ordinary people arrived at the station to pick up the evening newspaper from Dublin, all eager to discover the ‘condition of Lord Mayor MacSwiney’, Tomás MacCurtain’s successor, who was on hunger strike in Brixton Prison.⁷⁸ Krumm and his companion had been drinking in Baker’s Hotel all evening and were drunk when they arrived onto the platform. Supposedly unprovoked, Krumm began to fire around him and ‘shot a young man in the leg’.⁷⁹ When another jumped onto him to prevent anybody else from getting shot, Volunteer Sean Mulvoy received a fatal wound. Another shot, from an unknown revolver, hit Krumm and he also was fatally wounded.⁸⁰ Prior to this event a new District Inspector had been assigned to Galway town to replace the kindly more popular DI George Hildegard, his name was Richard Cruise.⁸¹ He had been commissioned to liaise between ‘the police and Auxiliaries who occupied Lenaboy Castle on the outskirts of Galway’.⁸² Commenting on Cruise, Dolan described him as being ‘a demon in human form who drove round the country with the Black and Tans, his head swathed in a mackintosh to protect his face from possible pellets. It was he who formed the “murder gang” in Galway, led by [Patrick] McGloin, Fox, and [Eugene] Igoe’.⁸³ The news of Krumm’s death reached the police and auxiliaries in Galway within the hour and a reprisal ensued. The police and Black and Tans began a rampage across the streets of Galway. Similar to other reprisals, the police and soldiers fired indiscriminately, threw bombs and grenades through shop windows and looted where they wanted. Séamus Quirke, a young Volunteer from Cork, was dragged from his lodgings and beaten severely with a rifle butt before being shot several times (see A17).

⁷⁶ Gregory, *Lady Gregory’s Journals, 1916–1930*.

⁷⁷ A full account of this can be read D.M. Leeson ‘The Curious Case of Constable Krumm’ in *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Fall/Autimne 2010), 114–137.

⁷⁸ Leeson ‘The Curious Case of Constable Krumm’, 122–4.

⁷⁹ Leeson ‘The Curious Case of Constable Krumm’, 122–4

⁸⁰ Leeson ‘The Curious Case of Constable Krumm’, 122–4.

⁸¹ *Connacht Tribune*, 2 October 1920

⁸² Dolan, ‘Connacht Galway’, 390.

⁸³ Dolan, ‘Connacht Galway’, 390.

Left for dead he managed to make his way back home where Fr. Michael Griffin arrived to give him the last rites before he died.⁸⁴ Two other Volunteers were taken to their execution that night and when the shooters opened fire, 'Volunteer Broderick [sic] fell with a head wound, while Volunteer Cummins, who had thrown himself on the ground at the command to fire, escaped with a slight wound.'⁸⁵ Henry maintained that only a cry of help to the local military barracks at Renmore halted the mayhem and destruction. Pat Margetts, the Commander in charge of the army in Galway reportedly dispatched his troops immediately and was 'shocked at the actions of the Tans and Auxiliaries'.⁸⁶ Margetts, was involved in several altercations that involved Black and Tans, he tried on several occasions to intercede on the behalf of ordinary citizens.

Violent assaults on civilians was becoming commonplace. Nellie Craven told the American Commission on Conditions in Ireland that an attack on her brother in Headford left him in bed for five days and extremely nervous at the very sound of a lorry. She told them that on 17 September the Black and Tans arrived at:

our place at home. It was about one o'clock, and there were seven of us who had just set out with our lunch for a little trip. There were three ahead of us, and the other four of us were coming in the rear. So the three ahead of us ran into this lorry of Black and Tans. They held my brother, and the sister and the other brother came back and said that my brother was taken. So I went up there and met two R. I. C. men and I asked them what the charges against my brother were and what they wanted with him. They said for me not to advance any further. And he said, Are you a Sinn Feiner? and I said I was. And he asked my sister, and she said she was. And he said, That is enough. You will get him in a half hour dead or alive. So I came down and told my mother.

Q. Did they take him away?

A. Yes. And we went back after a bit and found him crawling along the road, and we said, "What is the matter with you?" he said, "I don't know. I can't tell you." And we found two of his teeth were knocked out.

Q. He was unable to walk?

A. Yes, he was unable to walk. About an hour later they came and surrounded the house again, and said, "Who lives here?" and I said, "Cravens." And he said, "What people live here?" and I said, "Two boys and three girls." And he said, "Where are the boys?" and I said, "One of them is inside. You have been beating him." And he said, "Show him to me." And he looked at him and said, "He is faking." And he searched the beds and things, and the only thing they found was some songs of Easter Week. The next day my brother said what happened to him. They took his pocket book with seventeen shillings, put him against the wall, and shot three times over his head. One of them undressed

⁸⁴ Henry, *Blood for Blood*, 96–7.

⁸⁵ Dolan, 'Connacht Galway', 391.

⁸⁶ Henry, *Blood for Blood*, 96–7.

him, and his hands were put between his legs, and he was made to bend over, and they beat him with a belt. And his watch was gone.

Q. How did he lose his teeth?

A. I cannot say exactly whether he was hit with a closed fist or the butt of a rifle.⁸⁷

The powerful testimony given by Craven is an example of the personal terror that the local community had to endure during this period, despite acknowledging to be Sinn Féin members. This family witnessed their brother being sexually and physically abused whilst they most likely feared a similar fate for themselves. Unable to report this violent behaviour to the local police, their only recourse was the American Commission established to gather testimonies from eyewitnesses on the state of the country as a result of the War of Independence.⁸⁸ These incidents intensified an already heightened sense of anxiety experienced by the people of Galway town and county.

The following months of October and November in Galway brought some heavy casualties to the IRA Volunteers and citizens of Galway. Some of the key occurrences reflect how the county of Galway was descending into chaos and many no longer felt safe in their own homes. Newspaper reports took full pages to list the vast array of incidents and casualties that was happening around the county. The situation seemed out of control and Macready was beginning to feel 'uneasy about the behaviour of the new RIC recruits.'⁸⁹ Another series of violent confrontations which happened consecutively brought this sense of unease to a wider community outside of Galway. Reports from the *Westmeath Independent*, listed several incidents including:

The village of Ardahan (outside Galway city) was destroyed and several young men ordered to run up and down in their 'night attire followed by armed men';

Louis O'Dea's, a Galway solicitor had his office and home attacked. The furniture and contents destroyed or pillaged by the raiders;

A similar scene took place at Mr James Ward's office;

The Galway city offices of the *Galway Express* were once again destroyed and left in a deplorable state. Machinery and furniture smashed;

Joseph Athy, shot and killed;

Patrick Burke wounded.⁹⁰

Another disturbing report detailed a violent assault on a Constable who resigned

⁸⁷ Testimony of Nellie Craven, *Evidence on Conditions in Ireland*, 507–8.

⁸⁸ To view the full contents see <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000195622>

⁸⁹ Townshend, *The British Campaign in Ireland*, 112.

⁹⁰ *Westmeath Independent* 2 October 1920.

after the sack of Tuam. Mr Hugh Roddy, despite the presence of his hysterical wife and ‘two baby girls’ was taken out and brought to ‘a sandpit outside the town, where he was stripped and brutally beaten’.⁹¹ The incident was witnessed by another detainee captured the same night. Thomas Owens, who was also subjected to a similar beating for allegedly throwing a policeman’s child over a wall, an accusation he emphatically denied.⁹² John O’Hanlon, brother of Teresa Fallon, Galway Cumann na mBan and Sinn Féin activist from Lackagh, was another victim of this brutality. He was taken from his home and shot by Crown forces and his body was found in a field nearby. O’Hanlon was reported to have been shot whilst escaping.⁹³ The physician attending one of Lady Gregory’s granddaughters, informed her of the events in Galway as he was the doctor called out to attend. He stated:

I used not to believe the stories of English savagery whether written or told. I thought they were made up by factions, but now I see that they are true ... They are savages – they are out for loot. In Galway they went into Whelan’s Medical Hall and took a fancy to a Kodak, but it was £5 and they said that that was too dear. In the night they came back, broke the window and took it. And the next night they brought it back broken and took another.⁹⁴

Feeling very intimidated, Whelan did not report the incident as he felt they would break in ‘every night of the week’ if he did that.⁹⁵ Similarly, Michael Walsh, a publican, Sinn Féin member and urban councillor was taken to the docks in Galway and shot, his body was thrown into the bay (see A20, A21, B22).⁹⁶ When his cousin Nellie Craven gave evidence at the American Commission on Conditions in Ireland about his death, she spoke of the intimidation inflicted, not only on Michael but, Walsh’s wife and son. After one raid they stole money, tobacco, cigarettes, sugar, candles and ornaments from their living quarters above the pub, the Old Malt House.⁹⁷ The Crown forces had been intimidating Walsh and his family for some months and whatever happened after one particular raid his wife Agnes and his children moved out of the family home but Walsh continued to work there. These descriptions of vicious brutality, clearly establish the devastating impact of systemic violence on the various communities around Galway. Far from maintaining or providing a safe environment,

⁹¹ *Westmeath Independent* 2 October 1920.

⁹² *Westmeath Independent* 2 October 1920.

⁹³ McNamara, *War and Revolution*, 149.

⁹⁴ Gregory, *Lady Gregory’s Journals, 1916–1930*. 135

⁹⁵ Gregory, *Lady Gregory’s Journals, 1916–1930*. 135

⁹⁶ *Connacht Tribune*, 25 September 1920

⁹⁷ Testimony of Nellie Craven *Evidence on Conditions in Ireland*, 507–8.

these Crown forces had escalated the conflict.

Subsequently, road blocks, arrests and detentions were to severely hamper movements for most people throughout the county, including the IRA. In North Galway, Michael Moran was a prominent leader in the Tuam brigade. He planned and led many operations in his home area even whilst he was a student in Galway. McNamara refers to him as being one of the 'most effective republican leader in the county'.⁹⁸ Moran had come to the attention of the authorities and like most of his comrades he had to remain on the run. Even still, his home was raided on several occasions. Subsequent to his participation in the Gallagher attack, his home and family were subjected to a particularly nasty raid and IRA 'Volunteers placed a guard to protect his family'.⁹⁹ However, his luck ran out when he was finally arrested at the home of his sister, Mrs Dolan in October 1920. In November, whilst being transferred from prison, he was shot. The Crown forces indicated that he was killed 'trying to escape'. This pattern of being shot whilst trying to escape was beginning to cause outcry. In a debate in the House of Commons on 2 December 1920, a question was put to the Chief Secretary of Ireland on how many of these deaths had occurred in Ireland over the year. Mr Denis Henry, Attorney-General for Ireland (speaking for the office) replied:

According to the police reports the number of prisoners fired at while attempting to escape from custody within the period from 1st January to 30th November 1920, is 11. Of these nine were killed and two wounded. One of the prisoners killed and one of those wounded are stated to have been handcuffed while attempting to escape.¹⁰⁰

What could not be established during the debate was, how many more were shot dead on the 'allegation' that they were attempting to resist arrest. These incidents once again establish how out of control the Crown forces in Galway had become. With no clear voice of reason or authoritative figure to command the increasing violence, the situation could only worsen.

In November 1920, Thomas McInerney, Commandant Gort Brigade, ordered a 'number of men [to] ambush a police patrol at Kinvara, Kilmacduagh and Castledaly'¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ McNamara, *War and Revolution*, 122.

⁹⁹ McNamara, *War and Revolution*, 152.

¹⁰⁰ <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1920/dec/02/escaping-prisoners-shooting> Accessed 18 February 2019.

¹⁰¹ Thomas McInerney 22 April 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No.1150.

It was whilst delivering this attack on the RIC patrol between Kilchreest and Peterswell that Constable Timothy Horan was killed and another wounded. In revenge, the police burned four houses and destroyed a Sinn Féin hall in the area. In a bizarre and horrific twist this attack resulted in the shooting dead of Mrs Eileen Quinn of Corker, near Kiltartan, a heavily pregnant mother of three playing outside with her son (see A18, A23, B35, D19). The Crown forces had been in the market square in Gort earlier that day, and as reported in *The Cork Examiner* had fired shots ‘presumably in the hearing of those in the barracks.’¹⁰² Just before 3pm, as the lorries made their way from Gort, some auxiliaries continued to shoot into the surrounding roadside, a practice that they later stated was normal on roads unfamiliar to them. It appears that Mrs Quinn was in the wrong place at the wrong time and was shot into the lower abdomen most likely killing her unborn child instantly. Kate Murphy, servant to the Quinn’s was first to help,

when I went up to Mrs Quinn she was sitting on the grass on the roadside ... I took the child from her. She crawled over the wall into the yard. She lay down in some straw, and I saw a quantity of blood on it. She got up and came as far as the porch door where she fell. There was a lot of blood there also. She said she was dying and to go for someone. I went to fetch a neighbour Mrs Noone.¹⁰³

The local priest, Fr John Considine was called to attend and also a doctor. It was two local doctors, Dr Sandys, Gort and Dr Foley, Ardahan, that managed to ‘stem the bleeding somewhat, which gave her a few more hours of life’.¹⁰⁴ Notably, for some unexplained reason, the findings of the Military Court inquest held only days later were never made public.¹⁰⁵ Mrs Quinn’s demise was recorded as death by misadventure.¹⁰⁶ The people of Kiltartan Cross were particularly struck by the violent end to Mrs Quinn’s life and were equally horrified at the threatening behaviour shown to her husband in his grief. In her diary Lady Gregory recorded that none of Mrs Quinn’s friends were allowed to attend her inquest and her husband appeared to have been subjected to passing patrols randomly firing shots in the direction of the house.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, she adds that, as he was in the fields farming, small low flying planes

¹⁰² *The Cork Examiner*, 15 November 1920

¹⁰³ *Irish Independent* 5 November 1920

¹⁰⁴ Gerard Quinn, ‘The Killing of Eileen Quinn’, *Law Society Gazette* November 2020

¹⁰⁵ Chief Supt. Henry O’Mara, 22 July 1957 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1652

¹⁰⁶ See McNamara, *War and Revolution*, and Henry, *Blood for Blood*, 96–7; *Nenagh Guardian* 13 November 1920.

¹⁰⁷ Gregory, *Lady Gregory’s Journals, 1916–1930*. 138 Low flying planes from Oranmore aerodrome were often seen flying low in Galway town and also in the countryside. See Thomas Hynes, 17 July 1952, BMH. WS. No 714 <http://westmayo.ie/the-air-war-in-west-mayo-1918-1921/>

swooped from above and shots were fired.¹⁰⁸ Even the dead woman's mother, living in Raheen, Athenry, was being subjected to daily raids on her house. The pressure of such incidents had a detrimental effect on communities such as Kiltartan. This breakdown of law and order left everyone unable to fathom such transgressions. Notably, on one hand Fr Considine was condemning the killing of the policeman at Castledaly, after which he was thanked by the local sergeant. Later when he summoned the same sergeant to take a statement from the dying women, the sergeant refused. Considine later gave an interview to the *Skibbereen Eagle* where he stated

I have heard of Turkish atrocities ... have read of the death of Joan of Arc, I have read of the sufferings of Nurse Cavell, and as I read those things I often felt my blood boil, and I often prayed that the good God would change the hearts of the perpetrators but little did I then dream that I should witness a tragedy more cruel than any of these things, and here in our own little peaceful parish. My God! It is awful!¹⁰⁹

Unlike other priests who willingly participated in Sinn Féin activities that brought them into the limelight, Considine sought out ways of stopping such violent incidents. However, after the death of Mrs Quinn, he did become more outspoken about the Crown forces' violent tactics against not only his parishioners but those in the wider area. This in turn, as Leeson has discovered, brought about a nasty threat in the form of an anonymous letter. It said, "your efforts to stir up the blood lust against the forces of the Crown are duly noted ... you will be duly compensated as well as all the friends of Michael Collins".¹¹⁰ Shooting unarmed women was not presumably something that any police officer may have wished to do, even if drunk or unrestrained. These men most likely had female family members of their own as did their colleagues. How did they justify this killing to them? Yet, Eileen Quinn's death was the first incident in November that would later become infamous in its brutality.

The Killing of Fr Michael Griffin

On 14 November 1920, in another particularly sinister affair, Fr Michael Griffin, a known republican, was requested by subterfuge to leave his house and accompany a young man to the bedside of a sick parishioner. He never returned home. Sometime

¹⁰⁸ Gregory, *Lady Gregory's Journals, 1916–1930*, 138

¹⁰⁹ *Skibbereen Eagle*, 6 November 1920

¹¹⁰ As cited in D.M. Leeson, *The Black and Tans*, 164

later his body, shot through the head, was found in a shallow bog grave just outside 'Barna at a place called Cloughacoltia, near Lough Inch.'¹¹¹ It had been speculated by other Volunteers, that this was a case of mistaken identity and that Fr J.W. O'Meehan was the intended victim. O'Meehan was also a known republican and had recruited many young Volunteers, especially during his time in Kinvara. He had received up to five death threats and was almost permanently on the run, sleeping in the nearby nursing home. It has been speculated that Griffin, once captured, had refused to give the whereabouts of O'Meehan and was subsequently killed. However, Brian Heffernan has made a connection with an incident some weeks before, that points 'in a different direction'.¹¹² He maintains that:

In October the IRA apprehended a man called Patrick Joyce, a teacher at Barna national school in Griffin's parish, who had been caught sending letters to the British authorities with information about local Volunteers. One of these letters contained a list of names, including Griffin's ... Joyce was taken away for court-martial by the IRA ... and was killed after another priest heard his confession ... his grave was not discovered until 1998. It is likely that local Crown forces believed that Griffin had been the priest who had attended Joyce before his killing (see B16).¹¹³

Did they, as Ó Laoi suspected, try to ascertain the location of Patrick Joyce's body?¹¹⁴ For some time, the IRA in County Galway had suspected that information regarding certain Volunteers was being disclosed but had been unable to identify exactly where it was coming from. John Hosty, 'a printer in O'Gormans (now Easons)' together with Joe Togher, a Post Office official, made up the Galway Intelligence unit.¹¹⁵ Using his position in the Post Office, Togher was able to gather any post that could be of interest to the IRA. It was he who found five suspicious letters, all written in the same hand and addressed to:

1. The County Officer, Black and Tans, Eglinton Barracks, Galway (two letters)
2. The County Officer, Military Station, Earls Island, Galway
3. The OC, Renmore Barracks, Galway
4. Sir Hamar Greenwood, House of Commons, London¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ *Galway Observer*, 27th November 1920

¹¹² Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment*, 195.

¹¹³ Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment*, 195

¹¹⁴ Pádraic Ó Laoi, *Fr Griffin 1892–1920* (Galway: The Connacht Tribune Ltd, 1994) 65

¹¹⁵ Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment*, 195 and Patrick Callanan, 24 unknown 1950 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 347

¹¹⁶ Ó Laoi, *Fr Griffin 1892–1920* 66.

They were able to deduce that Joyce had written not only these five (two being addressed to the County Officer at Eglinton Barracks) but other letters reporting on various Volunteers in his home area of Barna and Furbo. Joyce specifically pointed the blame for these men becoming radicalised on ‘curates Griffin and O’Meehan’.¹¹⁷ After much deliberation Joyce was kidnapped, court-martialled, tried and convicted. His sentence was execution. Brigade Commandant, East Connemara Brigade, Mícheál Ó Droighnáin (Thornton) was the prosecutor and recalls that after his confession and ‘Holy Viaticum. A party of Volunteers from the Moycullen Company brought him into the boys, and he was there shot, with a .32 revolver and a service rifle, and buried in a convenient place in the bog.’¹¹⁸

There has been much speculation as to why Fr Griffin was killed, especially in this manner: each theory has supporting evidence that seem persuasive, including Heffernan’s. Yet, the killing of a priest was uncommon. Only three were killed during the War of Independence (see D9). Griffin was known to be a young well-liked individual, with a kind heart. It is possible that he naively followed whoever lured him, believing that his position would protect him against harm. If so, he had not taken heed of his fellow priest, O’Meehan who had gone into hiding. Fr Griffin’s death, as shown later, would remain within the remembrance of his community up until the present day. Markedly, Leeson states that the Bishop of Galway, Thomas O’Dea, received a threatening letter ten days after Griffin was taken from his home. It read, “if any members of His Majesty’s forces are interfered with in Galway, you will meet with Father Griffin’s fate—Beware”.¹¹⁹ The Bishop subsequently received what Leeson refers to as a ‘back-handed apology’ from the Divisional Commander, Inspector Cruise. He added to the apology by saying, “I must say I think it is unfair to attribute every wrong act ... to the Crown forces. I have striven hard to control the feelings of my men, and unjust charges added to their constant expectation of assassination make the position very difficult”.¹²⁰ Despite Cruise’s assertion, he was not in complete control, and what happened next further inflamed an increasingly violent situation.

¹¹⁷ Ó Laoi, *Fr Griffin 1892–1920* 67.

¹¹⁸ Mícheál Ó Droighnáin 16 December 1957 MACBB, BMH, WS No.1718.

¹¹⁹ As cited in Leeson, *The Black and Tans*, 164

¹²⁰ As cited in Leeson, *The Black and Tans*, 164

The Killing of the Loughnane Brothers

In November 1920, the killing of two brothers from Shanaglish, South Galway not only shocked and horrified their local community but news of their deaths reached as far as America. Tomás Ó hEidhín, a local schoolteacher took two photographs at their wake and these were sent to relatives in America and shared amongst friends to remember and illustrate the horror of what was happening in Ireland (see B31). It is still remembered today as having been one of the worst incidents of the War of Independence.

The Loughnanes were a farming family of comfortable means. Catherine, a widow, had three daughters named Mary, Nora and Katie, and four sons named, Harry, Patrick (Pat), Martin (Mattie) and Hugh. On the afternoon in question, neighbours and family were in the fields thrashing corn when a series of vehicles carrying several RIC and Black and Tans drove onto their lands. The surprise strike was part of an orchestrated campaign by Crown forces in response to several incidents involving Volunteers from the Beagh area over the previous months. It appears that shots were fired at anyone not co-operating with the party and even one who tried to run for cover. Both Harry and Pat Loughnane were picked out of the line-up of neighbours and friends, loaded onto the lorry and that was the last time either of them was seen alive by their family. Over the following ten days, despite repeated pleas from their mother and sister Nora, the two brothers' location was to prove elusive. During this time several reports from witnesses who saw violence inflicted on the young men were being contradicted by senior Constables. They claimed that they had escaped along with others shortly after they were brought to Drumharsna Castle (see A26). In a diary entry dated 4 December, Lady Gregory recorded that earlier that day, MacGill, a local man, had noticed that a lorry had turned off the road and knocked part of the wall. He was curious to see what was there and looked 'behind it and there were two boys lying, their heads near one another, and dark clothes on them. He went home and it was three days before he could rise from the bed.'¹²¹ Once recovered he explained where the boys lay. Although the area was searched thoroughly, the Loughnane brothers were nowhere to be found. Finally, in a strange turn of events, another young man, Michael Loughnane, had what he claimed to be 'a vision' or a dream that his 'employer

¹²¹ Gregory, *Lady Gregory's Journals, 1916–1930*. 142.

Mick Shaughnessy' was standing beside Pat Loughnane several days after they went missing. He spoke to a friend and they both went into Kinvara where Volunteer brothers Michael and Willie Hynes were working. They all went to Umbriste, near Drumharsna to where the boy thought the brothers had been placed. They lay in a shallow pond badly beaten, and the bodies were charred as if in a fire (see A28). Despite this, both corpses were identifiable. However,

they were examined by a local doctor who found that the letters 'I.V.' were cut into the charred flesh in several places, two of Harry's fingers were missing and his right arm which was broken completely across the shoulder was hanging off. Both of Pat's legs and wrists were broken. The doctor thought it possible that hand grenades had been put into their mouths and exploded.¹²²

However, Harry's wounds began to bleed once removed from the water. Michael and the two Hynes went to Kinvara and returned with other member of the Kinvara Company along with a horse and cart borrowed from the nearby Helebert family. Word of the discovery spread quickly, and it became necessary to secure the bodies, for fear that they would be taken by the Auxiliaries camped in Drumharsna Castle. They were waked in an out shed some distance from the home of the Hynes brothers, whose house had been burned (see B11) and then brought to St Coleman's Church in Kinvara (see A30). The Loughnane family never received a full explanation of the circumstances of their deaths or indeed what they had done to deserve their fate.

As the above circumstances reveal, during the latter half of 1920 in County Galway, many of the incidents, ambushes, killings and reprisals, not only escalated but became more repugnant in their extreme violent nature. In essence, law and order were now defunct, creating an impossible situation for any civilian to live in. Families of Galway Volunteers must have worried if it was their turn next or if their sons or brothers would be next.

Bloody Sunday

These incidents would be quickly overshadowed on one of the bloodiest weekends and considered a turning point in the struggle between both the British and the IRA. It was 21 November 1920 and the day was to feature a special sporting event in Croke

¹²²http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/claremuseum/acquisitions/patrick_harry_loughnane_mem_card.htm Accessed 21 April 2019

Park, the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) main grounds in the capital. It was a football clash between Dublin and Tipperary, in what was a much-anticipated match. Unknown to many at the time, Michael Collins's Squad had been out that morning in a well-orchestrated operation. They sought out and killed fourteen British officers and ex-officers in their lodgings around the city of Dublin. In response to this act, and in an unexpected move, Crown forces entered the grounds in armed vehicles during the match and killed fourteen people including a woman and young boy. Up to seventy more were injured in the incident. One young clerical student from County Galway was killed on the streets sometime later. William Cullinane of Cahernashelleeny, Lackage, and a fellow student left Croke Park when they heard the shots. However, as they made their way to All Hallows College, they somehow got caught in the mayhem that ensued and Cullinane was killed.¹²³ Also the same evening, two of Dublin's leading IRA leaders, Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy were killed while in custody in Dublin Castle.¹²⁴ The following Monday, the *Irish Independent* reported a further five deaths. This was a brutal affair by both Collins and the Crown forces, Collins's premeditated and exact, the other frenzied and chaotic, yet both conducted for little regard to the affect on the families or the following consequences. The repercussions for Galway were not yet finished.

One of those arrested for the killing of Crown forces was Galway-born Thomas Whelan of Sky Road, Clifden. Whelan was one of fourteen children born in Clifden. He was arrested on 23 November 1920 and charged with the shooting dead of Captain Geoffrey Thomas Baggallay, despite sworn evidence given that Whelan had attended Mass and held a conversation with a friend before returning home for breakfast. He was convicted and hanged alongside five others in Mountjoy Jail, on the morning of 14 March 1921 (see B29).¹²⁵ It was reported that Whelan sang 'The Shawl of Galway Grey' on the night before his execution'.¹²⁶ As a reprisal for his execution, Clifden IRA Volunteers exacted revenge by killing two RIC men for one IRA killed. Constables Charles Reynolds and Thomas Sweeney were approached two nights later and shots were fired, 'killing Reynolds and mortally wounding Sweeney'.¹²⁷ Correspondingly, with

¹²³ *Connaught Tribune* 1 December 1995

¹²⁴ Coleman, *The Irish Revolution*, xi.

¹²⁵ Henry, *Blood for Blood*, 196

¹²⁶ *Galway Advertiser*, 14 March 2013

¹²⁷ Henry, *Blood for Blood*, 197

terror and revenge on their minds, over thirty Black and Tans 'left Galway by special train for Clifden' on St Patrick's Day. Once the men arrived, they began to burn, smash and shatter everything in their path (see A35 &36). They raided the homes of known IRA men only to find them long gone. Any discipline that they may have had previously was now absent. Unable to punish those responsible for their comrades' deaths, they shot and killed a former Connaught Ranger, sergeant major John MacDonnell. His body was left in the street.¹²⁸ Eventually the terror abated and the Tans returned to Galway, days after Thomas Whelan was buried in the Mountjoy prison graveyard.

Incidents such as these were condemned by the press and church alike, even at an international level. The intensity of the violence perpetrated by Crown forces placed severe pressure on the British government as more and more brutal attacks and killings took place. The attacks on property 'peaked in November-December 1920, when 180 such incidents were recorded, climaxing in the 'Burning of Cork' on 11-12 December 1920'.¹²⁹ The devastation was attributed to a reprisal for an IRA ambush the same night at Dillon's Cross, however, it could also have been the killing of seventeen Auxiliaries in another IRA ambush at Kilmichael that ignited the fuse. It was becoming difficult to know which incident sparked which reprisal. Sir Hamar Greenwood, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, 'denied that Crown forces had any involvement in the fire and refused all demands for an enquiry. Instead it was suggested that the acts of arson had been carried out by civilians'.¹³⁰ The British authorities were running out of excuses for their forces' behaviour. It was difficult for them to concede that their counter-measures were failing. However, behind the scenes, tentative talks of a truce were underway.

Flying Columns

As more and more raids on the homes of Volunteers took place, it became clear that smaller concentrated units, largely existing of men on the run, had better opportunities against Crown forces. Townshend has argued that 'it became necessary for fugitives

¹²⁸ Henry, *Blood for Blood*, 199

¹²⁹ Joost Augusteijn, 'Military Conflicts in the War of Independence' in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* edited by John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil, Mike Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017) 354

¹³⁰ 'The Burning of Cork' Documentary on One <https://www.rte.ie/radio1/doconone/2011/0304/646642-radio-documentary-the-burning-of-cork-ireland/> Accessed 24 December 2020

to band together for protection'. He notes that 'several of the most famous columns had already formed when GHQ picked up the idea, and the spread of the concept thereafter was probably due less to GHQ orders than to its inherent appeal, both functional and romantic'.¹³¹ Safe places with food and first aid were increasingly difficult to find and men often met in the same areas because of this. The previous June 1920, this dire situation was brought to the attention of those in GHQ in Dublin. It was at this point that the notion of forming an Active Service Unit (ASU) or flying column came about.¹³² Although the Volunteers in Galway had already been assisting one another in various attacks or ambushes, they formally organised themselves into flying columns within their areas from 1921.¹³³ In some cases, men joined other units they felt would benefit from their experience. In one such case, Padraig Kilkelly, Kinvara Company Captain, Galway South West Brigade, joined Mid-Clare Brigade in January 1921 and was appointed Officer Commanding of the 2nd Battalion Active Service Unit. He had been very active in his unit in Kinvara and may have felt that he had become a marked man in his home area. He was both Chairman of Gort District Council and member of Galway County Council at this time and as such, had contact with several IRA members both in South Galway and North Clare. Whilst in the Clare Flying Column, he participated in several ambushes in Ennistymon, Corofin, Killydysart and Ballyvaughan. Not being recognised by locals gave him an advantage. These ASUs were small, manoeuvrable and could remain on the run with the support of Cumann na mBan and local safe houses.

Their tactics considered the supply end of the militarisation of the RIC reinforcements as a primary target. These supplies arrived by train or cart and the cargo was to replenish much needed food or arms no longer provided by the boycotting businesses of Galway town (boycotting was ongoing during this period). The local knowledge and the co-operation of the surrounding neighbourhood meant that these ambushes could be arranged at short notice, and any guns, ammunition or equipment could disappear quickly afterwards. As did the raiders themselves. Those who were injured or became fugitives were also hidden in safe houses for long periods of time. By late January 1921, the reorganisation of various companies in Galway was

¹³¹ Charles Townshend, 'The Irish Republican Army and the Development of Guerrilla Warfare, 1916-1921' in *The English Historical Review* Vol.94, No.371 (April 1979), 330.

¹³² Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare* 124.

¹³³ McNamara, *War and Revolution*, 125-31.

near completion. However, as in other areas around the country, the need for smaller units of men to employ a hit-and-run strategy became essential. Neighbouring companies, many of which had already collaborated on several occasions, naturally came together. Flying Columns formed by March 1921 included, West Connemara, North Galway, and South Galway.

However, some did not have an easy transition. Volunteer Michael Newell, after a disastrous ambush at Kilroe near Headford, applied to GHQ in Dublin for them to send an experienced officer 'to act as Column Commander ... but no one came'. This was one of the first planned ambushes in January 1921. Thomas 'Baby' Duggan led a group of men from Castlegar, Claregalway, Cregmore and Annaghdown to attack a group of eight Auxiliaries on Tuesday 17 January. The meeting, held in the local cemetery to avoid suspicion, resolved to confront the enemy near Kilroe on the Headford-Galway road as this was their usual route to the market in Headford. The inclement weather brought rain and bitterly cold temperatures that impacted upon the Volunteers' preparations. Many had to sleep in a 'disused house ... with nothing to eat' and slept on a cold concrete floor.¹³⁴ Nonetheless, the next morning all the Volunteers lay in wait for the Auxiliaries to arrive. The Auxiliaries were driving a Crossley Tender, an armoured vehicle that was difficult to attack.¹³⁵ As they came upon the ambush so too did a man with a horse and cart. Duggan threw a hand grenade at the vehicle, but it fell short of the target and startled the horse into rearing. Volunteers fearing for the safety of the innocent man paused, and this in turn gave the Auxiliaries the time to dive for cover and one of their number to reach the Lewis automatic rifle on the vehicle. The incident lasted over thirty minutes before the attackers ran out of ammunition. Several Auxiliaries were thought to have been injured and only one Volunteer, Charley Quinn, needed medical attention for an injured finger.¹³⁶

This ambush, and the Auxiliaries' subsequent retreat did embolden the ambitions

¹³⁴ James Duggan, 25 June 1953 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 875.

¹³⁵ W.H. Kautt, *Ambushes and Armour the Irish Rebellion 1919-1921* (Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2017)166. The use of armoured vehicles slowed down the ambushing by the IRA. The IRA were unable to acquire anti-armour weapons to counteract the vehicles and this necessitated the development of IED's (improvised explosive device) or bombs. The IRA were able to stymie British manoeuvre by blowing up bridges or roads in the meantime.

¹³⁶ The finger was removed with a penknife whilst they continued to evade capture. See James Duggan, 25 June 1953 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 875, Michael Newell, 6 September 1951 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 571 for further information.

of the IRA for another year. However, what followed also ensured that the increasing 'terror', now experienced by the people of Galway, was perpetuated into another year. Mainly due to the fact that, once again, Crown forces were whipped up into a frenzy and subsequent reprisals ensued. When the reinforcements arrived, this time Headford, as pointed out by Dolan, 'paid the penalty.'¹³⁷ It was to prove a heavy price indeed. The police and military launched an attack not only on the town of Headford, but the surrounding fields and 'haggards', burning everything in their wake.¹³⁸ Young men were taken from their homes and several beaten, three were shot whilst 'attempting to escape', namely James Kirwan, Michael Hoade and William Walsh.¹³⁹ The reprisals continued for a month, with areas such as Tuam, Kilconly, Glan, Castlegar, Sylane, Glenamaddy, Caherlistrae and Clonberne all reporting indiscriminate beatings and shootings of people 'with no republican connection'.¹⁴⁰ Over the next two months the reprisals left many communities in a worse state of fear and 'terror'. Nobody was safe. In March 1921, when two policemen were killed in an ambush in Clifden, 'at least sixteen houses were burned by Crown forces and hundreds of young men arrested.'¹⁴¹

The IRA flying columns continued to work sometimes independantly of GHQ in Dublin. Michael Collins was at this point in full control of IRA intelligence. He insisted on giving his orders directly to the person in question, to ensure total secrecy in all IRA matters. Ambushes, raids and killings continued in various places. At the same time, Volunteers found it progressively difficult to return home for any more than a change of clothes, as large numbers of Crown forces were now combing the countryside in search of hiding places. As wanted men, they were totally reliant on the help, kindness and support of the community. They also had to devise and scheme to remain undetected. Archaeologist Marion Dowd has identified twenty-four natural caves with a further possible seventeen sites as hideouts used by Volunteers during the War of Independence. She mentions Coppers' Cave in Castlegar and a cave used by Pádraic Ó Máille in the Maumturk Mountains. Dowd describes the den as, 'a natural cave or fissure ... artificially enlarged, a wall breached by a doorway and window was

¹³⁷ Dolan, 'Connacht Galway', 393.

¹³⁸ Dolan, 'Connacht Galway', 393.

¹³⁹ McNamara *War and Revolution*, 149; Dolan, 'Connacht Galway', 393.

¹⁴⁰ McNamara *War and Revolution*, 149.

¹⁴¹ McNamara *War and Revolution*, 149

built across the entrance, and the interior was fitted with a bed and fireplace.¹⁴² In Gort, Martin Fahy had an ingenious hiding place:

I got the idea of building a hide-out in a cock of hay which was about a mile from my home. The cock of hay which was built up the previous September was sixteen to eighteen feet at its widest point. We stripped it to that level. We cut a six-foot square hole with a hay-knife in the centre to within one foot of the ground. We put planks of timber and corrugated iron over the hole. We re-built the cock and re-thatched it. We made a hole in the side of the cock about one and a half feet in diameter for a doorway. We tied enough hay to fit exactly into the hole with a rope and when we entered, we closed the door by pulling the rope until the hay attached to it fitted in the doorway. There was then no opening to be seen from the outside. We had a mattress and blankets. It was warm and comfortable. The greatest number of Volunteers who slept in the cock of hay at any one time was five, we slept there from about the middle of November 1920 to the end of January 1921.¹⁴³

Regardless of how comfortable Volunteers made these hidden sanctuaries, living in constant fear of capture was ultimately to take its toll on both their morale and ability to carry out successful attacks. Many would later cite the time they spent outdoors as a reason why they applied and merited a pension.

Final Weeks of the Conflict

By early 1921, confidence in the war was beginning to waver, on both sides. On Monday 3 January 1921, *The Irish Bulletin*, a periodical published by the Dáil to counteract Dublin Castle's censor (but which suppressed all reports of Sinn Féin activity), listed the figures of those killed over the previous twelve months. The amount of which it claims was 'two hundred and three men, women and children shot dead by English and armed forces.'¹⁴⁴ The Propaganda Department of the Dáil used the publication to full advantage by informing foreign journalists and those of public influence of the frightening events in Ireland. Subsequently, *The Irish Bulletin* became, according to Ian Kenneally, 'a target for crown forces.'¹⁴⁵ Kenneally also adds that this newspaper accomplished its goals and was reproduced in many British newspapers and even referred to by those 'Members of Parliament critical of British government

¹⁴² Marian Dowd 'Caves, Guerrilla Warfare and the Irish Revolution' in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* edited by John Crowley; Donal O Drisceoil; Mike Murphy (Cork: University Press, 2017), 722.

¹⁴³ Martin Fahy, 5 October 1954 MACBB, BMH, WS No.1018.

¹⁴⁴ Ian Kenneally, 'The Irish Bulletin' in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* (Cork: University Press, 2017), 484.

¹⁴⁵ Kenneally, 'The Irish Bulletin', 486.

policy in Ireland.¹⁴⁶ Yet, despite the continuing criticism of the war, the violence intensified on both sides.

Despite being, to use McNamara words, 'a determined cadre of young fighters [that] re-emerged in early 1921', the Volunteers in Galway were incapable of overcoming the strength of the military and the Black and Tans.¹⁴⁷ Exhaustion, sleeping out and the constant state of alertness took its toll on Volunteers. Towards the end of March, Commandant Louis D'Arcy of Headford Battalion, after being under close surveillance for some time, was finally captured along with a man named Lally who was later released. On his way to Galway Jail, he was subjected to unmerciful torture and was according to Henry, 'tied to the back of the vehicle and dragged along the road to a field'.¹⁴⁸ His body was then lifted into a lorry and 'taken to the scene of the Merlin Park ambush in August of the previous year' where he was shot dead.¹⁴⁹ Troops once again rampaged through the town of Galway, and the Sinn Féin hall in Prospect Hill was burned to the ground.

Another infamous attack took place in south Galway on 15 May 1921 and was to send shock waves throughout the area. That Saturday afternoon John and Anna Bagot invited a number of friends to visit them at Ballyturin, just outside Gort and play tennis outside the house (see A33). However, the evening before, Volunteer Patrick Glynn had received 'a dispatch from Brigade Quartermaster Daniel Ryan to go by [himself] to the [IRA] camp in Gortacornane wood'.¹⁵⁰ He was to bring with him his rifle and all the ammunition he could collect. When he arrived, he was met by Brigadier Joseph Stanford, Captain John Coen and the Quartermaster. They informed him of an impending attack on District Inspector Cecil Blake who was to attend the social event at the Bagots' home. After discussing the logistics of the attack it was agreed to enlist the help of Patrick Houlihan from Clare, Thomas Craven from Tuam (he was staying in the area) and Michael Kelly, the Gort Intelligence Officer. Messages were also sent to two scouts from the area, John Keeley and Martin Coen. They were tasked to keep Ballyturin House under surveillance and inform Stanford immediately if Blake arrived. Shortly after Blake's arrival at the house, IRA Volunteers took up position either side

¹⁴⁶ Kenneally, 'The Irish Bulletin', 486.

¹⁴⁷ McNamara *War and Revolution*, 157

¹⁴⁸ Henry *Blood for Blood*, 202–3

¹⁴⁹ Henry *Blood for Blood*, 202–3; McNamara *War and Revolution*; Thomas Hynes, 17 July 1952 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 716.

¹⁵⁰ Patrick Glynn, 7 November 1954 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1033.

of the avenue to the house and waited on him to leave. Driving his own car, District Inspector Blake was accompanied by his common-in-law wife Eliza Williams, Lady Gregory's widowed daughter in-law, Margaret Gregory, and two army officers, Captain Fiennes Wykeham Cornwallis and Lieutenant Robert Bruce McCreery. After saying goodbye to the Bagots, they made their way down the long drive. When they reached the gate lodge, they discovered the gate closed.¹⁵¹ Just as they attempted to open the gate, a man shouted at them to raise their hands. The party of five tried to make a quick escape when the masked men opened fire on them. A hail of bullets hit the car and despite the best efforts to 'save the women in it', only Margaret Gregory escaped with her life.¹⁵² The Bagot family heard the gunfire and rushed to try to help, but they were held back by other Volunteers until the incident was over. The Volunteers who attacked the party ran quickly in several different directions to evade capture.¹⁵³ It would seem that killing pregnant women was not just a phenomenon of the Crown forces. Yet, Eliza Williams' death did not garner the same sympathy as Eileen Quinn who was killed by Crown forces the previous November.

However, this violent ambush spurred the Crown forces into a large-scale reprisal felt throughout the surrounding districts of Gort and Loughrea as the neighbouring areas were ransacked and burnt. Young men were taken from their homes and beaten. Lady Gregory once again records in her diary that:

all seems crumbling, yet I will not leave Ireland ... the Black and Tans have gone up to Chevy to make their camp ... they went around the country between Gort and Peterswell and took the men out and beat them ... the lorries passing are terrible ... they have a big black dog with them.¹⁵⁴

A curfew was imposed in the district and all the local businesses were forced to close until further notice, putting the local community under further pressure.¹⁵⁵ Once again local civilians would also suffer the consequences of these attacks.

The following month, a policeman was fired upon outside his home in Moylough. In retaliation for this, two lorry loads of Black and Tans set out to investigate the incident. On their way through Mountbellew they were attacked and the Volunteers, hidden in

¹⁵¹ Blake and Eliza may have never married. A grandson returned to the scene of their deaths in Gort enquiring about their lives in 2012. He claimed he was unable to establish if a marriage certificate had been issued.

¹⁵² Patrick Glynn, 7 November 1954 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1033.

¹⁵³ Henry Blood for Blood; McNamara *War and Revolution* and Martin Dolan, 'Connacht Galway'.

¹⁵⁴ Gregory, *Lady Gregory's Journals, 1916–1930*. 155

¹⁵⁵ Henry Blood for Blood, 227.

a trench, were able to hold off the Crown forces. According to Volunteer Thomas Mannion, the attack on the policeman was a deliberate ruse to draw out a larger force.¹⁵⁶ In addition, the IRA Volunteers used previously excavated trenches in order to slow down the movements of motor vehicles and provide cover.¹⁵⁷ However, one of Lady Gregory's servants told her about being lifted alongside other men from Gort. He was on his way to post letters for Lady Gregory when he was forced into a lorry and brought to an area near Lough Cultra to fill in these trenches dug by Volunteers.¹⁵⁸

The Crown forces adapted to these guerrilla tactics and made things more difficult for the IRA, fortifying their transportation and changing delivery times and dates at short notice to evade ambushes. Over 2,000 troops arrived into County Galway in June 1921. They 'camped on the Slieve Aughty Mountains, between Gort and Loughrea' and began to search the area extensively, seeking any Volunteers on the run.¹⁵⁹ It was just such rigorous hunting and 'counter-measures of the military, combined with the lengthening days,' that made the existence of the Flying Columns hard to maintain.¹⁶⁰ This coupled with the 'declining manpower and firepower' of the columns, has, as Coleman stated, 'resulted in an inconclusive debate about whether the war could have continued much longer had the truce not been agreed'.¹⁶¹

The Truce

After thirty months of conflict, both the IRA leaders and the British government sought to bring the War of Independence to an end. Hopkinson has argued that 'the IRA [even] in the most active areas [nationally] spent most of its time avoiding capture and demands increased for other areas to shoulder the burden.'¹⁶² In addition, by early July 1921 over 4,500 IRA had been interned, compared to an estimated figure of around 2,000 men still active.¹⁶³ How many of these were Galwaymen is hard to estimate, as some had fled to Clare and Mayo, others injured and inactive. From the

¹⁵⁶ Thomas Mannion, 21 April 1956 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1408; Martin Ryan, 21 April 1956 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1417.

¹⁵⁷ Gregory, *Lady Gregory's Journals, 1916–1930*, 155

¹⁵⁸ Gregory, *Lady Gregory's Journals, 1916–1930*, 156.

¹⁵⁹ Dolan, 'Connacht Galway', 393.

¹⁶⁰ For more on this see, Augusteijn, *From Public Defiance to Guerrilla Warfare* 138.

¹⁶¹ Coleman, *The Irish Revolution*, 73.

¹⁶² Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence*, 77

¹⁶³ Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence*, 77

British perspective, the IRA Volunteers in other parts of the country had continued to inflict significant damage. Townshend states that

the period from the beginning of May to the Truce accounted for well over a quarter of all the Crown casualties suffered in the whole two-and-a-half-year conflict. Military losses also rose in proportion to those of the police. In another field, that of sabotage, hitherto neglected by the rebels, the burning of the ordnance store in the Dublin Shell Factory on 4 June pointed to a type of action which could be repeated elsewhere with great effect. It destroyed £88,000 worth of stores, including 5 Peerless armoured cars and 35 other vehicles. At Rathcoole, County Cork, on 16 June the IRA showed that it had not altogether lost the ability to mount big attacks, for 130 rebels were assembled from five districts to ambush an ADRIC supply convoy.¹⁶⁴

Cooperation amongst the Crown forces had never been fully established. As Townshend maintains, 'there is no doubt that the military authorities often adopted a patronising or arrogant attitude towards the police.'¹⁶⁵ However, despite failed precursory attempts at truce negotiations, by July 1921 there was a willingness to find some resolution to the conflict. This was significantly furthered with the return of de Valera, 'the recognised leader of the republican movement' back to Ireland and his later release from prison.¹⁶⁶ There was also an added urgency to the negotiations in that, under the terms of the Government of Ireland Act 1920,

if the southern Irish provisions were not enforced by 12 July 1921, the British government faced the prospect of having to impose crown colony government with martial law, and many influential people, including John Anderson [the principal executive figure in Dublin] and [General] Macready, were opposed to resorting to further coercive measures.¹⁶⁷

The peace talks took place with several intermediators including General Jan Smuts, the South African Premier and Colonel Maurice Moore, former Inspector-General of the Irish Volunteers.¹⁶⁸ Smuts recommended a public offer of Dominion Status be offered to de Valera, especially since the establishment of the Northern Parliament 'definitely eliminates the coercion of Ulster, and the road is now clear to deal on the most statesmanlike lines with the rest of Ireland.'¹⁶⁹ Both Lloyd George and Eamon de Valera agreed to the terms and the agreement was signed on 9 July, and came into force on 11 July. Respite from the constant terror was desired by all. An article in the *Freeman's Journal* the Saturday before the official announcement may well sum up the

¹⁶⁴ Townshend, *The British Campaign in Ireland 1919–1921*, 186

¹⁶⁵ Townshend, *The British Campaign in Ireland 1919–1921*, 186

¹⁶⁶ Coleman, *The Irish Revolution* 101

¹⁶⁷ Coleman, *The Irish Revolution* 101

¹⁶⁸ Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence*, 195

¹⁶⁹ As cited in Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence*, 195

feeling of those praying for peace:

A truce is not peace. Should it fail to bring peace, should the long war be resumed, a terrible responsibility will lie on the shoulders of the statesmen. Peace for the sake of Ireland, for the sake of England, for the sake of humanity, must come. And peace can come. It needs two things to bring it, two qualities of statesmanship. They are courage and generosity.¹⁷⁰

Despite this fatigue, many of the Volunteers were sceptical of this truce. Both Mícheál Ó Droighnáin and Michael Brennan were doubtful that a ceasefire would last. Brennan was summoned to Dublin on 12 July. When he reported at IRA GHQ, he met Michael Collins, Richard Mulcahy, Gearóid O'Sullivan and other high profile leaders. They all emphasised that they did not expect the truce to last very long and added that the negotiating period must be used to improve the organisation and training. When Brennan left them, he was 'convinced that [they] had only got a breathing space and that a resumption of the fighting was an absolute certainty. In consequence [his] great anxiety was how and where [he] could secure arms and, above all, ammunition.'¹⁷¹ Ó Droighnáin had been sent a message to meet Volunteer Tim O'Connor from Moycullen Company at Fr. Connolly's house. O'Connor had a man with him from headquarters in Dublin who told Ó Droighnáin that a Truce had been arranged between the Volunteers and the British Government. However, O'Connor was suspicious of the man and stated, 'If this is a trap, you are in for it'.¹⁷² It was, however, the beginning of the end of the War of Independence in County Galway.

Conclusion

Overall, the seventeen months that comprised the period from 21 March 1920, to the truce of 11 July 1921 in County Galway, were characterised by a pattern of ambushes and reprisals from both the Crown forces and the IRA. By utilising several significant and critical sources, this chapter has sought to identify the key incidents that impacted upon the course of the War of Independence in County Galway. As shown here, having successfully constrained the RIC and dominated the local courts, the IRA effectively superseded them as upholders of law and order. However, this period also saw a marked escalation in confrontations and violent clashes, which impacted greatly

¹⁷⁰ *The Freemans Journal*, Saturday 9 July 1921.

¹⁷¹ Michael Brennan, 11 January 1955 MACBB, BMH WS No. 1068.

¹⁷² Mícheál Ó Droighnáin 16 December 1957 MACBB, BMH WS No. 1718.

on civilians going about their daily lives. Many of these lesser publicised incidents included young men being taken and beaten for no other reason than they were at home. Consequently, the increased levels of ferocity began from early 1920, once a force of special reserve temporary constables (the Black and Tans) were posted to County Galway. The Black and Tans immediately employed a series of countermeasures and engaged in reprisals in response to many of the ambushes and the instances of boycotting they encountered. As mentioned earlier, it resulted in what has been established here as a chronic state of terror, a term that historians such as David Fitzpatrick and William Henry have also alluded to.¹⁷³ This terror lasted until a truce was eventually declared in July 1921.

There can be no doubt that the continued political and military success that Sinn Féin and the IRA were holding nationally, generated confidence amongst their members. Yet, as shown throughout this chapter, this shifted when the undermined RIC began to integrate the newly-recruited reinforcements into their ranks. In County Galway, the impact was felt immediately. Yet, the Black and Tans responded to attacks and ambushes with a disregard for the lives of those they pursued, or indeed the innocent communities they occupied. Their actions drew condemnation from several quarters, including Britain, yet despite the demands for restraint, this behaviour was officially sanctioned by the British government. This once again prompted resignations from the RIC, including Jeremiah Mee. Nevertheless, amongst those who remained in the RIC were also some who compassionately endeavoured to abate or intercede on behalf of the victims of these violent outbursts. This put them in a perilous position in such a hostile environment.

Despite the risk of reprisal from the Black and Tans, the IRA continued to attack and ambush wherever possible. This was spurred on by the actions of other Volunteers around the country. On the other hand, some Volunteers also used their position to intimidate local landowners despite directives from GHQ to refrain from participating in land agitation. This in turn directed an added hardship and anxiety upon several members of the community and placed them in a deplorable position forcing them to seek help wherever possible. As already shown, this angered the Crown

¹⁷³ See Henry, *Blood for Blood* and David Fitzpatrick ed., *Terror in Ireland 1916–1923* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2012)

forces further leading them to making threats once again against the local communities.

However, despite the Galway Volunteers enthusiasm, the ongoing deeper issue of command caused disarray. The various complaints about Seamus Murphy's perceived inaction increasingly frustrated Volunteers and may explain why the county was somewhat neglected in historical scholarship until recent years, and again during the Decade of Centenaries. Furthermore, through the various consulted sources, there are several examples provided within this chapter that demonstrate IRA Volunteers wanted a meaningful role in the conflict and continued to find ways to disrupt and even fatally wound members of the Crown forces. Equally, their participation in Republican/Dáil courts and the ensuing police force was highly successful and certainly developed an alternative to the British judiciary. Yet a willingness to confront the Crown forces in the same manner as other counties such as Cork or Dublin had, was constantly hampered by the lack of ordinance and weaponry. Seizing arms from the general population had failed to meet demands. This ultimately forced more attacks directly at those police barracks in more isolated areas in the hope of seizing some weapons or ammunition. As the intensity of the conflict increased nationally, the British government wanted to suppress the insurgency and introduced the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act in August 1920. They suspended the now defunct courts system and instead established military courts with powers to enforce the death penalty and internment without trial. This brought about an unprecedented escalation in the conflict.

As noted earlier, three incidents in November 1920 caused reverberations throughout the country and also reached an international audience. These were the killings of Eileen Quinn, Fr Michael Griffin, and the Loughnane brothers. Such was the violent manner in which they died that all three would later dominate the memorialisation of this conflict, not only in their own communities, but the wider county. For the communities that mourned, it provided the evidence that no one was safe from the outrages perpetrated by the Crown forces.

Just as the success of the IRA military campaign lay in its guerrilla warfare tactic and continued support from the people within the small communities, this too took its toll on everyone, with more citizens being in the firing line of Crown forces. Ultimately, the conflict was bloodier than anyone wanted or could endure. As the Crown forces

continued their counterinsurgency tactics, the Volunteers established small bands of highly competent men into Flying Columns or Active Service Units. These small units took on more and more audacious ambushes sometimes resulting in deaths on either side. However, as the conflict progressed, and reorganisation of companies was put into effect, there was an escalation of violence and subsequent terror. The state of terror ultimately resulted in less and less safe places for the Volunteers to hide. Consequently, the Crown forces tightened their grip throughout the County. Nonetheless, the killings that occurred at Ballyturin not only alerted the Crown forces to the continued danger they faced, but provoked another violent reprisal in the local area. There were political endeavours underway to secure a truce. Nonetheless, the Galway Volunteers were almost out of ammunition as these ongoing talks continued. Finally, a truce was negotiated and enacted July 1921 and in December of the same year, a treaty was signed.

This aim of this chapter was to *furnish new local histories of the War of Independence in County Galway*. By firstly exploring essential newspaper reports and newly-released sources it has been possible to identify and detail key events which impacted upon the lives of local population. In doing so, it has also been possible to achieve one of the objectives of this study, namely to determine the facts surrounding not only the more familiar incidents or acts of terror, but equally, lesser known events that potentially contributed to more significant actions. As a result, this chapter has established that some areas or communities experienced more action than others, especially from Spring 1920 when Crown forces introduced the more aggressive Black and Tans. Nonetheless, the entire county had experienced this unprecedented state of despair as neighbours and friends became victims of this conflict. However, as shown in the following chapters, some of these incidents were commemorated more prominently than others and have persisted in memory to the present day.

Chapter 7. Chronicling Memories, 1919–1970

This chapter explores the means by which the War of Independence has been remembered and commemorated from 1921–1970 in County Galway. It also examines how, despite divided political opinions in the aftermath of the Civil War or the political climate under successive governments, local communities sought to acknowledge the men and women involved in the struggle for independence. Many of these initiatives have left an enduring legacy in the built and cultural heritage of County Galway. Remembrances are reflected in several ways. This study supports the assessment of Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney that, ‘collective memories are actively produced through repeated acts of remembrance using both a variety of media and a variety of genres.’¹ These include anniversary commemorations, monuments, street plaques, street names, poems, songs, and those remembrances contained within a death notice. In a wider context, folk memories and keepsakes held in repositories such as the National Schools’ Collection and archives also illuminate the extent of how the memories of this conflict were valued and secured. According to Justin Carvill, the interpretation of historical events ‘continues to be contested in both the academy and in public culture’.² How the past is then represented and commemorated nationally and locally follows similar debates, and is often occupied with the cultural politics of memory. For example, what events are considered of national importance, or who locally is worthy of remembrance in the form of built heritages, and why? Similarly, in their notable study, *The Heritages of War*, Martin Gegner and Bart Ziino have defined remembrance as a fundamental, political process, one in which the ‘production of heritage is deeply implicated, as it shapes and sustains identities, provides legitimacy to political systems and underscores territorial claims’.³ These were necessary components required for the fledgling Dáil Éireann, one that established a fundamental core purpose of nation-building; to unite the people behind the new state. The Civil War made this process a delicate situation, one that would take deft consideration. Notwithstanding this, remembrances of the War of Independence in County Galway took on various manifestations; cultural, material, and built. Mostly, they were centred around incidents or deaths of individuals that left indelible ‘memory cruxes’ or impressions,

¹ Astrid Erll & Ann Rigney ‘Literature and the production of cultural memory: Introduction,’ in *European Journal of English Studies*, (2006) Vol 10 Issue 2, 111

² Justin Carvill, ‘Photography, Materials Memory and 1916’ in *Making 1916: Material and Visual Culture of the Easter Rising* edited by Lisa Godson and Joanna Brück (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015) 235

³ Martin Gegner and Bart Ziino, *The Heritage of War*. 1

that over time became part of the collective memory.⁴ As with commemorative events held nationally, commemorations associated with the War of Independence did not necessarily follow conventional timeframes such as the beginning and end of the conflict.

For instance, whilst two separate events signified the commencement of the War of Independence nationally, namely the convening of the First Dáil in Dublin and the shooting of two policemen at Soloheadbeg, County Tipperary, neither are memorialised as an annual national day of remembrance. Commemorations of these two events were inconsistent and erratic. They can range from a large-scale national event such as the 50th anniversary of the First Dáil, in 1969, to a more community-based event to honour local veterans of Soloheadbeg.⁵ John Dorney has asserted that the ‘downplay [of] the commemorations of the First Dáil could be traced to the divide in Irish politics which occurred after the ratification of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in January 1922.’⁶ Years earlier, Dan Breen, was reflective when he declared that participation in rebellion and revolution only gets respectable after about fifty years.⁷ Consequently, contemporary political environments had a profound impact on commemoration. Successive governments, particularly Fianna Fáil, tended to favour the less provocative remembrance surrounding the Easter Rising 1916 as the more indisputable seminal event. According to Eunan O’Halpin, ‘504 people died as a result of Irish political violence in 1916, almost all of them (95 per cent) in Dublin’.⁸ Therefore, the majority of commemorations that took place during these national remembrances of Easter 1916 were of those who died during the War of Independence (or later, Civil War). Arguably, this caused some confusion during the latter half of the twentieth century as ‘collective misremembering’ or confusion about the actual time period of certain incidents began to form.⁹ Memory, is ‘faulty and can change over time, altering what

⁴ Oona Frawley, *Memory Ireland Volume 3 The Famine and the Troubles* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014) 1

⁵ See John Dorney <https://www.theirishstory.com/2018/02/19/controlling-history-commemorating-the-first-dail-1929-1969/#.YnzdYejMKU> and *Irish Press*, 18 January 1969

⁶ John Dorney <https://www.theirishstory.com/2018/02/19/controlling-history-commemorating-the-first-dail-1929-1969/#.YnzdYejMKU>

⁷ *Irish Press*, 18 January 1969

⁸ Eunan O’Halpin and Daithí Ó Corráin, eds., *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* (London: Yale University Press, 2020) 8

⁹ As cited by Jessica Cammaert-Raval and Matthew Remedio, ‘Evaluating Oral Source Methodology’, 2019 https://www.academia.edu/download/68383293/Evaluating_Oral_Source_Methodology_Remedios_M.pdf

subjects perceive to have happened'.¹⁰ This was specifically true in County Galway, although mostly in relation to those incidents which garnered large amounts of notoriety from newspaper reports or used in IRA/Sinn Féin propaganda campaigns. To a greater extent this concerned the two Loughnane brothers, Fr Michael Griffin and, to a lesser extent, Eileen Quinn, the heavily pregnant mother shot outside her home in November 1920. Therefore, what is explored here, is the inherent manner in which people remembered this period of history.

However, one discernible advocate for the families during the turbulence of this conflict that persisted during the practice of remembrance was the presence of the Catholic Church. Sinn Féin, successfully aligning itself with the Church in opposition to conscription was, as Michael Hopkinson signifies 'calculated wooing'.¹¹ Having the clerics endorsement when they knocked on voters' doors during the election of 1918 broadened the IRA's legitimacy further. The Catholic Church in Ireland played a significant role in people's lives, from baptism to death, and during the particularly chaotic period of the War of Independence, 1920, they offered reassurance and comfort. Whilst the Church never fully accepted the IRA as the legitimate army, the Church was 'composed of Irishmen who reacted like all other Irish nationalists in the emotional atmosphere of terror which existed prior to the Truce.'¹² This brought attention to certain priests that were known to keep company with Volunteers. However, Margaret O'Callaghan asserts that 'the Church during this time had little real [political] influence', unlike their later authoritative role in the Free State government.¹³ Justifiably, from their point of view, the clergy rejected violence and were reluctant to take sides. As the conflict continued they remained uncertain, as to the 'problem of legitimacy, of deciding what attitude to adopt towards the competing regimes.'¹⁴ Nevertheless, once the Black and Tans arrived and began their violent reprisals, it provided the clergy with what Heffernan refers to as convenient 'foreign objects of indignation.'¹⁵ The abduction and killing of Fr Griffin was a critical point for

¹⁰ For more information see Joan Tumblety, ed. *Memory and History Understanding Memory as Source and Subject* (London: Routledge, 2013) 7

¹¹ Michael Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence* (Dublin: Gill, 2002) 15

¹² Margaret O'Callaghan, 'Religion and Identity: The Church and Irish Independence' in *The Crane Bag* 1983, Vol. 7, No. 2, The Forum Issue: Education/Religion/Art/Psychology (1983), 65

¹³ O'Callaghan, 'Religion and Identity: 65

¹⁴ O'Callaghan, 'Religion and Identity: 65

¹⁵ Brian Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment: Catholic Priests and Political Violence in Ireland 1919–21* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014) 245

the wider Church in Ireland as ‘raids of ecclesiastical buildings and arrests of priests became common.’¹⁶ The Black and Tans did not have the same respect or ‘traditional esteem’ for the position of the Church as ‘fellow members of the local elite.’¹⁷ Moreover, as mentioned throughout Chapter 5 and 6, there were several priests who were active in different capacities during the War of Independence. These rebel priests were causing enough trouble and were suspected of passing information. Nonetheless, as Brian Heffernan has established, not all priests endorsed Sinn Féin or IRA policies. He cites a newspaper article in 1920 in which a priest from Tuam claimed that ‘Sinn Féin politicians were “upstarts who imagine that they are the alpha and omega of nationality here” even though they were all “corner boys without any business.”’¹⁸ Nevertheless, as the violence escalated, the Catholic Church, according to O’Callaghan,

reacted disjointedly to events as they occurred without any clear moral position in relation to the wider context of the questions raised by the violence. Individual acts of murder were murder, Black and Tans violence was persecution – outside those fundamental polarities the Church’s moral stance was vague and uncertain.¹⁹

Certainly, by November 1920, the escalating violence and an increasing death toll had become overwhelming for the people of Galway. The ensuing funerals of Eileen Quinn, Fr Michael Griffin and the two Loughnane brothers, Pat and Harry, amongst others, bound the Church and the people together as they united in their combined grief at such brutality. The Church had assumed a key role in these funerary processes and their presence projected an unwavering reassurance to the congregation during such a terrifying period. This pastoral care was administered alongside their spiritual and moral teachings and would continue throughout the conflict, entrenching their relevance as a voice for their flock. It was a position that would later advance the Church’s role into a significant social and political influence in the new independent state. Their presence in both state and local remembrances became an important component and legitimised the new government’s place in history. As demonstrated here, this is particularly true when political tensions heightened in response to the conflict in Northern Ireland from the late 1960s onwards.

¹⁶ Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment* 245

¹⁷ Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment* 245

¹⁸ Brian Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment: Catholic Priests and Political Violence in Ireland 1919–21* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014) 27

¹⁹ O’Callaghan, ‘Religion and Identity: The Church and Irish Independence’, 65

In addition, economic hardship, emigration, and the effects of geopolitical recessions post war had left few communities untouched.²⁰ Such deprivation allowed little appetite for any high-profile commemoration during the first fifty years of anniversaries. However, this may have permitted a vacuum that increased tensions that arose after the Treaty, the Civil War and into the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Once such hostilities surfaced, this in turn determined how, when and what was remembered throughout the last century by nationalists and the wider population. Graveside speeches not only recounted the manner in which the dead met their demise but appealed for their sacrifice not to be in vain in what became more a call to action than memory. However, as time progressed, the living memory of the War of Independence depleted, and with it a rich source of information. What sort of effect was this to have on the memories of the War of Independence in County Galway? This in particular opened a wider debate on the various methods of memory and how, or in what way, do communities and individuals remember?

Through text, objects and actions, acts of remembrance or memorialisation can incorporate sites of memory, agents of memory, collective memory, public memory, politics and aesthetics of commemoration, community memory and individual memory. The idea that memory has a history is one that Guy Beiner has pointed out in his article 'Memory Too has a History'.²¹ Beiner echoed a presidential address given by TW Moody at Trinity College Dublin, delivered on 10 May 1977. It is worth reiterating here, as it confirms the key role of memory in the living present. Moody argued that, 'the past lives on: in works of human hands and minds, in beliefs, institutions, and values, and in us all, who are its living extension.'²² Beiner responded by positing that the,

living present can no longer be ignored. Under the collective term, the Decade of Centenaries (also referred to as Decade of Commemorations) the state's current approach to the remembrance of significant historic events, is underway. Some of which was guided by an Expert Advisory Group. The plethora of events and the ever-growing list of related publications show a compulsive obsession with Irish memory.²³

²⁰ This predominantly refers to WW2, yet the effects of the First War and other conflicts are included.

²¹ Guy Beiner, 'Memory Too Has a History' *Dublin Review of Books*, Issue 65, March 2015, <https://www.drb.ie/essays/memory-too-has-a-history> Accessed 4 November 2019.

²² Cited in Beiner, 'Memory Too Has a History', <https://www.drb.ie/essays/memory-too-has-a-history> Accessed 4 November 2019.

²³ Beiner, 'Memory Too Has a History' <https://www.drb.ie/essays/memory-too-has-a-history> Accessed 4 November 2019.

Notwithstanding the politics of commemoration, and the need for successive governments to position themselves on the right side of history, or what John Dorney ascertained as ‘establishing the historical position’, obsession may overstate the state’s compulsion.²⁴ On the other hand, local communities that engage in local remembrances are often volunteers on low budgets, and do so to re-engage with their history, and generate a sense of place. Enthusiasm and drive is certainly a prerequisite to succeed with any local commemoration event.²⁵

There is also an opportunity to explore and evaluate the memories of IRA units and their successes, the communities in which they lived, and the legacy of the Truce on commemoration. All conflicts leave behind memories, some that endure for a lifetime, others, as they are revealed, are woven into the tapestry of a nation’s cultural heritage. The idea that ‘family history connects everyone to the past whether they are aware of it (as seems increasingly to be the case) or not’ brings about another notion of reclaiming family memories.²⁶ Overlooked at a national level yet of significance locally, are the memories of these small communities concerned, which can be as diverse as the actors themselves. Their narratives often reveal a legitimacy that can no longer be dismissed or marginalised and deserve to be considered. To this end, the academic field of memory studies has initiated, developed, and influenced a wider consideration of the cultural heritage of war and conflict. Nonetheless, commemoration at both national and local level surrounding the War of Independence has not been straightforward, and at times provocative. As Diarmaid Ferriter has argued, ‘objectivity can still be a challenge, especially as current affairs and controversial commemorations can revive or facilitate fresh polarisations, distortions and simplicities.’²⁷ Even so, one notable remembrance ceremony that takes place at both national and local level, and on either side of conflict, was the funeral ritual. This was a traditional symbolic activity that allowed family and friends of the deceased to express their deepest feelings on the loss of life. As the conflict moved into the most traumatic phase prior to its cessation, this ritual was also used to protest at the atrocities that had befallen the community. This was evident by the sheer numbers

²⁴ As cited in John Dorney <https://www.theirishstory.com/2018/02/19/controlling-history-commemorating-the-first-dail-1929-1969/#.YnzdYejMKUJ>

²⁵ Based on this researcher’s experience with several heritage events in the local community

²⁶ Edward Madigan, ‘Introduction’ in *Towards Commemoration: Ireland in War and Revolution 1912–1923*, edited by John Horne and Edward Madigan (Royal Irish Academy: Dublin, 2013), 2

²⁷ *Irish Times*, 3 June 2020

that attended despite restrictions imposed by Crown forces.

1920s

Early Ceremonial Rituals and Funerals

One of the greatest challenges that individuals and communities had to endure during the War of Independence in County Galway was the violent loss, injury and emotional stress on family and neighbours. Conflict, and the resultant traumatic incidents, often violated basic human rights.²⁸ The terror that was spread during this conflict through violent acts, both mental and physical, caused untold anxieties to families, communities and relationships. This ultimately resulted in many individuals and communities being unable to function normally. In addition, the community of families and friends of those injured and killed, had to not only overcome their own personal grief and loss, but also the collective sadness of their neighbouring communities. Furthermore, in addition to the ongoing agrarian agitation, the escalated violence that followed the arrival of the Black and Tans and their counter-insurgency tactics, led to a trail of misery, and degradation and violation of human rights. Moreover, a rapid increase in deaths brought about a large outpouring of grief and stress at funerals. Moreover, such gatherings also provided an opportunity to galvanise support and utilise the propaganda value of these emotive funerals.

Figure 7.1. Photograph depicting the large crowds that attended the funeral of Séan Mulvoy and Séamus Quirke
Source: *Connacht Tribune*, 11 September 1920.



²⁸ Green, B.L., Friedman, M.J., de Jong, J., Solomon, S.D., Keane, T.M., Fairbank, J.A., Donelan, B., Frey-Wouters, E. eds. *Trauma Interventions in War and Peace: Prevention, Practice, and Policy* (Springer: USA, 2003), 2

This was evident following an altercation (discussed in Chapter 6) at the Galway train station on 9 September 1920. The incident resulted in the deaths of Private Edward Krumm, Volunteer Séan Mulvoy and, later the same day, Séamus Quirke. The killings instigated a distraught response from the community with a large-scale funeral cortege passing through Galway town (Fig. 7.1). This deeply moving event can conceivably be considered a peaceful protest against the tyrannical efforts at law and order, or even likely, as a form of IRA propaganda, thereby rallying support for the cause. Or even more likely, both. Either way, the people of Galway were determined to have their presence felt. As seen in Fig. 7.1, the coffins were draped with the Tricolour and their Irish Volunteer hats, thus marking them as faithful sacrifices, a symbol of their ultimate commitment to the struggle for Irish independence. Not every Volunteer had a uniform, so in death these symbols were of a ‘sacred service’, held aloft for all to see. These dramatic scenes became the iconic image of dead republicans.²⁹

Figure 7.2. Photograph of the scene from Séamus Quirke’s funeral cortege when it arrived in Cork, 12 September 1920
Source: *Cork Examiner*, 13 September 1920.



The processions for Séan Mulvoy and Séamus Quirke were reported in the *Connacht Tribune* as follows:

Impressive scenes at Volunteers funeral, ten thousand people march[ed] after coffins ... no more memorable and impressive—even if sad—scenes were ever witnessed in the ancient City of Galway ... presided over by the Bishop of Galway, the most Rev. Dr O’Dea and attended by forty priests, the touching scenes at the Pro-Cathedral where men and women wept openly, and then the great, sorrowful procession of ten thousand people that followed the two coffins slowly and sadly to Temple [sic] (Mervue) where Mulvoy was

²⁹ *An tÓglach*, Vol. IV, 24 June 1922,

laid to rest, and from where Quirke's body was taken by motor to Cork.³⁰

The Connacht Tribune also reported that after the funeral mass, the two coffins began the journey through the streets of Galway, as the fife and drum band played the 'Death March'.³¹ The coffins were followed by the Bishop of Galway, Dr O'Dea and over forty clergy, next marched several Irish Volunteers followed by Cumann na mBan, and finally, walking four abreast the grief stricken community of Galway.³² Thus, figuring in a prominent position at the head of this procession was once again a large contingent of the Catholic Church. Whilst they were not there in support of conflict, their presence certainly demonstrated solidarity with the people of Galway.

As the procession arrived in Teampill, St James' Cemetery, Mervue, the coffin containing Séamus Quirke was heavily guarded while the remains of Séan Mulvoy were laid to rest. Once his coffin was lowered into the grave, the earth was returned and the sods of grass were replaced, over which a 'wealth of wreaths' were placed.³³ During this time, the coffin of Séamus Quirke was placed into a motor vehicle to prepare for his final journey back to Cork where his sick mother remained in hospital awaiting the arrival of her son.³⁴ As Diarmaid Ferriter stated, 'alongside an increasingly intense military conflict, there were political, psychological, intelligence and propaganda battles.'³⁵ Here, the theatre of the dead Volunteers became a performative propaganda strategy that not only focused on a shared grief and a common goal for independence, but also the men who suffered for the cause. Both of Quirke's parents were distraught. His father Christopher Quirke was reported as presenting a 'pathetic figure' as he accompanied his dead son along the streets of Galway and onwards to St Finbarr's cemetery in Cork City (Figs. 7.1, 7.2).³⁶

The spectacle of the dead Volunteers in open coffins was an affective propaganda tool and one that would be seen again after the Loughnane brothers were killed (B31). The photograph in Figure 7.3 was taken to emphasise a hagiographic plausibility and passes for incontrovertible proof of the violence that took place, one that could not be easily denied by the British propaganda political machine.

³⁰ *Connacht Tribune* 11 September 1920

³¹ *Connacht Tribune* 11 September 1920

³² *Connacht Tribune* 11 September 1920

³³ *Irish Independent* 11 September 1920

³⁴ *Connacht Tribune* 11 September 1920

³⁵ *Irish Times*, 3 June 2020

³⁶ *Connacht Tribune* 11 September 1920; *Irish Independent* 11 September 1920

Figure 7.3. Photograph of Séamus Quirke's body lying in state in an open coffin surrounded by wreaths while Volunteers formed a guard of honour

Source: <https://irishvolunteers.org/seamus-quirke-lt-in-the-fianna-eireann-cork/>



On the same day, the coffin of Constable Edward Krumm, who was also killed at Galway's train station, was also beginning the journey for burial. The coffin was loaded onto a police lorry at Eglinton Street police station within moments of the funeral cortege arriving at Teampill St James' Cemetery. In a display of solidarity, the coffin was escorted by sixty armed constabulary to the mail train, en-route for London. Those in attendance were, the County Inspector George Bedell Rutledge and District Inspectors Richard Cruise and James Sugrue. Before the train left the station, the military 'presented arms, and the people on the platform reverently lifted their hats.'³⁷ Just like the families of Quirke and Mulvoy, Edith Krumm, Edward's mother, was distraught over the death of her son.

Figure 7.4. Facsimile of the Courts of Inquiry register of cases, showing Mulvey, Quirke and Krumm listed together.

Source: www.findmypast.ie The National Archives, UK, WO35 series, War Office: Army of Ireland: Administration and Easter Rising Records.

2543/3 13 2/2	Mulvey John	Galway.	1 st Div	9. 9. 20	Bullet wounds inflicted by provo or persons unknown	19. 10. 20
2543/3 13 2/2	Quirke James	Galway.	1 st Div	9. 9. 20	ditto	19. 10. 20
2543/4 13 2/2	Krumm Constable R.I.C. Edward	Galway.	1 st Div	9. 9. 20	ditto	5. 10. 20

As a way to counteract the propaganda value of these funerals, the indiscriminate and aggressive tactics of the Black and Tans became widely reported, and the

³⁷ *Irish Independence*, 11 September 1920.

attendance of mourners at funerals became acutely difficult. One such example was the funeral of John O’Hanlon who was killed by Crown forces at his home in Turloughmore. Lorry loads of Black and Tans were reported as speeding along the roads randomly shooting at people, narrowly missing several mourners on their return home.³⁸ Some golfers at the local course in Tuam had to dive for cover as a volley of shots were directed toward them.³⁹ As a result of such incidents, restrictions on attendance also came into force. Sinn Féin Councillor Michael Walsh’s funeral on 22 October 1920 ‘was limited to the clergy and fifty persons, including the family.’⁴⁰ The *Connacht Tribune* reported on the enforcement of the order:

Military and police were stationed at the Cathedral and along the streets at several points, the Dragoon Guards, with drawn sabres, lining the way on either side along the route to the new cemetery where the interment took place. An armoured car was also on the streets, and followed the funeral.⁴¹

Despite these extreme constraints, nationalist sentiment and loyalty could not be suppressed. The community of Galway ‘suspended’ their activity and all shops were closed as the streets filled with those that wished to express their sympathy.⁴² The funeral cortege made its way to Eyre Square where ‘a cordon of military and police was drawn across, and the people were ordered home’.⁴³ Frightened, the crowd quickly ran away as the military cleared the streets. Later a detachment of the cavalry ‘paraded the town’.⁴⁴

The communities defiance exemplified a shared grief and embodied the need to show solidarity during this traumatic period and which in turn, created its own collective memory. However, notwithstanding the trauma of the numerous killings that occurred during this conflict, there were three funerals that took place in November 1920 that would remain in the collective memory of the people of Galway initially, and then transmitted onto the wider population of Irish people throughout the following decades. The violent circumstances surrounding the deaths of Eileen Quinn, Fr Michael Griffin and the Loughnane brothers, Pat and Harry, was discussed at length in the previous chapter. Considered here is the effects of those deaths and

³⁸ *Connacht Tribune*, 9 October 1920.

³⁹ *Connacht Tribune*, 9 October 1920.

⁴⁰ *Connacht Tribune*, 23 October 1920.

⁴¹ *Connacht Tribune*, 23 October 1920.

⁴² *Connacht Tribune*, 23 October 1920.

⁴³ *Connacht Tribune*, 23 October 1920.

⁴⁴ *Connacht Tribune*, 23 October 1920.

how they were reflected in the response from the community in which they lived. Eileen Quinn was shot by passing police on 1 November 1920. Her funeral was, according to the *Connacht Tribune*, 'by far the largest ever seen in the district, [with] telegrams of sympathy ... received by the relatives from all parts of Ireland.'⁴⁵ The sight and sound of her children crying left a lasting impression on her family and friends. Fr Michael Griffin, kidnapped on 14 November 1920 and who was found dead a week later, was killed by person or persons unknown. It was considered necessary by Fr O'Meehan and others to keep the news hidden that his body had been found until an announcement was made at Mass the next morning. Their fear was that the Auxiliaries would try to pin the blame for his death on others and not accept responsibility themselves.⁴⁶ The *Galway Observer* noted:

The scenes witnessed in the Galway Churches on Sunday morning when the announcement was made of the finding of the dead body of Father Griffin are probably without parallel in the history of Ireland for over a century. A shudder of horror passed through the congregations. Women and even men sobbed aloud. Little girls and children wept as if their hearts would break. People were to be seen in tears on the street. The ordinary salutations were put aside.⁴⁷

Attendance at his funeral was large and estimated at between 10,000 and 12,000 mourners. The *Connacht Tribune* reported it as 'the first priest killed since the days of Oliver Cromwell'.⁴⁸ Pádraic Ó Laoi estimated attendance as 12,000 and as the coffin, held high by six of his fellow priests, moved through the city by 'Shop street, Eyre Square and Forster Street to the outskirts at Moneenageesha Cross ... Every shop was shuttered and every private house had its blinds drawn.'⁴⁹ Ó Laoi also declared that the streets were kept clear of police and military, only one group of RIC men from the Dominick Street Barrack stood at O'Brien's Bridge 'doffed their caps and saluted as the cortege passed.'⁵⁰ Like the streets of Galway the people of Oranmore and Craughwell gave a similar reaction as the coffin, now inside a motor car, passed on its way to Loughrea Cathedral. Once there, the mourners queued until after 9pm, to pay their last respects before the doors were closed and locked for the night. The collective sorrow and sense of trauma felt by the friends, family and wider community

⁴⁵ *Connacht Tribune*, 13 November 1920.

⁴⁶ John Rushe 'The Martyr Boy Priest: Father Michael Griffin' in *Vexilla Regis*, Maynooth's Laymen's Annual, 9 (1961-62), 70

⁴⁷ *Galway Observer*, 27 November 1920

⁴⁸ *Connacht Tribune*, 27 November 1920

⁴⁹ Pádraic Ó Laoi *Fr. Griffin 1892-1920* (Ireland: Connacht Tribune Ltd, 1994) 51

⁵⁰ Ó Laoi *Fr. Griffin*, 51

was evident in the numbers that attended the funeral of Fr Griffin. Unable to stop or even protest at what was happening in their community, their sense of outrage was overcome with the misery they were experiencing. Fr Griffin was buried in the grounds of Loughrea Cathedral the next morning, 24 November 1920. The Bishop of Clonfert, Dr O'Doherty was the celebrant and the Bishop of Galway, Dr O'Dea alongside over a hundred clergy was present, 'young and old turned out to do reverence ... from early morning there was a constant stream of mourners to the church ... the relatives and friends were pathetic figures, yet, they bore up with remarkable fortitude.'⁵¹ The *Connacht Tribune* went on to report that 'the events of Wednesday will live long in the history of his native diocese'.⁵² The death of Fr Griffin gave the Church a shared grievance in this conflict, one they readily exploited when they went on to claim a full part in shaping the new Free State.

However, the violence continued and other deaths led to the now familiar sense of collective anguish and heartache at the helplessness of the situation. The killing of both the Loughnane brothers not only provided another propaganda opportunity, it also led to the development of a tangible form of remembrance, one that endured into the present. The photographs of the two brothers in a deathly pose acted as a visual proof of the atrocities and has since become an historical document that continues to inform the present.

Photography and Memory

The connection between photography and memory is, as Carville has stated, in 'the materiality of the photographic image, its tangible existence as a physical object, that has the potential to connect the viewer in unpredictable ways to the past and with the shifting contours of remembrance.'⁵³ The photograph depicting the charred bodies of Pat and Harry Loughnane provoked a similar grief-stricken reaction amongst their community as did the image of Quirke (see B31).

The one difference is how those photographs have remained in the public sphere over the intervening years. The widely-distributed Loughnane photographs were taken

⁵¹ Ó Laoi *Fr. Griffin*, 52

⁵² *Connacht Tribune*, 27 November 1920

⁵³ Carvill, 'Photography, Materials Memory and 1916' 237

by Tomás Ó hEighín, a local man known for his interest in photography.

Figure 7.5. Photographs of the two Loughnane brothers, Pat and Harry in coffins.
Source: Courtesy NUI Galway Digital Collections



The notion of photography as ‘a tool for memory culture’ is important.⁵⁴ This is especially true, states Gail Baylis, of historical photographs in the ‘construction of memory cultures because, even in a digital age when the “truth” of the image is questioned, when they are used as a support for a notion of a shared past, the historicity of the image carries authority.’⁵⁵ These photographs (at least two are known) were valuable for several reasons. They provided irrefutable proof of events and enabled the dissemination of nationalist visual propaganda to the wider public. Over time, the photographs became family heirlooms that were continually passed down to those keepers of the family’s heritage, positioning them as guardians of a shared history. The use of these photographs at particular historical junctures was critical, leading support to Victor Burgin’s assertion ‘that images are not transparent representations of the world but rather [can be] principal players on the stage of history’.⁵⁶ Notwithstanding this point, the funeral of these young men was also etched

⁵⁴ Gail Baylis ‘The Eviction Photograph as Shifting Trace’ in *Memory Ireland: Volume 2 Diaspora and Memory Practices*, edited by Oona Frawley (New: Syracuse University Press, 2012), 171.

⁵⁵ Baylis ‘The Eviction Photograph as Shifting Trace’, 172.

⁵⁶ As cited in Baylis ‘The Eviction Photograph as Shifting Trace’, 172.

into the memories of their community. The manner in which they died would be used in successive commemorations to exemplify the hurt and loss this conflict had on the people of County Galway. The terror and anguish that these deaths caused provoked continued remembrance of these traumatic events. The erection of monuments, naming of roads, instillation of plaques, exhibitions, talks, podcasts and radio shows, folklore, films, television shows, poems and songs have contributed to memorialising the events of the past. Some were unveiled or announced on anniversaries as the motivations and funding permitted, others during remembrance of another significant conflict, the Easter Rising 1916.

Sequence of Anniversaries

Commemoration and remembrance do not always sit comfortably side by side. Commemoration is selective: to remember some event or some body is to forget something or somebody else and this is often deliberate as much as accidental.⁵⁷

National commemorations, instigated by governments of the day, are both selective and divisive. For example, remembrance of the events of Easter 1916 over the years had somewhat overshadowed other conflicts and became 'the centrepiece of the commemorative calendar of the revolutionary period' for many nationalists and local communities alike.⁵⁸ Unlike its successor, the War of Independence, which, according to Higgins, became marred by partition, 'civil war and peacetime politics', Easter 1916, had become 'the moment into which all other historical events were collapsed and could be remembered.'⁵⁹ However, not all veterans fought during Easter 1916, and not all veterans remained on the same side after the Treaty. Therefore, coordinating a dignified commemoration for all sides, for both the living and the dead, particularly in the early years of the Free State, would never be easy. Thus, the anniversary of the Easter Rising became the agreed unifying remembrance event that everyone could participate and mark Ireland's independence. However, as the veterans gathered for these commemorations and possibly mythologised on their active participation in

⁵⁷ Terence Dooley, 'Historian Terence Dooley previews the decade of centenaries' *Eolas Magazine* February 2012. <https://www.eolasmagazine.ie/historian-terence-dooley-previews-the-decade-of-centenaries/> Accessed 2 July 2019.

⁵⁸ Róisín Higgins 'Commemoration and the Irish Revolution' in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* edited by John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil and Mike Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2018) 849.

⁵⁹ Higgins 'Commemoration and the Irish Revolution', 849.

either the 1916 Rising and/or the War of Independence, over time in some instances, this began to cause some confusion. For example, as these stories filtered out to wider communities, the exact period of the deaths of the Loughnane brothers and Eileen Quinn, mistakenly believed to have happened during the Easter Rising 1916.⁶⁰ Over the years this shift or reconstruction of memory did not align with the true events, despite local remembrances of the incidents.

Remembrance of the War of Independence was further complicated, even overshadowed in the early years of the Free State, as commemoration of the First World War reached its peak.⁶¹ Even in 1923 amid the aftermath of the Civil War, the amnestied Connaught Rangers mutineers were greeted on their return within an atmosphere of jubilation, such was the admiration for their demonstration of national loyalty. The men were stationed at Jullundur, India in June 1920. They refused to take up duty and objected to the violent treatment of those at home under Martial Law and the constant brutality of the Black and Tans during the numerous reprisals. Led by James Daly, the mutineers attempted to take over the armoury in protest.⁶² Two men were killed, and Daly was executed, the rest imprisoned. Patrick Donoghue, a native of Gort, County Galway was sentenced to four years in Mailing Gaol. On his return, he joined the Free State Army and served for a number of years.⁶³ The men were denied a military pension by the British government. The display of public reverence later shown towards these men persuaded the then 1936 government of Eamon de Valera to 'offer pensions to the surviving mutineers thus equating them with the soldiers of the War of Independence.'⁶⁴ However, it is telling that when a Connaught Rangers Cenotaph was unveiled at Glasnevin cemetery in 1949, the honour guard of veterans was named as survivors from the Easter Rising and not from the

⁶⁰ During the 2016 commemorations of 1916 Rising in Kinvara, County Kinvara, an exhibition was held and several people arrived requesting information on the deaths of the Loughnane brothers and Eileen Quinn. Folk memories seemed to have confused the Loughnane brothers or Eileen Quinn's demise as having occurred during the 1916 Rising as successive commemorations began to associate the two into one memory.

⁶¹ Heather Jones 'Cultures of Commemoration, Remembering the First World War in Ireland' in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* edited by John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil and Mike Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2018) 843.

⁶² T. Bartlett, 'The mutiny of the Connaught Rangers', *History Ireland* Issue 1 (Spring 1998), 5–7.

⁶³ *Connacht Tribune* 2 December 1961.

⁶⁴ <https://soundcloud.com/irishhistory/on-this-day-connaught-rangers> Accessed 18 October 2019. See <http://msearch.militaryarchives.ie/detail.aspx> for the full details on Mutiny Connaught Rangers, Release of Prisoners and Pensions for Dependants of those involved.

War of Independence.⁶⁵ The emphasis shifted backwards again, which is a demonstration of how memory can be adjusted to benefit political culture.

The terror, discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, that was inflicted upon communities, resulted in a predictable outcome of war making, the inevitable deaths of innocents or non-combatants. However, the emotional and psychological impact on society is harder to gauge. This had a lasting effect on the living memory. Whilst the Truce held, and negotiations for a Treaty were ongoing, communities began the process of remembrance in a more public manner without the threat of arrest. One such instance in County Galway was the first anniversary Mass for Fr Michael Griffin held on 17 November 1921. Fr Griffin was venerated by his parishioners, colleagues and friends. He was honoured in the parish he served and in the place of his birth. As stated above the manner of his death was to have a lasting impact on the people of Galway and his memory was to take on the cult of a martyr such was the pilgrimages made to his tomb. However, on his first anniversary, the ritual of Mass and the congregation of people, in what some newspapers reported as 'remarkable scenes', launched what became an annual public tribute.⁶⁶ All shops, businesses and theatres were requested to observe a day of remembrance and remain closed. The office for the Dead, a prayer cycle normally reserved for All Soul's Day, began fifteen minutes before High Mass to an overflowing church. Over fifteen hundred people unable to enter the church grounds, just knelt outside along the footpaths to St Joseph's; others moved to the nearby Abbey Church. Seats inside were reserved for the wider family of Fr Griffin. The solidarity of the Church at this significant remembrance of one of their own, was represented by a heavy clerical presence on the day. Although Treaty negotiations were at a critical stage other mourners amongst the congregation included several high-ranking officers, Commandant Eoin O'Duffy, Deputy Chief of Staff, General Headquarters; Commandant O'Droighnean, Vice-Commandant Davoren; Adjutant Walsh, East Connemara Brigade. Staff officers also attended from the South Mayo Brigade, IRA, as well as from the South and East Ridings of the county.⁶⁷ All of these people were very high-profile officers of influence. It was clear from their attendance

⁶⁵ Michael Silvestri 'Commemoration: Nationalism, empire and memory: the Connaught Rangers mutiny, June 1920'. *History Ireland* Issue 4 (July/August 2010)

⁶⁶ See *The Freeman's Journal* 17 November 1921, *Irish Independent* 17 November 1921 and *Connacht Tribune* 19 November 1921

⁶⁷ See *The Freeman's Journal* 17 November 1921; *Irish Independent* 17 November 1921 and *Connacht Tribune* 19 November 1921

that remembrance of Fr Griffin was considered an important factor in the recent past that they shared.

Fr Michael Griffin was also remembered in the *Connacht Tribune* by a poem written by Kathleen Ita O'Donoghue, under the single heading 'Immortelles' (meaning 'everlasting').⁶⁸ Although written for a general audience, this poem plays on a mother's love, each of the seven verses begins with the words 'A fair-haired ... son ... youth ... priest' and ends with him given the prominence of 'saint'.⁶⁹ However, it achieves its climax as the 'Prouder, happier there was none/when she saw the host uplifted/In the figure of her son' soon turned into anguish over the death of her fair-haired son:

A fair-haired priest was dying
And to sooth him none was near
To lift his head or whisper
Words of comfort in his ear
Yet all that life and beauty
Were from out that body driven
'Twas but of the gentle passing
Of the Spirit into heaven.

A fair-haired priest was sleeping
His earthly duties done
And again that mother bent her o'er
The form of her dear son
His smiling eyes were lifeless
And no loving word he said
For that kindly Irish Sagart now
Was numbered with the dead.⁷⁰

The gratification of mothers at their son's sacrifice for Ireland's freedom was a common characteristic of those executed after the 1916 Rising and to some extent the wives. This perception continued to those who died during the War of Independence. However, preserving the memory of the past in this way, alongside other poetry associated with this conflict, ensured this form of cultural heritage for future generations. Such poems were a direct expression of the traumatic stress that evoked such an emotional response. In turn, such poetic expression provides a lens with which to view the past. In this case, the poem above as seen above portrays a legacy of sorrow in the living memory of the people in County Galway.

⁶⁸ *Connacht Tribune* 19 November 1921.

⁶⁹ *Connacht Tribune* 19 November 1921.

⁷⁰ *Connacht Tribune* 19 November 1921.

After his death in 1920, Fr Griffin's fellow curates from Maynooth reached out to one another to fund a memorial on the site where his body was found, namely Cloughscoiltia, Bearna (Fig. 7.6).

Figure 7.6. Photograph of the monument at the site where Fr Griffin's body was found.
Source: Eilish Kavanagh



In his letter, Fr Andrew Seisnian, the treasurer and secretary of the small committee, informed his colleagues that the memorial was distinct from the proposed monument in St. Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea and suggested a donation sum of £5 each. Seisnian was informed that people were in regular attendance and recognised the cultural significance of the site. He felt that the area needed to be conserved for present and future generations, thereby providing a sense of connection to the past. In the letter to his fellow curates he wrote:

This is to be a special memorial ... a simple structure on the spot where his body was found—a spot already frequented by pilgrims and held in the deepest veneration by everybody. We could select no more prominent or suitable place in which to proclaim our love and admiration for our martyred friend and our sympathy for the cause for which he gave his life.⁷¹

Erecting the memorial outside of Church grounds in 'sympathy for the cause' was making a bold statement. The *Connacht Tribune* further explained that 'while the reign of terror prevailed no definite action could be taken' for fear that the men who 'murdered him, or their associates would scarcely hesitate to desecrate or destroy his tomb'.⁷² Any defilement of his memorial would have been intolerable for the

⁷¹ Cited by Ó Laoi *Fr. Griffin*, 52

⁷² *Connacht Tribune*, 28 October 1922.

community to bear. According to Ó Laoi, the monument was ‘erected in November 1922 and stands as a sentinel’ a signal to those who want to come and pray for and with Fr Griffin.⁷³

The monument was constructed of cut limestone blocks built into a low wall with a centre short obelisk on which the following inscription is inscribed:

Tá an leac seo mar chomhartha ar an áit in-ar fritheadh corp an Athar Mícheál Ó Gríobhtha, Séiplíneach an pharóiste seo, sé lá tar éis a mharbhtha.

Mheall na Gaill ó n-a leabadh é, oíche Shamhna a 14, 1920. Chuireadar piléar thré n-a inchinn agus sháitheadar an corp fá'n bhfód sa mbogach seo.

Mar síor chuimhne ar a gcompánach grádhmhar Gaodhlach agus mar chomhartha a measa ar an Athair Mícheál a dúithchais, chuir na sagairt a bhí sa mbuidhean chéadhna leis i gColáiste Muighe Nuadhad an leac seo ar bun ar an áit seo beannuighthe.

Ar dheis Dé go rabh a anam fíor ghlan.

Pretiosa in conspectus Domini mors sanctorum Eius

This can be translated as:

This monument reminds of the spot where the body of Fr. Michael Griffin, a curate in this parish, was found, six days after his death.

The Crown forces lured him from his bed on the night of the 14th November 1920. They shot him through his head and they buried his body in this boggy ground.

To show their love of their ever-remembered companion and as an expression of their esteem for Fr. Michael Griffin, who was murdered because of his love for his country, the priests of his class in Maynooth have erected this monument on this hallowed ground.

‘May his pure soul find rest at the right hand of God.

Precious in the sight of God is the death of his saints.’⁷⁴

The use of such direct language is a very public illustration of the intent that not only should he be remembered, but also the manner in which he met his demise should never be forgotten.

Fr Griffin’s legacy, as tragic as his death was to those who loved him and the wider public, created the baseline for public commemoration in County Galway in the first half of the twentieth century. The subsequent display of grief began to shape what became painful bitter memories surrounding this conflict. In addition, the manner of which the Loughnane brothers, Eileen Quinn, and to a somewhat lesser extent, how

⁷³ Ó Laoi *Fr. Griffin*, 76

⁷⁴ Ó Laoi *Fr. Griffin*, 76

Michael Walsh (Micheál Breathnach), Séamus Quirke, and Séan Mulvoy were killed, sustained the emotional scars throughout the commemorations. Shirley Wrynn outlines further the complications that Civil War brought to commemorations of Easter 1916 in County Galway: 'By agreeing to Partition, the pro-Treaty republicans were judged by anti-Treaty republicans as having deserted the ideals of 1916.'⁷⁵ In the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, it explains the reluctance to stand in unison at memorials, and participate in the recollecting and commemorating of those who later fought in opposition to each other. Public memory records areas such as Connemara as having a bitterly fought Civil War. The actions of some divided the community, such as the burning of a Protestant orphanage in June 1922:

the boys' orphanage at Ballyconree, Clifden, Co Galway was burnt down by anti-Treaty troops who regarded it as a "pro-British" institution. The boys – some as young as 5 – and the staff were evacuated by the Royal Navy, taken to London and given emergency shelter in a hostel ... As far as is known, none of the boys ever returned to Ireland ... All are now presumed deceased. But they passed on memories of their childhood in Ireland and the burning of the orphanage.⁷⁶

It therefore became more tolerable and less contentious to develop the memorialisation of individuals, such as the Loughnane brothers, Fr Griffin and others mentioned above, as symbols of remembrance.

The politics of state-building, and the forging of Ireland's cultural identity began in the years following the War of Independence and the subsequent Civil War. The result of the General Election in August 1923 saw William T Cosgrave elected as President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State. In September, Cosgrave stood in the League of Nations and thanked the Assembly for Ireland's membership to the League, on behalf of his country. He said, of 'one of the oldest and yet one of the youngest nations.'⁷⁷ In his speech he continued by affirming the following:

Ireland joins today in a solemn covenant to exercise the powers of her sovereign status in promoting the peace, security and happiness, the economic, cultural, and moral well-being of the human race ... to enable even the weakest of nations to live their own lives and make their own proper contribution to the good of all, free even from the shadow and the fear of external violence, vicious penetration, or injurious pressure of any kind ... Ireland counts on having no enemy and on harbouring no enmity in the time

⁷⁵ Shirley Wrynn, 'Galway and the Easter 1916 Rising: An Investigation of Local Histories, Memories and Heritage Tourism Possibilities' (Unpublished PhD Thesis Department of Heritage & Tourism, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, 2016) 245.

⁷⁶ *Irish Times*, 19 March 2012.

⁷⁷ <https://www.difp.ie/docs/1923/Admission-speech-to-League-of-Nations/454.htm> Accessed 14 November 2019.

to come. She counts also on bringing forth fruits worthy of liberty. *Si tollis libertatem, tollis dignitatem* [If you take away liberty, you take away dignity]. These are the words of a famous Irishman of the sixth and seventh century. Inscribed on his tomb at Bobbio in Italy, they met our eyes when, a few days ago, a happy conjuncture enabled the members of this Irish Delegation to assist at the celebration of the thirteenth centenary of Saint Columbanus, pioneer of Ireland's moral and intellectual mission among the nations of Western Europe.⁷⁸

The use of a religious figure to promote Ireland's moral responsibility to protect against fear, violence, 'vicious penetration or injurious pressure of any kind' is indicative of the complex relationship between Church and State.⁷⁹ The nuances behind the Church's position on the War of Independence and the subsequent Civil War has been referred to earlier, however, a relationship did develop with the leaders and placed them 'in a strong position to shape the policies of the new state.'⁸⁰ Ireland became a strict Catholic State and placed its moral identity into the hands of its Catholic leaders. With power and influence, consciously or not, Brody claims that 'Catholicism became a surrogate for national identity.'⁸¹ Heffernan maintains that 'for the majority of Irish Catholics, it was not until the end of the twentieth century that being Irish ceased to be coterminous with being Catholic.'⁸² Nevertheless, by embracing Columbanus and his religious heritage, Cosgrave was to furnish Ireland with what Lowenthal describes as a 'collective identity.'⁸³ Moreover, the religious ceremony of Mass was inextricably linked with the ritual of remembrance in the county. This is exhibited in such cases as Fr Griffin, Eileen Quinn, and the third anniversary mass for the reposed souls of Séamus Quirke and Séan Mulvoy in September 1923.⁸⁴ Equally, a remembrance ceremony at St Augustine's Church, Galway provided a purposeful gathering of surviving veterans and their associated families, and the opportunity was seized by the *Connacht Tribune* to recount the events that had happened three years previously.⁸⁵ The legitimacy of the church entrenched the ritual of commemoration and vice versa.

⁷⁸ <https://www.difp.ie/docs/1923/Admission-speech-to-League-of-Nations/454.htm> Accessed 14 November 2019.

⁷⁹ <https://www.difp.ie/docs/1923/Admission-speech-to-League-of-Nations/454.htm><https://www.rte.ie/news/2011/0720/303925-cloyne/> Accessed 14 November 2019.

⁸⁰ Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment* 245

⁸¹ Micheál Briody, *The Irish Folklore Commission 1935–1970: History, Ideology, Methodology* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2007)

⁸² Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment* 246

⁸³ David Lowenthal, 'Identity, Heritage, and History' in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* edited by John R. Gillis (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996) 43.

⁸⁴ *Connacht Tribune*, 15 September 1923.

⁸⁵ *Connacht Tribune*, 15 September 1923.

Over time, the nature of remembrance took various forms. For example, during their meeting in November, 1923, the Galway Urban District Council unanimously agreed to re-name the terrace of houses on Woodquay after Michael Walsh. The Sinn Féin Councillor and publican was taken from his home and shot by ‘partially disguised’ men, on 19 October 1920. His body was then dumped into Galway Bay.⁸⁶ The initial proposal was to name the street after the sitting councillor Dr Walsh, who helped to secure the loan to build the houses. However, Dr Walsh suggested that it was more appropriate for the terrace to be named in honour of the ‘patriot Irishman who was done to death during the Anglo-Irish war’.⁸⁷ The naming and re-naming of streets and roads was a way not only to honour the deeds of dead revolutionaries in the present but of establishing the political aspirations of nationalist Ireland in the future. By exemplifying the deeds of people such as Walsh in such a public manner, the local political culture was strengthening the ideals of freedom from the British establishment.

Recording of First-Hand Living Memories

Another key aspect is the recorded first-hand living memories surrounding the period of the War of Independence in County Galway. These reflections contribute a perspective that enhances a wider comprehension of events within the region. Some living memoirs are personal notes kept in a diary or notebook, others are published in magazines or book chapters, both of which are discussed later in this study. However, one significant repository of files, that include detailed memories, are the Military Services Pensions Collections, later followed by Bureau of Military History Witness Statements. Notwithstanding the caveat of some unsubstantiated claims or that some successful applications were dependent on proving an ‘active’ role, these records are integral when studying the period.⁸⁸ The number of Military Pension application files and supporting documentation is 300,000. Catriona Crowe has explained that the collection provides an ‘unparalleled and detailed picture of Irish Volunteer, Irish Republican Army, National Army and anti-Treaty forces’ activities

⁸⁶ Conor McNamara *War and Revolution in the West of Ireland: Galway 1913–1922* (Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2018), 149

⁸⁷ *Connacht Tribune* 22 November 1924

⁸⁸ Discussed in further detail in Chapter 8, the word ‘active’ proved controversial in its definition.

throughout the period from the 1916 Rising to the end of the Civil War in 1923.⁸⁹

Figure 7.7. Example of a statement by Michael Newell in WMSP34 REF4796.

Source: [https://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-](https://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923)

1916-1923

1st April 1920 to 31st March 1921.

During this period I continued as I.O. For some time I took part in blocking the roads for attack on Loughgeorge Bks. During this period acting under orders I held up a mail-car and seized all Enemy Correspondence. I accompanied Brian Molloy in transporting Explosives to Bookeen for attack on that Bks.

Through my intelligence I was able to inform the Capt. of the movements of Police, which were to go to Galway on a certain date. Acting on this he was able to plan and carry out an ambush in which I took part. This was at Merlin Park. In this we captured 2 revolvers and 5 bicycles. I made arrangements for the immediate despatch of the bicycles to Dublin. T. Duggan took them by goods train and were sold in Dublin and guns bought for the proceeds. We stood to for several nights expecting Reprisals. During this period I accompanied the Captain to receive arms which came from Dublin by goods train. I continued in this way until T. Duggan arrived from Dublin with orders to appoint a Brigade Comdt. immediately. At a meeting on the same night I was appointed Brigade Comdt. about Oct. 1920. I had been on the run for some time previously, and my forge closed up. I immediately took up duty as Brigade Comdt. and appointed Brian Molloy Battl. Comdt. of Nol. Battl. and the following with P. Feeney, P. Glynn, with orders to appoint the Battl. Staffs.

The Brigade Officers were as follows;

M. Newell O.C. Brigade Comdt.
T. Ruane Vice Brigade Comdt.
J. Donnellan Adj. (Deceased)
T. Duggan Quartermaster (Deceased)

When this had been done, I started to make arrangements to arm the 2nd and 3rd Battalions. This was delayed very much owing to a consignment of Rifles, which we had paid for, being sent to O.C. Tuam Brigade by mistake. The receipt of those by Tuam Brigade was not reported to me for some time afterwards. At this time I had received information which I required for, to carry out an ambush at Kilroe Headford from L. Darcy (R.I.P.) While making these arrangements I was daily expecting a Column Commander who I heard was being sent from H.Q. Dublin and was badly needed by me, as we had not a Military trained man in our area. I decided to carry out the ambush at Kilroe. About January I proceeded with a picked column to Kilroe, and placed my men in position there before daybreak. As the Tans were likely to come from Galway or Tuam, I had to divide my column in two. I made the following arrangements. I placed a covering party on the Galway side of Kilroe with orders not to fire but let the Tans into the main body, but to recover our retreat if necessary. I alone went to the north side of the road, after issuing the following orders, that nobody was to fire until I had thrown a Grenade at the lorry. This was to be the signal for the column to open fire. I placed the men in this position to avoid cross-firing. These arrangements did not work as expected, owing to the Officers and men of the covering party firing at, and disabling the lorry before it had reached the ambush. Another detrimental factor was that two farmers with two horses and a cart came abreast of the lorry at the time it stopped, which compelled the main body to hold fire for some time. As had we opened fire the farmers would undoubtedly have been killed. This gave the Tans time to get their machine-gun going. I had to run towards the lorry to be able to throw the Grenades. After throwing 4 I had to get back to my first position and then had to cross the road under fire to try and move the men into a better position, as at this time ammunition which was faulty and was running very low had caused a slackening of firing which gave the Auxies. time to take up positions at the walls, which made our position a very dangerous one, owing to the superior equipment and firing of the Tans. Some of the Column was forced to retreat from their position, and as I had sighted another lorry coming I gave the signal for a General Retreat. I remained in the position until I had seen all the men were clear. One of my men was wounded and most of the Tans (about 12) the lorry contained 17 men. I had only 10 rifles for this ambush the others had shotguns.

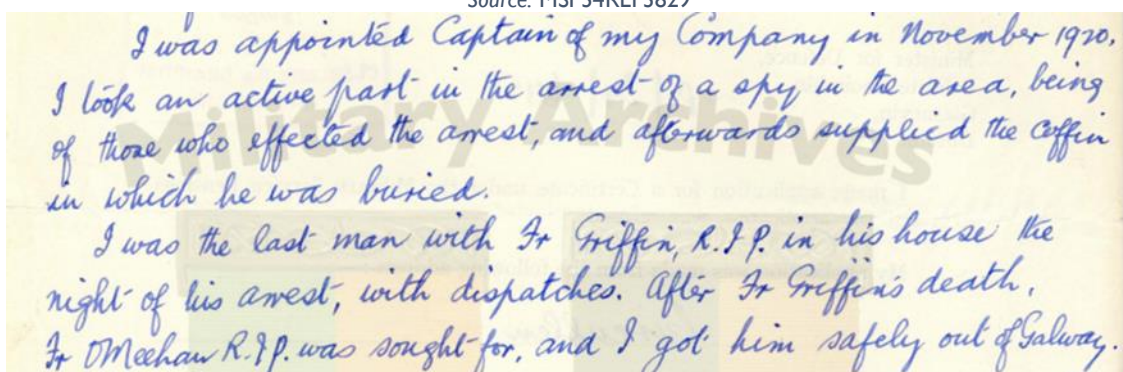
I would like to state that of 70 Liberty. Wm. Brennan, Patrick Tynan, and Timothy Duggan who were British Co. service men. Rendered very valuable assistance. Not owing to the in Civil Service positions. And living in Galway. They were not always available.

The first Pension Act was introduced in the summer of 1923, a year later it was signed

⁸⁹ Catriona Crowe 'Introduction' in *Guide to The Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection* edited by Catriona Crowe (2017) 10

into law and the collection commenced.⁹⁰ This was initially to compensate those wounded members, and the 'widows, children and dependents of deceased members, of the those mentioned military groups.'⁹¹ The claims were contingent on active participation in the events from 1916 to the official end of the Civil War in 1923.⁹² Overall the applicants were required to provide added detail, for instance, in some cases, pension applications were accompanied by personal statements that records their memory of certain situations (Fig. 7.7). Even the smallest of details recorded gives perspective on the period, providing an insight into the social, political and community lives of not only the applicant, but also, on occasion, those whom they encountered as a Volunteer. As shown here, Michael Newell contributed his account of a planned ambush at Kilroe (Jan. 1921). In it his frustration with fellow raiders becomes clear. He stated that his orders had been defied and two unanticipated farmers on a horse and cart nearly lost their lives. He continued by describing how the whole column was placed in jeopardy because of the blunder and had to retreat quickly. He later had the 'leader of the covering party court-martialled ... for not carrying out [his] orders and for firing prematurely.'⁹³ Newell's documented memories and the many other statements included in the Pension Applications which provide other personal accounts of the period enhance the wider understanding of events.

Figure 7.8. Example of a handwritten statement.
Source: MSP34REF3829



I was appointed Captain of my Company in November 1920. I took an active part in the arrest of a spy in the area, being of those who effected the arrest, and afterwards supplied the coffin in which he was buried.

I was the last man with Fr Griffin, R.I.P. in his house the night of his arrest, with dispatches. After Fr Griffin's death, Fr O'Meehan R.I.P. was sought for, and I got him safely out of Galway.

During Easter 1925, a larger procession and 'commemorative service' was held at the Fr Griffin memorial, Barna. The Easter Sunday commemorations began with various attendances at Mass in churches around the city for all those who had given

⁹⁰ <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/bills/bill/1924/37/> Accessed 22 November 2019.

⁹¹ <http://acts.oireachtas.ie/framed/en.act.1923.0026.1.html#sec1> Accessed 22 November 2019.

⁹² <https://militarypensions.wordpress.com/the-collection-2/> Accessed 22 November 2019

⁹³ Sworn Statement Made Before the Advisory Committee, 13 June 1935, Michael Newell, Military Service Pensions Collection (hereafter MSPC), WMSP34REF4796.

their lives for Ireland. This was followed at 12:30 pm by a simultaneous wreath laying on the graves of Michael Walsh, Jack Lohan and Christopher ‘Christie’ Folan in New Cemetery; Fran Dowd, Forthill graveyard; Séan Mulvoy and Michael McGreal, Tempell graveyard; Thomas ‘Baby’ Duggan, Castlegar; and Joe Howley, Oranmore.⁹⁴ Four separate groups were assembled at various points all facing towards Eyre Square, with the supervisory marshalling of Thomas Maguire T.D. and Tom Flanagan keeping control of the parade. Maguire had been OC 2nd Western Division, IRA, from October 1921 and a firm anti-Treaty campaigner. At 2:30 pm the procession made its way to Barna, the general public were ‘requested to facilitate in every way in making the procession one of great solemnity.’⁹⁵ Badges depicting the faces of Fr Griffin and Liam Mellows were worn by many attendees.⁹⁶ The large crowds that gathered for remembrances on anniversaries of Fr Griffin’s death continued in subsequent years.

Figure 7.9 Memorial to Fr Michael Griffin on the north eastern side of St Brendan's Cathedral, Loughrea.
Source: Eilish Kavanagh



On 6 May 1927, five years after his death, another large gathering was assembled at St Brendan’s Church, Loughrea Cathedral where a limestone memorial was unveiled

⁹⁴ *Connacht Tribune*, 11 April 1925.

⁹⁵ *Connacht Tribune*, 11 April 1925.

⁹⁶ *Connacht Tribune*, 18 April 1925

in Fr Griffin's honour.

Amidst an 'uncomfortably' large crowd of people were twenty-five close clerical friends of Fr Griffin. Included amongst them was, Monsignor Joyce, P.P. Portumna, Dr. O'Doherty, Bishop of Galway and Dr Dignan, Bishop of Clonfert.⁹⁷ In his panegyric to Fr Griffin, Bishop Dignan praised the curate for his supreme sacrifice and while he sympathised with his widowed mother, he also envied and congratulated her for being the mother of 'so true and noble a son' as he.⁹⁸ He continued with a prediction that the time might come when 'people would come there, not to pray for him but to him when possibly he would be raised to the honours and alter to take his place in the Mass and Office with St Oliver Plunkett'.⁹⁹ The rectangular limestone monument has four side panels and tapers gradually to the top. The sculptor, Michael J. Shortall, who had already contributed to the many artistic pieces inside the cathedral itself, completed this tribute to Fr Griffin in 1926 (Fig. 7.9). The front ensign is a circular bronze plaque depicting the face of Fr Griffin with Gaelic inscription translated as:

This plaque was erected in memory of Fr Michael Griffin
Priest of Clonfert Diocese
And Clergyman in the Parish of Ragoon in Galway
He was murdered by the foreigner on the 15th November 1920
For his loyalty to Ireland
May God have mercy on his soul¹⁰⁰

A different emotion was expressed three years later, 1929, at a commemoration of the two 'martyred brothers', Patrick and Harry Loughnane held at Eastertime.¹⁰¹ In his address, Thomas Maguire declared that they were 'assembled to do homage to the memory of two brave, loyal, steadfast and true soldiers of the Republic of Ireland'.¹⁰² He renounced the results of the Treaty claiming that the settlement was not 'a final settlement'. He also said that they were the only 'white race ... who were slaves'.¹⁰³ Maguire had not contested his seat in the 1927 General Election due to his disapproval of the hard-line anti-Treaty stance Sinn Féiners had taken. Yet he continued to campaign politically for what he considered to be the great betrayal.

⁹⁷ *Irish Independent* 17 May 1927

⁹⁸ *Irish Independent* 17 May 1927

⁹⁹ *Irish Independent* 17 May 1927

¹⁰⁰ Translation by Olive Kavanagh

¹⁰¹ *Connacht Tribune* 6 April 1929.

¹⁰² *Connacht Tribune* 6 April 1929.

¹⁰³ *Connacht Tribune* 6 April 1929.

According to Marie Coleman and Michael MacEvilly, Maguire 'was an important symbol for republicans', he attended numerous IRA commemorations in Ireland and the USA, and 'remained an uncompromising republican,'¹⁰⁴ Standing in front of a large crowd at the graveside of Patrick and Harry, he used the platform to express these political beliefs:

They stood up single-handed to the overwhelming majority of Ireland's enemies, and in spite of the torture they had to endure, they remained true to their principles and resolute even in death, and did not abandon each other as they died together ... Let the spirit of Irish nationality so strong in Emmet, Tone and the Loughnane brothers ... over whose graves they stood, inspire them to continue the work.¹⁰⁵

Within one decade of their deaths, the two Loughnane brothers transcended into the same patriotic sacrificial place of remembrance that was reserved for Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone.

In what could appear as a contradictory conclusion, considering the speech, the 'Last Post' was played before the crowd dispersed to their homes. This poignant tune, customarily played in honour of fallen British Commonwealth soldiers, was traditionally the bugle call to signal the end of day in British military camps. Was this lost on those present? It is more likely that commemoration of fallen Irish soldiers fighting under a British flag received similar emotional tributes and this was adopted as a respectable homage to Irish volunteers. Nonetheless, political undertones became more defined, particularly at the sites of memorials to both Fr Griffin and the Loughnane brothers. The feeling of unrest was justified as the world plummeted into recession. The 'Loughnane brothers', is a poem written by Rev. Maurice Slattery in *The African Missionary* magazine (1929).¹⁰⁶ Slattery was the Provincial Superior of the Irish Province of the Society of African Missions and had persuaded Nora Loughnane to join him in his work. Captured within the lines of his poem is not only a tribute to the brothers, but a warning of revenge for those men 'shot down':

But there are rebel hearts amongst us,
Still, who'll repeat those words again,
And thread the path of those dauntless men,
Who died without fear or stain,
But if you be true to England,
Or obey her oppressive laws,

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.dib.ie/biography/maguire-tom-a5368> Accessed 15 December 2021

¹⁰⁵ *Connacht Tribune* 6 April 1929.

¹⁰⁶ *The African Missionary* Vol. VII., No. 1. January 1929

Or ignore our Irish martyrs,
Who perished for the cause.
We'll never forget their actions,
We'll revenge our men shotdown,
By the cold-blooded murderers,
Their servants of the crown.
Let those words ring your ears.
And echo o'er the plains,
To show that those precious men,
Have not sacrificed their lives in vain.¹⁰⁷

The reference to sacrifice or martyrdom is continued in Slattery's poem to the brothers, once again positioning them as emblematic patriots.

As mentioned earlier, their deaths were commemorated on an annual basis, not necessarily on the anniversary of their deaths, but on other key dates on the republican calendar, such as at Easter commemorations. Patrick and Harry's sister Nora, loved her brothers deeply, and despite her brave attempts to overcome her sorrow, the manner in which they were killed left an impact on her life. She also wrote a piece for *The African Missionary* where she frequently recalled the memory of her brothers, when she was either 'sitting under the big cedar in Ardfoy, or wandering through the woods in Cloughballymore, or kneeling beside the grave of two brave boys' (see D6). She met Rev Slattery when he was superior of the new novitiate and house of philosophy at Kilcolgan, County Galway and entered the Order of Our Lady of Apostles in 1922 as a Society of African Missions Sister. After an initial period in Lyons, France, Nora, now Sr Patricia, was re-located to the Gold Coast (now Ghana) where the Order was administering four primary schools and helped establish a training college for girls.¹⁰⁸ Nora returned to Ireland in 1931, and despite her various roles until her death in 1981, her brothers remained firmly in her memory. She reproduced Slattery's poem in small handmade commemoration booklets alongside photographs of their burial place and memorial cards (see D7).¹⁰⁹ Nora Loughnane had always wondered what happened to her brothers, this is reflected in Slattery's poem. Contemplating their deaths Slattery asked in his poem, 'when shall we know dear boys/ the horrors of that night', not out of morbid curiosity but to seek comfort that 'Mary'

¹⁰⁷*The African Missionary* (1929) The same poem was printed in a local publication, *Eleven Galway Martyrs in Tuam* (1985) The publication was issued as a keepsake at the unveiling of a memorial wall on the site of Tuam's workhouse and a tenet to the Republican cause. *Eleven Galway Martyrs* (Tuam: Local Publication, 1985)

¹⁰⁸ *Connacht Tribune*, 3 July 1981

¹⁰⁹ National University of Ireland Galway (henceforth NUIG), POL 4/2 (1)(2)(3)

stood beside them and poured into their souls ‘Heaven’s purest light.’¹¹⁰ He concluded with a reassurance to their friends and to them that ‘your name to us, dear boys/are treasures evermore/a light, a joy, a flame/within our shore’.¹¹¹ The magazine, *The African Missionary* that published the poem and the article was expected, according to the *Cork Examiner* to, ‘command a very large sale’.¹¹² For the new Free State, having such a widely-distributed publication aligning the heroic deeds of ‘Irish martyrs’ and the work of missionaries affirmed the government’s legitimacy, and in part contributed to cement the link between Church and State.

1930s

The international depression of the 1930s saw mass unemployment precipitated by the Great Wall Street Crash at the end of the previous decade. However, in an Irish context, Mary E. Daly contends that this was not ‘always seen in an exclusively negative light’.¹¹³ Daly also establishes that, lessening the impact of the depression ‘is complicated by internal political developments, specifically by the change of government in 1932.’¹¹⁴ The result of the 1932 General Election was a victory for the Fianna Fáil Party. Eamon de Valera formed his first government with Labour in support.¹¹⁵ The newly-formed government pursued a republican policy.¹¹⁶ Their manifesto, according to Úna Newell, was full of promises about economic recovery. They pledged to

abolish the oath, to retain the land annuities, establish new industries, introduce economic protection, increase rural employment, accelerate land division, maximise economic independence, preserve the home market for Irish farmers, reduce salaries in the public sector, stimulate local industries, promote additional welfare measures and revive the Irish language.¹¹⁷

William T. Cosgrave had been President of the Executive Council of the Free State since 1922 and now reluctantly passed over office to what Patrick Lynch referred to

¹¹⁰ NUIG, POL 4/2 (1)(2)(3)

¹¹¹ NUIG, POL 4/2 (1)(2)(3)

¹¹² *Cork Examiner*, 19 December 1928

¹¹³ Mary E. Daly ‘The Irish Free State and the Great Depression of the 1930s: the interaction of the global and the local’ *Irish Economic and Social History*, Vol. 38 (2011) 19

¹¹⁴ Daly ‘The Irish Free State and the Great Depression of the 1930s’ 19

¹¹⁵ Lynch, ‘The Irish Free State and the Republic of Ireland: 1921–66’ 286.

¹¹⁶ Lynch, ‘The Irish Free State and the Republic of Ireland: 1921–66’ 287.

¹¹⁷ Úna Newell, *The West Must Wait: County Galway and the Irish Free State, 1922-32* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015) 166

as ‘men who a decade earlier had challenged the Free State’s very existence’.¹¹⁸ Despite a warning by the Department of Finance, de Valera and his followers did what they had promised and withheld the payment for land purchase annuities which amounted to over £3m per annum.¹¹⁹ Responding to this move, the British government imposed a tax on Irish imports designed to recoup the amount, which in turn provoked Irish tariffs on British imports, and thus began the Economic War.¹²⁰ Ongoing negotiations finally settled the dispute with the Irish making a ‘one-off £10m payment in respect of the remaining annuities.’¹²¹ This was not the only change de Valera would make.

Úna Newell has pointed out that in 1932, ‘more than half the Galway electorate was now prepared to endorse de Valera’s version of the Free State.’¹²² Almost immediately, de Valera released twenty-three political prisoners and suspended ‘the military tribunal set up by the Cosgrave government to deal with rampant political crime, [this] allows the order declaring the IRA illegal to lapse.’¹²³ When the Easter commemorations took place on 27 March 1932, the mood was triumphant. The *Connacht Tribune*, reported the event as ‘one of the most striking demonstrations seen in Galway for a long time.’¹²⁴ An estimated commemoration procession of almost 8,000 people from Clifden, Oughterard, Carranroe, Moycullen, Claregalway, Castlegar, Spiddal, Barna, and other areas took part, reflecting the active IRA units from the War of Independence and the Civil War. The two pipers, Thomas Flanagan and P. Furey were dressed in Irish costume and played Irish music until reaching the gates of New Cemetery at Prospect Hill. The address was given by Dr J Madden, Westport, a republican activist. The banners carried by soldiers of the Thomas Ashe Cumann bore the names of dead heroes, Fr Griffin, Michael Walsh, Christopher Folan, Jack Lohan (killed in Civil War) Seán Mulvoy, Séamus Quirke, Hugh Tully, Joseph Donnellan (shot by Free State army) Thomas ‘Baby’ Duggan (who died from injuries sustained during hunger strike during the Civil War), and Frank O’Dowd (who died after a beating from the RIC).¹²⁵ Three months later another address by Dr Madden was given at the

¹¹⁸ Lynch, ‘The Irish Free State and the Republic of Ireland: 1921–66’ 286.

¹¹⁹ Unknown, ‘When Dev defaulted: the land annuities dispute, 1926–38’ in *History Ireland* Issue 3 (May/June 2011), Volume 19

¹²⁰ Unknown, ‘When Dev defaulted: the land annuities dispute,

¹²¹ Unknown, ‘When Dev defaulted: the land annuities dispute,

¹²² Newell, *The West Must Wait*: 166

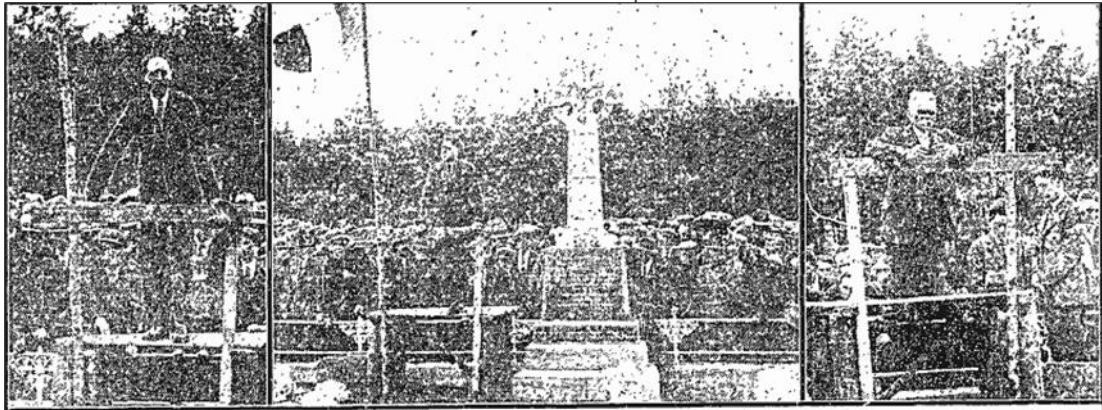
¹²³ *Irish Times*, 12 October 1999

¹²⁴ *Connacht Tribune* 2 April 1932.

¹²⁵ *Connacht Tribune* 2 April 1932.

Republican Plot in Shanaglish Cemetery, Gort, as he unveiled the new memorial cross to perpetuate the memory of the Loughnane brothers (Fig. 7.10).¹²⁶ Reinforcing his militant view, Dr Madden stated openly that there was ‘some who believed in constitutional methods’, however when this failed, the only way was to ‘join the IRA which stood for the people and nationality’.¹²⁷

Figure 7.10. Unveiling of memorial cross dedicated to the Loughnane brothers at Shanaglish cemetery
Source: *Connacht Tribune* 2 April 1932



It was men from the South Galway companies, chaired by Joe Stanford, that raised most of the funds to erect a memorial over the Loughnane’s grave. The *Connacht Tribune* in July 1932, reported the unveiling ceremony ‘in the presence of a large gathering from counties, Galway and Clare.’¹²⁸ Designed by O’Regan’s, Loughrea, the beautiful Celtic design cross with rich interlacings on all four sides echoes images from the Book of Kells. The cross, die-stone and three base stones reach a height of almost thirteen feet. The railings surrounding the plot was designed and installed by Galway Foundry.¹²⁹ Tomás Ó hEighín, the photographer and teacher who took the iconic pictures of their charred bodies twelve years earlier, stood to say the rosary (Fig. 7.10).

The emblem endorsed at commemorations in Ireland was that of the lily. Although adopted by Cumann na mBan a decade before, to signify the Tricolour flag that hung above the General Post Office during fighting at Easter 1916, it soon stood to represent all who gave their lives for Ireland.¹³⁰ Green, white and orange, it was seen

¹²⁶ *Connacht Tribune* 9 July 1932

¹²⁷ *Leitrim Observer* 9 July 1932

¹²⁸ *Connacht Tribune*, 9 July 1932

¹²⁹ This was later replaced sometime in 1980s. Marie McNamara, Maura Madden Beagh *A History & Heritage* (Beagh Integrated Rural Development Association, 1995) 125

¹³⁰ *The Connacht Tribune* 8 April 1933

as the ‘symbol of Republican Ireland’ and signified ‘the union of North and South through love and friendship’.¹³¹ Establishing emblems, national symbols and national identity in this new state under a fledgling government did not prove easy. It appeared that Fianna Fáil’s reform and the ensuing Economic War (brought about by the government decision to withhold land annuities owed to the British Treasury) placed a class divide between rural and urban communities. Equally, the devastating effects of the Great Depression added burdens on rural communities. The government was under constant pressure to solve the issue. This resulted in a significant ‘expansion of state support for the able-bodied poor — a process that transformed the nature of unemployment in Ireland, and the role of the state.’¹³² Consequently, sensing this unrest, commemorative speeches such as Dr Madden’s became more political.

Confident in his continued support from the electorate, de Valera gambled and held a snap election in January 1933. Following his success, the Easter commemorations were held on 17 April. Reports were emerging that ‘while the rest of Ireland was celebrating with every token of public veneration the memory of the dead’, a ban was placed on public commemoration in the six counties of Northern Ireland.¹³³ This was to stay in place for twenty-four hours. A young paper boy in Armagh was arrested for simply wearing the Easter Lily. To outwit the ban and avoid arrest, others laid wreaths on graves before the hour of midnight.¹³⁴

Further south-west, attendance at the 1933 Eastertime Rising commemoration in Galway town was thought to have increased from the previous year. It was reported as involving as many as 10,000 participants and supporters. The Galway Thomas Ashe Sinn Féin Cumann once again led the parade to Bohermore Cemetery, only this time the names of the fallen heroes were written in the Irish language across their banner.¹³⁵ After returning to Eyre Square, Seán Óg O’Ceallaigh, General Secretary of the Gaelic League, delivered the oration. According to the *Irish Press*, he said that the politicians

asked us to forget and forgive. We should never forget, and it would be time enough to forgive when we were sure that Ireland was free, and that England had no more dominion over us.

¹³¹ *The Connacht Tribune* 8 April 1933

¹³² Mary E. Daly, ‘The Irish Free State and the Great Depression of the 1930s: the interaction of the global and the local’ in *Irish Economic and Social History*, Vol. 38 (2011), 36.

¹³³ *The Irish Press* 17 April 1933

¹³⁴ *The Irish Press* 17 April 1933

¹³⁵ *Irish Press* 17 April 1933

The increase in IRA membership from 4–5,000 to 30,000 had already begun to cause ‘disorder throughout the state’ and forced a tougher stance from the government.¹³⁶ De Valera and his government were, as Mark McCarthy points out, compelled ‘to do a rethink on using Emergency Powers.’¹³⁷ De Valera’s stance had deliberately kept the IRA in check, with ‘firmness, and even ruthlessness. He [had] interned many of them and, using military tribunals, executed some.’¹³⁸ The perceived relationship that prompted the election slogan ‘The Shadow of the Gunmen’ was now shattered (Fig.7.11).¹³⁹ The poster depicts a large sinister figure hovering over a home with a gun in his hand.

Figure 7.11 Cumann na nGaedhael Election Poster
Source: Courtesy of National Library of Ireland



The commemoration of Easter 1916 became a more considered national event

¹³⁶ Mark McCarthy, *Ireland's 1916 Rising: Explorations of History-Making, Commemoration & Heritage in Modern Times* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 145

¹³⁷ McCarthy, *Ireland's 1916 Rising*, 145

¹³⁸ Kevin Haddick Flynn, 'The first coalition—60 years on', *History Ireland* Issue 1 (Jan/Feb 2008), News, Volume 16

¹³⁹ *Irish Times* 6 February 2020 The slogan was a Cumann na nGaedhael election poster that referred to Fianna Fáil being run by shadowy gunmen, 'Keep it from your home vote for Cumann na nGaedhael'.

under the new Fianna Fáil government with bands, banners and rosary recitals.¹⁴⁰ The signing of the Treaty and subsequent Civil War was hotly contested and as mentioned earlier, this made any remembrance of the events of the War of Independence fraught with complications. Therefore most commemorations were organised by different groups, some consigned to being more low-key events confined to local communities or to those killed during the conflict. Yet the tactic of political orations delivered at gravesides had enhanced the assertions of other nationalist leaders in the past. Therefore, retaining control of remembrance would be essential to legitimise any claim to leadership. Equally, disparaging the claims of those who opposed that leadership was also necessary. Having influence over a national newspaper and its editorial content was one way of securing public opinion. The *Irish Press*, a newspaper founded by Eamon de Valera, condemned the IRA statement read at the gravesides of honoured heroes. It claimed that the document, 'will draw a protest to the lips of nine out of every ten Irish Republicans, and provoke everywhere a feeling of resentment that so great an occasion should be so grievously misused.'¹⁴¹ In some cases, Easter commemorations were being used as a party political broadcast and at this grass roots level the bystanders had little choice but to listen. Moreover, as McCarthy has pointed out,

it was within the arena of public commemorations of [the] Rising that this philosophical dedication to a 32-county Irish Republic was most graphically demonstrated, as de Valera immersed himself in a populist attempt to connect the 1916 metanarrative more closely to his own party's political heritage. The enterprise was also partly designed to keep republican dissidents and other movements at bay.¹⁴²

In contrast, tributes to the memory of Fr Michael Griffin did not cause controversy and provoked only sorrow and anger at the manner of his demise. The love and respect that his memory evoked was evident in the repeated commemorations and annual Mass service held in County Galway. Notably, the *Connacht Tribune* reported in April 1933 that a motion was passed at a meeting held in Galway County Council that the new road from Dominick Street to Salthill be called after Fr Griffin.¹⁴³ At the same meeting, a discussion ensued on the size and decoration of a plaque to mark the area. However, the county surveyor, Mr. M Kennedy, said he was 'working on a suitable

¹⁴⁰ *The Irish Press* 17 April 1933

¹⁴¹ *The Irish Press*, 17 April 1933

¹⁴² McCarthy, *Ireland's 1916 Rising*, 145.

¹⁴³ *Connacht Tribune*, 29 April 1933

design' which he would submit to the council at a later date.

Meanwhile in the small parish of Gurteen, County Galway, preparations had been underway for the 16 July 1933, when the new parish church dedicated to Fr Michael Griffin was officially blessed by Dr Dignan, Bishop of Clonfert. He complimented the parishioners and those living in America who had contributed the funds required, a deposit that exceeded the required £12,000.¹⁴⁴ Built in what is referred to as 'Irish Romanesque style' of cut limestone, the project had begun two years previously when the Bishop placed the foundation stone.¹⁴⁵

Figure 7.12. Leaflet announcing a fundraising venture by the parish of Gurteen in Galway to build a church in memory of Father Michael Griffin
Source: National Library of Ireland



¹⁴⁴ *Connacht Tribune*, 27 June 1931

¹⁴⁵ *Connacht Tribune*, 15 July 1933

The appeal leaflet, now held in the National Library of Ireland, once again binds the 'heroic' deeds of the 'boy priest' with heavenly ideals by building a church in his memory (Fig. 7.12). In his speech the Bishop contributed to the various speculative motives for the priest's brutal murder, when he stated:

it may be that when the true facts of Father Michael Griffin's death are known, the church will raise him to the dignity of Her altars, and it may be that the reason that poor Father Michael Griffin was put to death was because he refused to reveal the secrets of the confessional.¹⁴⁶

The original site chosen for the church had been donated by Fr Griffin's mother. However this was deemed unsuitable due to its foundational soil and a more stable site was located on higher ground, 'thus the old Irish tradition of building a church on a hill' was followed.¹⁴⁷ The limestone and Connemara marble altar was donated by local benefactors and the Harry Clarke window with 'its brilliant colours enhances the sanctuary'.¹⁴⁸ Fr Griffin's mother was elderly and remained home on the day the church was dedicated, which prompted a visit by the celebrants after the ceremony. The *Irish Press* journalist who accompanied them, reported a curious statement by the then Bishop of Galway, Dr O'Doherty, when he mentioned 'that he possessed a precious relic of the dead priest, the bog-stained stole which he wore when he went on his last mission'.¹⁴⁹ The whereabouts of this relic was considered lost until the newspaper article was further investigated by this researcher (see B28). It was eventually found hidden in a desk drawer in the Galway Diocesan Archive and has since been placed in an exhibition the Galway City Museum. One other remembrance to note is the dedicatory hymn printed in the *Connacht Tribune*.¹⁵⁰ The hymn reflected the church's patron 'glorious Michael' who was a 'hero, [a] holy martyr' who taught 'the truth on Erin's sod'.¹⁵¹ The concluding verse contemplated how 'Michael' and his journey to heaven would now protect the parishioners in their spiritual future:

Forward then with sacred banner
With Christ's standard at our head
We shall chant our hymn to Michael
For the living and the dead
For our friends, our homes and parish
We shall pray this glorious day

¹⁴⁶ *Connacht Tribune*, 27 June 1931

¹⁴⁷ *Connacht Tribune*, 27 June 1931

¹⁴⁸ Padraic Ó Laoi, *Fr. Griffin 1892–1920* (Galway: the author, 1994) 77

¹⁴⁹ *Irish Press* 17 July 1933

¹⁵⁰ *Connacht Tribune*, 22 July 1933

¹⁵¹ *Connacht Tribune*, 22 July 1933 Noteworthy is the name Michael, although the church is dedicated to the Archangel Michael it is widely known as Fr Michael Griffin's memorial church.

That Faith which Patrick brought us
Shall guard us o'er life's stormy way.¹⁵²

Since his death, Fr Griffin has been regarded as a spiritual being, much as though he were a saint such is his martyred status. The hymns and poems written in his honour reflect the local sentiment that has transcended him past the beatification process into a local glorified soul.

On the nineteenth anniversary of the Rising in 1935, de Valera unveiled a bronze statue of Cú Chulainn inside the General Post Office (GPO) in Dublin City, in what the *Irish Press* referred to as 'a tableau of the War of Independence, its triumph and its tragedy'.¹⁵³ The legendary figure of Cú Chulainn and the 5,000 strong military parade was to commemorate the location which had remained 'so long unmarked'.¹⁵⁴ In addition, de Valera was having personal and political issues, not least as McCarthy notes, the 'criticisms of his handling of political prisoners' and the 'devastating impact that British tariffs were having on the Irish agricultural population'.¹⁵⁵ Therefore he seized this opportunity to legitimise the government's quest to 'claim the contested heritage of 1916'.¹⁵⁶

Meanwhile, as the sky above Dublin displayed a squadron of fighter planes in formation, in the west, the skies in Galway were marred by the outbreak of storms. A much more subdued gathering of between 200-300 people took place for the commemoration amid the downpours.¹⁵⁷ It is noteworthy that the banners that once contained the names of the dead from the War of Independence were noticeably absent from the parade.

Irish National Folklore Collection: The Schools' Collection

The 1930s witnessed an orchestrated national attempt to capture folk memories including recollections on the subject of the War of Independence throughout the country including County Galway. The Schools Collection, is housed within University College Dublin and is recognised as one of Europe's largest archives of oral tradition

¹⁵² *Connacht Tribune*, 22 July 1933

¹⁵³ *The Irish Press*, 22 April 1935

¹⁵⁴ *The Irish Press*, 22 April 1935

¹⁵⁵ McCarthy, *Ireland's 1916 Rising*, 146.

¹⁵⁶ McCarthy, *Ireland's 1916 Rising*, 146.

¹⁵⁷ *The Irish Press*, 22 April 1935, *Connacht Tribune*, 24 April 1935.

and cultural history.¹⁵⁸ Its history began with the foundation of the Folklore of Ireland Society in 1927. Its founding goal was; to ‘make a last-minute effort to save as much of the riches of Irish folklore for posterity before they were irretrievably lost.’¹⁵⁹ To collect a nation’s memories seemed so ambitious it could well have quickly lost its appeal. However, librarian Séamus Ó Duilearga, editor of the society’s journal *Béaloides*, with the support of his colleagues, ventured out to Northern Europe to pursue and learn how other researchers had amassed their collections of memory. He returned full of vigour and purpose. Such enthusiasm needed to be matched with huge state support and a defined framework for the project to succeed. An elaborate plan, which was genius in its simplicity, was born. With the co-operation of the Vocational Educational Officers’ Organisation, who in turn collaborated with the local primary schools around the country, the plan was implemented. Children ten and eleven years old were enlisted to record and collect this rich folkloric culture and memories from elders in their locality. For it to be successful, it needed the backing of the government of the day, so the new Taoiseach, Eamon de Valera was approached. One anecdote of note exemplifies how this was accomplished by Ó Duilearga. It relied on the concept that to build a strong national identity, the state needed to encourage and collect its cultural memory and up to this point, this had been sorely neglected. Ó Duilearga described the meeting between himself and de Valera on 10 May 1933 as follows:

It was the night of the Budget, and officials were coming in to him, into his room, and he was pushing them aside. And he talked about something ... he talked about his youth: when he was a boy that he had heard folktales, told in English of course, in Co. Limerick. And he went on talking, and then I couldn’t ... it was a tense moment for me, and I said: ‘Excuse me! Sir! I don’t speak the language of diplomacy. I have just one thing to say to you. The material is there, it’s dying and you know it. You are interested in the Irish language as I am, and I think it is about time that something was done to put on paper or to record in some way the oral tradition of a silent people’ (who as I said a moment ago had much to say). ‘So please, take that pen in your hand and write ‘Let it be done!’ and I’ll do it and get all the people to help me.’ And that’s how the Folklore Commission started.¹⁶⁰

Amongst this collection there are brief, yet significant references to the War of Independence in County Galway. As noted in Chapter 3, their discovery was not straightforward. However, one particular mention is from Kiltartan School under the

¹⁵⁸ The Irish National Folklore Collection was inscribed in 2017 to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register. <https://www.ucd.ie/folklore/en/> Accessed 26 November 2019.

¹⁵⁹ Briody, *The Irish Folklore Commission 1935–1970*, 19

¹⁶⁰ Briody, *The Irish Folklore Commission 1935–1970*, 108

heading 'The Local Landlord—Lady Gregory'.¹⁶¹ The entry describes how Lady Gregory's son, affectionally known as 'Master Robert', left a widow. It continues,

His widow, Mrs Gregory, had a providential escape from death during the "Black and Tan" War here. Accompanied by Captain Blake, the District Inspector of Gort, and Mrs Blake, together with two British Military Officers from Gort, they journeyed to the residence of a local Landlord, Mr Bagott, Ballyturin House, Gort, one Sunday afternoon for a game of tennis.

As they were returning to Gort that evening, they ran into an ambush at the entrance to Mr. Bagott's residence, and four of the occupants of the car were killed; Mrs Gregory, the fifth, being the only one that escaped with her life..¹⁶²

There was no mention of the men that conducted the ambush and no mention of the other female, Eliza Williams, Blake's common law wife.

Figure 7.13. Marblehill House, built in 1770 and home to the Burkes. Marblehill House, which was burnt on the night of 13 June 1921.
Source: Éamonn de Búrca



Another result brought forward a previously unknown event, the burning of a big house 'Marblehill and its Antiquities (Fig. 7.13).¹⁶³ This oral history described how the Burke family found several barrels of gold hidden in the ground and used it to build the Marblehill House and cultivate the lands. That is until, 'during the time of the Black and Tans, the mansion was burned by the people. All the books, plate, and furniture,

¹⁶¹ National Folklore Collection, Schools (hereafter NFCS) 47:106 unknown informant, unknown collector. Kiltartan National School, County Galway, 1937. Teacher: Mícheál Ó Tuathaigh

¹⁶² NFCS 47:106 unknown informant, unknown collector. Kiltartan National School, County Galway, 1937. Teacher: Mícheál Ó Tuathaigh

¹⁶³ NFCS 51:251 Brigid Keane (70), farmer, Drumkeary, County Galway, Kathleen Shiel, Drum National School, County Galway 1939. Teacher: Máiréad Ní Dubháin

and valuable articles were destroyed by the fire. Although the chapel was attached to the building, it escaped destruction.¹⁶⁴ Both stories differ in their empathy for the ascendancy class, one talks of the Gregorys as ‘beloved’ and the other with obvious distain. This may well have resulted from the treatment of local tenants. Lady Gregory was renown for her love and respect for those who lived and worked in the general district.

Field names are also recorded in the Folklore Collection. The Dump, is a significant archaeological detail that is described as ‘a hole about seven feet long and the same depth, situated in Toberroe bog where it is said that men who were on the ‘run’ hid from the Black and Tans. It was covered with galvanise and over that was covered with bog “screws” (sods)’.¹⁶⁵ Another from Ballymacward, County Galway, recorded a ‘Quarry Field, and about a century ago people used to quarry stones in it to put on the road. In the time of the Black and Tans the Republicans used to drill in the quarry under Captain Moore.’¹⁶⁶ Maureen Gibson from Kilconnell, recorded information told to her that revealed a strongly held fear of Crown forces:

The tans came to Ireland, and they searched all over the parishes to see if any hedge schools about the place and if they found any they would kill the children. If the children saw them coming, they would get hurlies and pretend to be playing ball. The soldiers used to take the strong boys and kill them.¹⁶⁷

The false memory in this reference may well be akin to tales of the bogeyman under the bed, a device to keep children in check. Nonetheless, it also confirms the deep-rooted fear and hatred that Lowe and Henry referred to in Chapter 6.¹⁶⁸

However, despite this fear, Séan Joyce recorded a story from Mrs P.K. Joyce (possibly his mother) about an act of kindness that could well have gotten the lady in question into trouble at the time (Fig. 7.14). His essay is entitled, ‘The Saving of a Black and Tan Life by a Clifden Nurse’:

When the Black and Tans were burning Lyden O'Neill's house one of the Black and Tans was over-come by the smoke and he was nearly suffocated.

¹⁶⁴ NFCS 51:251 Brigid Keane (70), farmer, Drumkeary, County Galway, Kathleen Shiel, Drum National School, County Galway 1939. Teacher: Máiréad Ní Dubháin

¹⁶⁵ NFCS 16:204 Michael Kelly Toberroe East, County Galway, Kathleen Kelly, Toberroe East National School, County Galway 1938 Teacher: Eibhlín, Bean Uí Mhuireagáin

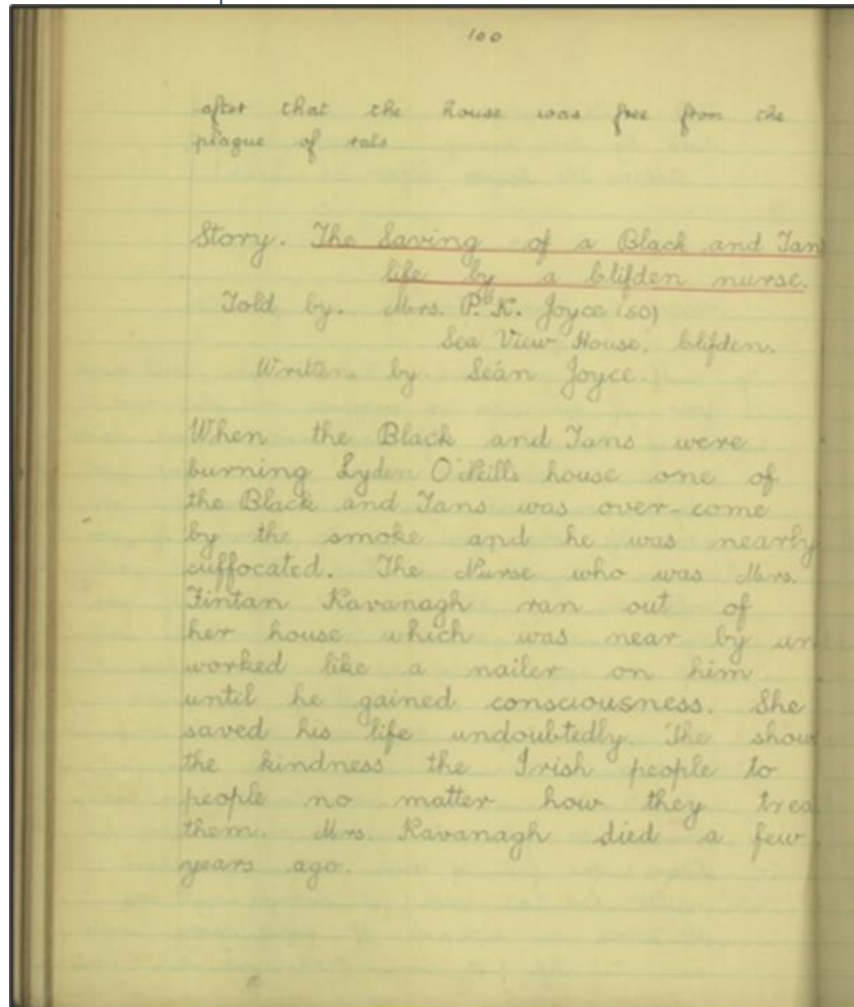
¹⁶⁶ NFCS 43:287 unknown informant, John Parker, Aughrim National School, County Galway, 1938. Teacher: Aodh Mac an Mhaoir

¹⁶⁷ NFCS 43:239 unknown informant, Maureen Gibson, Kilconnell National School, County Galway 1938. Teacher: Máire, Bean Uí Shéaghdha

¹⁶⁸ See William Henry, *Blood for Blood: The Black and Tan War in Galway* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2012), 51 and W. J. Lowe, ‘The War Against the RIC, 1919–21’, *Éire-Ireland* 37 (2002), 79–117

The Nurse who was Mrs Fintan Kavanagh ran out of her house which was nearby and worked like a nailer on him until he gained consciousness. She saved his life undoubtedly. This shows the kindness the Irish people to people no matter how they treat them. Mrs Kavanagh died a few years ago.¹⁶⁹

Figure 7.14. Manuscript from Schools Folklore Collection
Source: <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4602676/4594591/4615098>



The house referred to in the above quote, 'Lyden O'Neill', was mentioned on another occasion in connection with the burning of Clifden on 17 March 1921. The incident followed the pattern of reprisals and counter-reprisals that marked the bloodiest six-month period of the conflict up until the Truce. It began with Thomas Whelan's execution, followed by the shooting of Constables Thomas Sweeney and Cornelius Reynold (who died of his injuries) and the killing of an ex-soldier John Joe McDonnell. The burning of Clifden resulted in seventeen houses 'injured by fire'. The *Connacht Tribune* placed a total estimate of £70,000 on the damage including £6,000

¹⁶⁹ NFCS 04:100 Mrs P. K. Joyce (50) Clifden, County Galway. Seán Joyce, Clifden National School, County Galway 1937. Teacher: An Br. Angelo Mac Shámhais

for Alec McDonnell's hotel and £3,000 for his son.¹⁷⁰ The grim recollection recorded by Seán Joyce continues with a rather violent development to be recorded by a boy of eleven or twelve years of age. The woman at the centre of the incident, Mrs P.K. Joyce, may well have experienced some post traumatic memories such is the vivid account. Nevertheless she disclosed her remembrance to the young collector, Seán Joyce,

The man's name was John Joe McDonnell he was an ex-soldier. The day that the Black and Tans came to Clifden they were looking for the 'Sinn Feiners' who were in Clifden. The RIC told the Black and Tans and J.J. McDonnell's first cousin was one of them. John Joe heard some shooting out on the street and he went out to see what was wrong and the Black and Tans mistook him for his cousin and started hitting him with the butts of their revolvers. Patrick O'Conner heard his screams trying to tell them that he was an ex-soldier and that he had his papers in his pocket but it was no use. They battered his brains up against Ward's shutters. In the morning when Patrick O'Connor came down to take off the shutters, he saw the brain matter and he had to wipe it off the shutters with a cloth. When the Black and Tans left the town Mary Higgins the dead man's cousin was brought to see would she be able to identify him but she failed.¹⁷¹

Other examples include Black and Tan burnings of houses or towns, poems and stories that referred to the death of Fr Griffin, or the monument erected in his honour at Loughrea Cathedral. Revisiting the online site periodically with new words or phrases, sometimes yielded previously unseen points of interest. For example, Thomas Mullen, Killavoer, Clonberne was shot dead near his home on 3 March 1921 and Máirtín Mac Diarmada, Ahaun, County Galway, informed the collector that 'the people of the place erected a monument where he was shot.'¹⁷²

Another reference to Fr Griffin was recorded in Clifden, Co. Galway. This composition from the Schools' Folklore Collection depicts him as a spirit among his people sent directly from God and stolen from them by 'a lying tale'.¹⁷³ Included in this poem is his place of death in the 'brown bogs of Galway'. It suggests that he was killed 'While the winds wailed in sorrow through the swaying ceannabhán' (translated as bog cotton).¹⁷⁴ His death, was then elevated to the status of the ultimate sacrifice, that of

¹⁷⁰ *Connacht Tribune*, 26 March 1921.

¹⁷¹ NFCS 04:213 Mrs P. K. Joyce (42) Clifden, County Galway. Seán Joyce, Clifden National School, County Galway 1934. Teacher: An Br. Angelo Mac Shámhais

¹⁷² NFCS 13:303 Máirtín Mac Diarmada Ahaun, County Galway. Eibhlín Nic Diarmada, Lerhin National School, County Galway 1937. Teacher: Seán Ó Labhradha

¹⁷³ NFCS 04:500 Unknown informant. Carmel O' Farrell, Clifden National School, County Galway 1938. Teacher: An tSr. M. Peadar

¹⁷⁴ NFCS 04:500 Unknown informant. Carmel O' Farrell, Clifden National School, County Galway 1938. Teacher: An tSr. M. Peadar

martyrdom: 'Like Christ, he loved his little flock and tended them with care/Like Christ he died that they be saved, his life was all a prayer.'¹⁷⁵ His youth and love of children was forever captured and still yet, his faith 'sets a Nation's soul on fire.'¹⁷⁶

A Mother's Sorrow

The sentiments of mothers is a common thread that has been observed throughout this research. Reactions to events or incidents involving their children is recorded in poetry and prayer as seen earlier in the tribute to Fr Griffin. Similarly, their own deaths are also recorded as noteworthy. For example, the death notice of Mrs Catherine (Kate) Loughnane, mother of Pat and Harry appeared in the *Irish Press*, 13 November 1936. The article described how Mr Martin O'Regan, then Chairman of the County Galway Home and Home Assistance Committee in Tuam, adjourned their meeting out of respect. He stated that Mrs Loughnane was 'a woman of great old national type who offered the sacrifice of her two sons to the nation in the right spirit.'¹⁷⁷ He hoped she would be rewarded for her loss by being re-united with them in her death.¹⁷⁸ Mrs Loughnane may well have been a nationalist, however, the 'spirit' in which O'Regan implies, was not by choice. In addition to the case of Margaret Pearse, discussed later in this chapter, Kate Loughnane's role was seen as that of the grieving mother of the two dead heroes. Kate was the widowed mother of ten children, eight of whom were alive in the 1911 census, and who worked a busy farm in Beagh up until and most likely after the time her two boys were taken from her and subsequently killed.¹⁷⁹ Although it is not certain, it is unlikely that Kate Loughnane would have qualified for the Military Pension Special Dependents' Allowance introduced later. Similar to the mothers of the 'martyred' Kevin Barry, and Joe Howley, Kate was not seen as dependent on her sons and would have been refused.¹⁸⁰ Kate Loughnane's sorrow was immortalised in a poem in the Schools Collection.

¹⁷⁵ NFCS 04:500 Unknown informant. Carmel O' Farrell, Clifden National School, County Galway 1938. Teacher: An tSr. M. Peadar

¹⁷⁶ NFCS 04:500 Unknown informant. Carmel O' Farrell, Clifden National School, County Galway 1938. Teacher: An tSr. M. Peadar

¹⁷⁷ *The Irish Press*, 13 November 1936.

¹⁷⁸ *The Irish Press*, 13 November 1936.

¹⁷⁹ <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai003941501/> 29 January 2020.

¹⁸⁰ <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/martyrdom-for-kevin-barry-but-no-pension-for-his-mother-1.3266218> Accessed 29 January 2020. The Loughnane farm was considered to be large and wealthy, this may have disqualified her from receiving a pension.

That day was a sorrowful day for their mother,
To see the fresh blood oozing from a wound in Harry's side,
Poor Pádraig's flesh was torn, over his eyes were boiled within,
There was nothing left to recognise but a nose and half a chin,
His brothers bones lay visible as cold corpses they did lie,
Their bodies they were coffined and wrapped in brown and white,
And left into the Church of God where they rested that night.¹⁸¹

The findings within the collection of recorded oral histories should not be underestimated. As shown above, these sources generate several alternative perceptions and epitomise the memories of places, incidents, and memorials of an older generation, many of whom are long since forgotten. Such examples of living memory create an important sense of ambiance, albeit from a personal perspective. Penny Summerfield has established that oral and personal histories, 'ground the general in the particular, and they juxtapose the public with the personal.'¹⁸² Such sources, she argues, 'have not been easy for historians to use.'¹⁸³

The decade of the 1930s also popularised an important collection of personal memories surrounding the War of Independence that of individual accounts (autobiographies or memoirs). One set of published recollections began in 1936 with Ernie O'Malley's *On Another Man's Wound*, a memoir of the War of Independence. Other books in his compendium would follow suit. O'Malley himself has been the subject of several academic studies, the most recent by Harry Martin with Cormac O'Malley.¹⁸⁴ He is, as Peter Hart described, 'the perfect subject for such an enterprise: at once a leading figure in the IRA, one of its most dedicated historians, and the author of its finest memoir.'¹⁸⁵ Similarly, Richard English has described the relevance of his work, 'O'Malley's importance in the Irish revolution derives both from his significant role during 1916–23 itself as well as his valuably thoughtful later reflections on those years.'¹⁸⁶ Acclaimed for his contribution to historians through his writing, O'Malley during his research amassed a large body of archival material now partially available in University College Dublin (UCD).¹⁸⁷ Included in this collection are several interviews

¹⁸¹ NFCS 50:149 Unknown informant. Eileen Kelly, Reyraver National School, County Galway 1937. Teacher: Seán A. Mac Fhloinn

¹⁸² Penny Summerfield, *Histories of the Self: Personal Narratives and Historical Practice* (Oxon: Routledge, 2019) 2

¹⁸³ Summerfield, *Histories of the Self*: 2

¹⁸⁴ Harry Martin with Cormac O'Malley, *Ernie O'Malley: A Life* (Dublin: Merrion Press, 2021)

¹⁸⁵ Peter Hart, 'Book Review *Ernie O'Malley: IRA Intellectual* by Richard English' in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (September 2000), 789

¹⁸⁶ *Irish Times*, 18 November 2021

¹⁸⁷ Dictionary of Irish Biography <https://dib-cambridge-org.ezproxy.gmit.ie/quicksearch.do?jsessionid=C4B897D475AE570168CA648C0B0A55AE> Accessed 19 May 2020.

with veterans. Of significance here are those from County Galway. O'Malley transcribed the oral histories into notebooks but unlike the Schools' Collection mentioned previously, he did not have a consistent technique. Cormac Ó Comhraí, who has edited several of the notebooks, describes O'Malley's approach to the collection of narratives as allowing his informant to 'ramble and cover many topics', rewriting at a later date to include labels such as 'Tan War, Truce, Civil War.'¹⁸⁸ The hand-written notes are difficult to decipher with many names and places written phonetically and O'Malley's own short-hand to indicate incidents, places, or people. However, the men he interviewed in the published Galway material had 'rejected the Treaty and so their statements reflect the Republican opinion among the Volunteers in Galway.'¹⁸⁹ Such perspectives furnish a vivid insight into the experiences of those who participated in the War of Independence in County Galway.

The British government's declaration of war against Germany in 1939 interrupted any notions of remembrances surrounding the twentieth anniversary of the War of Independence whilst many Irishmen were enlisting to fight against Hitler. Nonetheless, Eamon de Valera addressed the people to affirm the Irish government's resolution to remain neutral.¹⁹⁰

Meanwhile, later the same year, an invitation was issued to tender for the building of a community hall in Labane, County Galway close to the site of the old parish hall, St Teresa's, which had been previously burned by the Black and Tans in 1920. The local parish priest, Canon Considine, had successfully sued the British government at the time but these funds were used to extend the local school. Nineteen years later, despite a widely distributed request for donations, the response was frustrating to the members of the fundraising committee. In a letter to the editor of the *Connacht Tribune* in July 1939, T.J. Fleming, Secretary to the Organising Committee corrected a previous article when he claimed that 'the response to [the] appeal has been most disappointing and disheartening'.¹⁹¹ He went on to state that a reluctance to publish the current subscribers was reasoned by the Chair of the committee, Fr Considine, so as not to

¹⁸⁸ Cormac Ó Comhraí and Cormac K.H. O'Malley, *The Men Will Talk to Me: Galway Interviews by Ernie O'Malley* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2013) 19

¹⁸⁹ Ó Comhraí and. O'Malley, *The Men Will Talk to Me*: 19

¹⁹⁰ <https://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/eamon-de-valera/719114- taoiseach-broadcast-to-the-nation/> Accessed 4 December 2019

¹⁹¹ *Connacht Tribune*, 15 July 1939

'disgrace County Galway'.¹⁹² However, Fleming was emphatic that they intended to publish the full list and suggested that those who meant to donate, should do so immediately before publication. In his postscript, Fleming did confirm that a substantial sum of £500 had been gifted to the cause and a promise of 'a loan of £1,000 later to be paid back in ten years.'¹⁹³ Speculation existed that one of the Shaw-Taylor or Martyn family was the contributor.

Nonetheless, later that year it was announced that the new hall was to be named the Quinn Loughnane Hall in memory of Eileen Quinn and the Loughnane brothers, Pat and Harry. It would be May 1941 before the new memorial hall at Labane was finished and open for business (see A18).¹⁹⁴ The final cost of erecting the new community facility was in excess of £3,500, mostly raised locally.

Figure 7.15. Picture from the *Connacht Tribune* depicting the unfinished hall at Labane 1939
Source: *Connacht Tribune*, 15 July 1939



As the images show, this structure was built in the style of most community halls around the county (Fig. 7.15). The conventional rectangular shape provided an easy design plan that could be cheaply erected. The columns to the doorways and the 'elaborate caps to the piers were salvaged following the demolition of Cregaclare House in 1939'.¹⁹⁵ This hall has provided the venue for several community based events

¹⁹² *Connacht Tribune*, 15 July 1939

¹⁹³ *Connacht Tribune*, 15 July 1939

¹⁹⁴ *Connacht Tribune*, 12 April 1941

¹⁹⁵ <https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/30411406/loughnane-quinn-memorial-hall-ballylara-laban-county-galway> Accessed 1 June 2020

and is still in use today.

Figure 7.16. Photograph of the hall in 2019
Source: Eilish Kavanagh, 2019



1940s

Despite the early 1940s having been dominated by the Second World War (1939–1945), or the ‘Emergency’ as it was known in Éire Ireland, some commemorations still took place. For instance, in Galway, although seeming difficult to attend with severe transport difficulties, there were still over 700 in attendance at the Loughnane brothers commemoration in May 1943. The large procession marched from Shanaglish to the cemetery marshalled by Peter Howley, Limepark. The 1916 Proclamation was read prior to a recounting how the two brothers had met their demise. The gathering was reminded of the sacrifice and suffering of the ‘Irish race from the time of Cromwell down through the ages.’¹⁹⁶ The following year, an invitation was sent to Frank Fahy, Ceann Comhairle, Senator Pádraic Ó Máille and Dr Brian Cusack, three surviving representatives from County Galway to a special concert in the Town Hall to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the First Dáil. Although delayed until March, the *Connacht Tribune* reported the concert was to include ‘tableaux portraying

¹⁹⁶ *Connacht Tribune*, 15 May 1943.

soldiers of Ireland from 1600 up to present day [1944].¹⁹⁷ Holding the concert in the Town Hall, used prior to the War of Independence for the detention of prisoners, was an effective symbolic signal to reassert the government's independence while Europe was still at war.

The first post-war general election was held in 1948. Fianna Fáil was defeated, albeit they remained the largest party. The first coalition government was formed between Fine Gael, Labour, Clann na Talmhan and National Labour 'with Clann na Poblachta and a handful of independents, saw to it that Dev and his colleagues went into opposition.'¹⁹⁸ The new Taoiseach, John A. Costello, was a former Attorney General. He was a compromise that was 'untainted by civil war memories, and acceptable to [Séan] MacBride.'¹⁹⁹ The same year, Costello made an impromptu statement on a foreign trip to Canada declaring publicly that Éire would become a Republic.²⁰⁰ MacBride, IRA leader and son of Maud Gonne and John MacBride, took the prominent role in the repeal of the External Relations Act of 1936 and the Dáil passed the Republic of Ireland Act.²⁰¹ Thirty years after the first shots at Soloheadbeg, 1919, the Act came into force. It demonstrated that the Truce and the subsequent 'Treaty did, in fact, confer the freedom to achieve freedom.'²⁰²

In April, 1948, an Easter commemoration was held at the Republican plot in Donaghpatrick cemetery, to honour 'all those who gave their lives in all generations for the complete freedom on Ireland.'²⁰³ Attendees were encouraged to wear the Easter lily not only to honour all those who have given their lives in the cause of Irish freedom, but as a symbol of unity and support. The Caherlistrane Pipe Band led the procession from Headford to the cemetery followed by those carrying a scroll with the names of the North Galway IRA Brigade. Despite the bad weather, a large crowd was reported with many from Tuam attending.²⁰⁴ Once again, the oration was delivered by Tom Maguire, the South Mayo veteran. Although now seen as a republic,

¹⁹⁷ *Connacht Tribune*, 11 March 1944

¹⁹⁸ Kevin Haddick Flynn, 'The first coalition—60 years on', *History Ireland* Issue 1 (Jan/Feb 2008), News, Volume 16

¹⁹⁹ J.J. Lee *Ireland 1912–1985: Politics and Society* (Wiltshire: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 299

²⁰⁰ <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/learning-zone/secondary-students/history/important-irish-international-overview-of-the-years--4/> Accessed 20 May 2020.

²⁰¹ Lynch, 'The Irish Free State and the Republic of Ireland: 1921–66', 291. See also, <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1948/act/22/enacted/en/html> Accessed 20 November 2019.

²⁰² Lynch, 'The Irish Free State and the Republic of Ireland: 1921–66' 290

²⁰³ *Tuam Herald*, 3 April 1948

²⁰⁴ *Tuam Herald*, 3 April 1948

partition was still for many veterans and current IRA members, the last hurdle to overcome.

As stated earlier, memory has a history. It could be argued that Irish people have a history of memory, both oral and written. This is especially true in the case of the *filidecht* or *bairdne* traditions.²⁰⁵ These professions have for long been understood to be custodians of Ireland's cultural memory, from the pre-Christian era onwards. The act of memorialising in poetry and saga as an upper-class profession waned in the medieval period. Prior to this the *filid* had 'narrated *seanchas* (history), *dinnsheanchas* (history of places), and *primscéla*, the 'principal tales' that gave the history of battles, plunderings, destructions, and the like'.²⁰⁶ The once respected *filí*, was dispossessed of offices in the rapidly changing social order and reduced to the 'composition of odes of praise and satire, the maintenance of pedigrees, and the chronicling of history'.²⁰⁷ They, assumed the 'panegyric' role of the lower class bardic profession and this became known as *bardaigheacht*, simply 'foul abuse'.²⁰⁸ This bardic tradition was revitalised in the Irish Literary Revival sometimes referred to as the Irish Literary Renaissance during the late 19th and early 20th century. Inspired by nationalistic pride, it was closely aligned with 'a strong political nationalism and a revival of interest in Ireland's Gaelic literary heritage'.²⁰⁹ Poets such as William Butler Yeats were struck by events of Easter 1916 and the War of Independence. He wrote of sacrifice and embraced the sentiment of the Irish mind. Others such as Thomas (Tommie) Quinn or Kathleen Ita O'Donoghue (see D2 and D3), less famous, wrote from their hearts and their emotions reflecting what they witnessed.

In addition to his poem 'Easter 1916', Yeats also wrote about the War of Independence. This poem 'Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen' was written in six parts of 'unequal length. The poem uses, as its focal point, the bloody retribution of British soldiers against the Irish citizenry during the time of the Sinn Féin rebellion'.²¹⁰ He remembered Eileen Quinn, shot outside her home in Kiltartan amid the raids and

²⁰⁵ *Filí* were an ancient Irish class of professional poets and philosophers, they also safeguarded the family lineage of kings. Bards were a lower form of poet. <https://oldmooresalmanac.com/the-history-of-the-irish-bardic-poets/> Accessed 4 November 2019.

²⁰⁶ J E Caerwyn Williams and Patrick K. Ford *The Irish Literary Tradition* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992) 155

²⁰⁷ Caerwyn Williams and Ford *The Irish Literary Tradition*, 155

²⁰⁸ Caerwyn Williams and Ford *The Irish Literary Tradition*, 155

²⁰⁹ <http://libapps.libraries.uc.edu/exhibits/irish-lit/sample-page/> Accessed 4 November 2019.

²¹⁰ <https://www.enotes.com/topics/nineteen-hundred-nineteen/in-depth> Accessed 4 November 2019.

terrors of conflict. He likened the Crown forces to fire-breathing animals that live only in dreams:

Now days are dragon-ridden, the nightmare
Rides upon sleep: a drunken soldiery
Can leave the mother, murdered at her door,
To crawl in her own blood, and go scot-free.²¹¹

It would seem that this particular incident was to have a profound effect on Yeats. However, his poem 'Reprisals', in memory of Major Robert Gregory, once again referred to Mrs Quinn. Yeats called upon the dead man to return to his home in Kiltartan to defend his tenants against the Crown forces he once fought for. This was essentially a political poem, one that the dead Major's mother, Lady Gregory, disapproved of; she did not wish her only child dragged 'from his grave':

Some nineteen German planes, they say,
You had brought down before you died.
We called it a good death. Today
Can ghost or man be satisfied?
Although your last exciting year
Outweighed all other years, you said,
Though battle joy may be so dear
A memory, even to the dead,
It chases other thought away,
Yet rise from your Italian tomb,
Flit to Kiltartan cross and stay
Till certain second thoughts have come
Upon the cause you served, that we
Imagined such a fine affair:
Half-drunk or whole-mad soldiery
Are murdering your tenants there.
Men that revere your father yet
Are shot at on the open plain.
Where may new-married women sit
And suckle children now? Armed men
May murder them in passing by
Nor law nor parliament take heed.
Then close your ears with dust and lie
Among the other cheated dead.²¹²

Although originally written in 1920, Lady Gregory's disapproval prevented the poem from being published until 1948.²¹³ Her greatest displeasure came from the fact that Yeats did not use his own remembrance of the events in Kiltartan. In her journal she wrote, 'for Yeats only knows hearsay while our troubles go on—and he quoted

²¹¹ <https://celt.ucc.ie/published/E910001-058.html> Accessed 5 November 2019.

²¹² Cited in Peter McDonald 'Yeats and Remorse' Chatterton Lecture on Poetry, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 94, (1996) 186.

²¹³ W. B. Yeats, 'Reprisals' *Rann: An Ulster Quarterly of Poetry* No. 2 Autumn 1948.

words G.B.S. [George Bernard Shaw], told him and did not mean him to repeat.'²¹⁴ The killing of Eileen Quinn shocked the people of Kiltartan and the wider community. The incident instigated questions about the validity of the conflict. As a consequence, her death, memorialised within these poems served not just to preserve her memory but also, retrospectively, encapsulated a community's acknowledgment of the legacy of trauma that had befallen it.

1950s

Figure 7.17. Newspaper clipping of the four men included on the Castlegar memorial, namely Joe Donnellan, Louis D'Arcy, Sean Lohan and Thomas 'Baby' Duggan.

Source: *Connacht Sentinel* 27 March 1951



While Europe recovered and reconstructed post war, Ireland in the 1950's experienced mass emigration and a social deprivation that was felt in most communities, particularly in rural areas. Foster calculated that over the decade more than '400,000 left – many to Britain.'²¹⁵ In County Galway, a mostly rural farming society, employment choices were limited. With a lack of indigenous industry and no foreign investment, if you did not inherit the farm or were well educated, often the only option was religious life or the building sites of London. Even so, commemorating those who lost their lives fighting for independence was high on the agenda of many of the veterans. In the *Connacht Tribune*, 8 April 1950, an announcement was placed that stated:

It is the intention of their comrades to erect a suitable Memorial at Castlegar

²¹⁴ McDonald 'Yeats and Remorse', 186

²¹⁵ Roy Foster *Modern Ireland 1600–1872* (London: Penguin Books, 1989) 578

in memory of these four men who lost their lives in the War of Independence: Joe Donnellan, Thomas 'Baby' Duggan, Sean Lohan and Louis Darcy [sic] (Fig. 7.17).²¹⁶

The committee were long-standing veterans and amongst those whose living memory remained vibrant albeit thirty years after the Treaty. In large capital letters the announcement listed the committee as follows: Chairman Michael Newell, Castlegar; Vice Chairman Patrick King, Oranmore; Hon Treasurers John Fahy, Ballybane; James Furey, Ballybane; Bartley Nolan, Renmore; Brian Molly, Castlegar and Hon. Secretary Thomas Courtney, Galway.²¹⁷ Many of these men took part in several incidents during the War of Independence and their need to remember and be remembered is worth noting.

The memorial was eventually unveiled on 25 March 1951. In his speech Nolan offered the care of the memorial to the 'youth of the parish' to use the memory of these men to guide them and to 'stand shoulder to shoulder' with their priests and be 'counselled by them'²¹⁸ Significantly, this memorial bridged three conflicts, Easter 1916, the War of Independence and the Civil War, 1916–1923. Perceived animosities pertaining to the signing of the Treaty and the ensuing Civil War were relinquished to honour all those involved. The memorial itself is a Celtic cross on an orange polished granite plinth. The four names are inscribed and the names of two priests were added in recognition of their support to the Volunteers, Fr H.J. Feeney and Fr Thomas Burke. The plinth had its own unique history. Once the base of the Lord Dunkillin statue which stood in Eyre Square, it was extracted from the docks after some vandalism occurred, and held in the Corporation yard until the County Manager, C. I. O'Flynn, offered it to the Castlegar committee.

As noted in Nolan's proposal above, the position and influence that the Catholic Church held within the country was evident when the government voted against Noel Browne's Mother and Child Scheme in 1950.²¹⁹ Objections from their Lordships, the Bishop of Ferns James Staunton and the Bishop of Galway, Dr Michael Browne allied with Archbishop McQuaid of Dublin. McQuaid became a key figure in the debate when

²¹⁶ *Connacht Tribune*, 8 April 1950

²¹⁷ Padraic Ó Laoi *History of Castlegar Parish* (Galway: Author, 1996) 133

²¹⁸ *Connacht Sentinel*, 27 March 1951, *Tuam Herald*, 31 March 1951

²¹⁹ The scheme proposed free (voluntary) ante- and post-natal care for mothers, as well as free medical care for all children under sixteen, without a means test. For a full discussion on the matter see Lee *Ireland 1912–1985*, 315–321

he made his objections, stating, the scheme is entirely and ‘directly contrary to Catholic teaching on the rights of the family, the rights of the Church in education.’²²⁰ Costello during a debate on the issue in the Dáil announced: ‘I am an Irishman second, I am a Catholic first, and I accept without qualification in all respects the teaching of the hierarchy and the church to which I belong.’²²¹ In this, he was speaking for the vast majority of the Republic’s population and once again confirming the relationship between Church and State. He explained further, ‘I, as a Catholic, obey my church authorities and will continue to do so’, leaving no doubt as to the power held by the senior clergy in political matters.²²² The whole debacle contributed to the collapse of the government and a general election was held in May 1951. Eamon de Valera was appointed Taoiseach and formed the sixth government of an independent Ireland, a single-party minority Fianna Fáil government.

Later that same year, Séan MacEntee, speaking at the Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis, stated that Fianna Fáil was still committed to the erection of national memorials to commemorate the dead patriots. However, efforts to build a stronger economy was higher on the governments agenda. Referring directly to County Galway, MacEntee stated that,

the best memorial would be a strong, happy and economically sound nation ... The economic condition of Connacht is by no means a worthy memorial to the men of 1916 and the following years ... Galway people are prepared to make their city and county a worthy memorial to the men who made sacrifices for freedom if only the government will give that little co-operation that the underdeveloped state of the western coastal area demands.²²³

The same month an advertisement in the *Connacht Tribune* announced the meeting of the ‘pre-Truce’ IRA, stating that only men ‘with approved service’ were invited to attend.²²⁴ This was part of a wider effort to establish a nation-wide organisation. Three years later, on 11 February 1954, the fruits of these efforts were realised as over 200 guests arrived at the Banba Hotel, Salthill. Captain Petie (PJ) McDonnell spoke about commemoration and how,

we are very lax in our attempt to perpetuate the memory of those who died

²²⁰ F.S.L. Lyons *Ireland Since the Famine* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1971) 576

²²¹ As cited in the *Irish Times*, 22 July 2011

²²² Dáil Éireann Debate – Thursday, 12 April 1951 Vol. 125 No. 5 The full debate including Minister Browne’s resignation can be viewed at https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1951-04-12/43/#spk_282 Accessed 16 July 2020

²²³ *Connacht Tribune*, 10 November 1951

²²⁴ *Connacht Tribune*, 10 November 1951

and Galway should do something in this respect every other town and village had its memorial and it was a poor reflection on the city that the extra few £100 or so needed to make the memorial a reality could not be raised.²²⁵

The memorial McDonnell referred to was the proposal to build a 'gateway' on O'Brien's Bridge in Galway city.²²⁶ According to the *Connacht Tribune*, Seamus Murphy, the sculptor, designed two relief panels in limestone, 'that on the left symbolises Irish culture and the right, valour and patriotism ... The wrought iron gates will be forged by Galway smiths.'²²⁷ Despite various fundraising events and subscriptions, this memorial was never erected. Issues surrounding the ownership of the land and drainage work were cited as postponements.²²⁸ Subsequently, as the veterans passed away, the urgency receded, and although the proposal surfaced periodically over the years, whatever issues were surrounding the memorial, those in favour could not quite bring the project to fruition.²²⁹

Nonetheless, at this same gathering, a unique photograph was taken of members of Cumann na mBan (see B33). This photograph illustrates how members of the same family were active and also the intermarriage between the Cumann na mBan women and members of the IRA. Those in the photograph appear happy and ready to lend their support to the cause in hand.

Although mostly held at Eastertime, over the rest of the decade several 'annual' 1916 Rising commemorations took place for those who had given their lives for Irish freedom, in areas such Donaghpatrick and Tuam.²³⁰ However, the annual commemoration ceremony at Shanaglish cemetery in memory of the two Loughnane brothers seemed to consistently have large crowds in attendance. The *Connacht Tribune* reported that 'special buses from Clarecastle, Lisdoonvarna and Galway, brought together a huge crowd' which marched to the music played by Ennistymon Pipe and Clonmoney Pipe Bands.²³¹ Standing by their grave was an active IRA representative, Leo Duignan, from Longford. Recently released after ten years imprisonment, he had mixed feelings of sorrow and pride, 'proud that Ireland reared such men as Patrick and Harry ... and deep sorrow that the cause for which they gave

²²⁵ *Connacht Tribune*, 14 February 1953

²²⁶ *Connacht Tribune*, 18 March 1950

²²⁷ *Connacht Tribune*, 18 March 1950

²²⁸ *Connacht Tribune*, 5 July 1958

²²⁹ *Connacht Tribune*, 24 January 1969

²³⁰ *Tuam Herald*, 17 April 1954

²³¹ *Connacht Tribune*, 16 April 1955

their lives had not yet been attained.²³² He finished the oration with how as Irishmen 'we abhor the use of physical force but there is no alternative and only physical force can achieve a Republic for the whole of Ireland.'²³³ Hugh Loughnane, Pat and Harry Loughnane's brother, was a member of Sinn Féin. He and other Sinn Féin representatives were the central organisers behind the annual Loughnane brothers commemorations in Shanaglish. Those who attended the memorial were there for mixed reasons, some as Sinn Féin supporters, neighbours and friends. Sinn Féin exploited the event to firstly, legitimise their cause by aligning their message with the sacrifice of the brothers and secondly, to promote the continuation of their cause. Duignan 'urged all young Ireland to study the historical facts and to find out for themselves if the Twenty-Six County Republic was the Republic for which the Loughnanes and their comrades had given their lives.'²³⁴ Despite growing tensions in the north during this time, the annual commemoration of the Loughnane brothers garnered significant attention amongst political leaders in the west of Ireland and the wider community.

The following year in the small town of Clifden, a committee of forty-five members came together on 1 November 1956, to fundraise for a memorial to Thomas Whelan, executed in Mountjoy goal, 14 March 1921 (Fig. 7.18) (see C12).²³⁵ Once again the members of the working committee were included in the announcement, to give credence to the fundraising but also to entitle them to be remembered by future generations. The *Irish Press* lists the Chairman as P.J. McDonnell, Vice Chairman G. Bartley T.D. and P.D. Joyce as Secretary.²³⁶ The monument was scheduled to be unveiled in December 1958 by Michael Kilroy an IRA veteran and retired TD, however, Kilroy became ill, and Gerald Bartley, Parliamentary Secretary performed the unveiling in his absence. The *Irish Press* reported that Bartley, 'spoke in Irish and English, [and] said that Tommy Whelan had been a contemporary and friend of his.

²³² *Connacht Tribune*, 16 April 1955

²³³ *Connacht Tribune*, 16 April 1955

²³⁴ *Connacht Tribune*, 16 April 1955

²³⁵ *Irish Press*, 1 November 1956

²³⁶ *Irish Press*, 1 November 1956

Figure 7.18. Monument to Thomas Whelan, executed in Mountjoy 14 March 1921.
Source: Eilish Kavanagh



He paid tribute to Whelan's bravery before his execution and hoped that his life and death would be a shining example to all young people of the district.²³⁷ Whelan's ninety-three year old mother was present as were 'IRA veterans from many parts of Galway and Mayo.'²³⁸ The inscription on the monument that was erected read:

Óglaigh na hÉireann
I ndíl-chuimhe Tomás Ó Faoláin
Saighdiúir cróga d'Arm na hÉireann
a thug a shao lar son a thír
Ar an 14ú Márta 1921 I bPríosún Mhuinseo, Baile Átha Cliath
maraithe ag eachtrannaigh
Beannacht Dé ar a anam
A shean chomrádaithe agus a sheanchairde

²³⁷ *Irish Press*, 22 December 1958

²³⁸ *Irish Press*, 22 December 1958

a thóg an leacht cuimhneacháin seo²³⁹

Irish Volunteers
In loving memory of
Thomas Whelan
A brave soldier of the Irish Army
who gave his life for his country
On 14th March 1921
in Mountjoy Prison, Dublin
killed by foreigners.
God's blessing on his soul
His old comrades and his old friends
erected this monument²⁴⁰

The monument stands at a fork in the road, on the higher side. As seen in Fig. 7.16, a Celtic cross carved in limestone has been placed above a plinth of limestone. In more recent times the annual commemoration at Whelan's memorial has been organised by local members of Sinn Féin, however, a report in the *Connacht Tribune* in 1973, reported heavy criticism for the censorship by the media of Erskine Childers wreath-laying ceremony at the monument.²⁴¹ Having control over these memorial ceremonies provided an important political opportunity when interacting with voters. Therefore, political leaders that engaged in this type of public memory made efforts to control the historical narrative. To become part of the act of commemoration wielded a certain political influence.

The Volunteers in County Galway did not have any casualties during Easter 1916, and therefore the commemoration speeches delivered at gravesides, unlike in Dublin, were generally delivered about those that either served in the War of Independence or the Civil War. The pattern of annual individual commemoration, other than the National Easter celebrations, were still focused on Fr Griffin, the Loughnane Brothers, and Eileen Quinn.²⁴² However, the circumstances surrounding the Loughnane brothers' deaths in 1920, in addition to the graphic photographs taken by Tomás Ó hEighin, placed these two young men at the pinnacle of memorialisation. This is illustrated when the death of John Burke, of Kinvara was formally announced.²⁴³ Burke himself was a well-regarded member of the old IRA. However, his obituary largely mentioned his involvement in the recovery of the Loughnane brothers. His own

²³⁹ Updated spelling of old Irish by Olive Kavanagh

²⁴⁰ Translated by Olive Kavanagh

²⁴¹ *Connacht Tribune*, 9 November 1973

²⁴² *The Nationalist*, 25 January 1958

²⁴³ *Connacht Tribune*, 21 February 1959

involvement in securing pensions and earnest support of his fellow comrades were not mentioned. Nevertheless, at Eastertime 1959, thirty years since the start of the conflict, once again another large gathering stood in commemoration at the graveside of the Loughnane brothers.

The same year an irreplaceable set of memories were finally deposited for what some viewed as a frustratingly undetermined length of time. Over the previous decade under the new Bureau of Military History, a team of nine collectors began gathering material from veterans involved in conflict up until July 1921, in the form of statements. A total of eighty-three steel boxes were locked away in a strong room in Government Buildings under the direct control of the Department of Defence. As Ferriter observed,

They contained 1,770 statements, 66 annexes to witness statements, 54 collections of documents relating to people who did not contribute statements, 322 collections of original documents, 178 collections of press cuttings, 12 voice recordings, and 246 photographs.²⁴⁴

Despite pressure from several historians and researchers, it would be some decades before the contents would be revealed.

1960s

The global counterculture movement of the 1960s also manifested itself in Ireland, albeit to a lesser extent. Challenges to existing policies or attitudes called for change in areas relating to poverty, censorship, contraception, education and sexual awareness and equality.²⁴⁵ As Ferriter has noted ‘there was also a new generation coming to the fore – in politics, the media, health services, sport, musical, cultural and legal life, and religion – who seemed to have little patience with or tolerance of conditions their elders had endured, and they refused to indulge in the sanctification of deprivation which had persisted in some quarters of Irish nationalist thinking.’²⁴⁶ In addition, the role of the Catholic Church also began to change. After Vatican II, ‘the Hierarchy, the name by which the bishops and archbishops collectively are known no longer sought the role in society which it had previously seemed to think was its by

²⁴⁴ Diarmaid Ferriter ‘In such deadly earnest’ in *the Dublin Review*, Autumn 2003

²⁴⁵ See Michael Gallagher, ‘Societal Change and Party Adaptation in the Republic of Ireland, 1960-1981’ in *European Journal of Political Research* 9 (1981) 269–285

²⁴⁶ Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900–2000* (London: Profile Books, 2000)537

right.²⁴⁷ Meanwhile the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association) challenged inequality and discrimination against Catholics in the North. Daly, chronicles the ‘reshaping’ of Ireland during this period, concluding that ‘the government’s commitment to change did not extend beyond the economy and programmes such as education and health.’²⁴⁸

Figure 7.19. Photograph of Mrs Kate Loughnane and Sister Patricia (Nora) Loughnane at the original Celtic cross memorial for their brothers Pat and Harry.

Source: Courtesy of James Hardiman Library, NUI Galway



In County Galway emigration was still a preferred choice, with family members following one after the other in search for a better life. A new economic programme created to curb such emigration had been introduced by Taoiseach, Seán Lemass some years before. Galway’s industrial potential, forestry, tourism and its potential of its port to become a major fishery harbour.²⁴⁹ Lemass, a surviving veteran of Ireland’s struggle for independence, was determined to modernise his cabinet in addition to their policies. De Valera moved into the role of President of Ireland as several other old guard veterans retired, leaving room for a new generation of politicians, such as Jack Lynch, Neil Blaney, Brian Lenihan, Patrick Hillery and Lemass’ son-in-law, Charles J Haughey.

However, the veterans and dead IRA members from the War of Independence

²⁴⁷ Gallagher, ‘Societal Change and Party Adaptation’, 271

²⁴⁸ Mary E. Daly *Sixties Ireland Reshaping the Economy, State and Society, 1957–1973* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016) 385

²⁴⁹ *Connacht Tribune*, 28 January 1961

remained in the memory of those within Galway communities. For many of the diaspora this memory of home was also stimulated by republican songs such as the 'Boys of the Old Brigade' and the growing unrest north of the Irish border.²⁵⁰ Notably, on the forty-first year of the death of the Loughnane brothers, 26 November 1961, a large eight-foot Celtic cross surrounded by a decorative wall and ornamental railings, was unveiled in their memory amid another large crowd that gathered (Fig. 7.20).²⁵¹ The memorial replaced a smaller limestone cross that had been there for twenty-five years (Fig. 7.19). As seen in the photograph above, unlike the mini skirt fashion of the 1960s, Sister Patricia (Nora) Loughnane and her sister Kate, wore more modest outfits. Kate in a practical hat and coat and Sister Patricia in the full length habit of her order.

Figure 7.20. An unidentified young boy standing beside the new Celtic Cross memorial dedicated to Pat and Harry Loughnane, 26 November 1961.

Source: Courtesy of James Hardiman Library, NUI Galway



The original memorial was of a simple design with twisted ivy motif symbolic of Celtic art. However, later the more elaborate Celtic cross, often decorated with traditional Gaelic symbols or Celtic knots in old Irish design, had become popularised and was used more frequently for memorials. The large procession met at Fogarty's Cross.

²⁵⁰ This is a reference to a song written by Patrick McGuigan, 1969 and sung by the Wolfe Tones. McGuigan wrote a series of songs which quickly garnered fame by many Irish forced to reside in other countries, especially Britain.

²⁵¹ *Connacht Tribune*, 2 December 1961.

Two bands, Fianna Éireann Band, Dublin and the Tulla Piper's Band began the parade, followed by a colour party bearing the Tricolour and the flags of Cumann na mBan and Connra na gCailíní.

The Parade Marshall was Brian Murphy from Dublin, and he was then followed by several hundred people as the marching bands played. They continued to the memorial at Carrowgarv, Ardrahan. Before the official unveiling, a decade of the rosary was recited led by Pádraig Fox. Once he unveiled the memorial, Councillor Pádraig O'Ceallaigh, Galway County Council, from Ballygar, described the vivid circumstances surrounding the death of the brothers. He included the bravery of Mrs Linnane and her son from Chessy, as they defied the police by saying the Act of Contrition into the ears of the dying men. Thomas Mitchell, delivered the oration. Mitchell, a retired MP for Mid-Tyrone, was a prominent Sinn Féin activist and fought the 1955 election from Crumlin Road prison. He was renowned for attending commemorations and funerals such as this in order to promote the ideas of Sinn Féin.²⁵² In his speech, Mitchell proclaimed:

These two men were of the common people. More than that they were leaders in their own right, respected and admired by the community, and the English knew they must destroy such men before they could hope to break the spirit of South Galway. In this they failed, for the spirit of the Loughnanes and the manner of their death only inspired their comrades into greater efforts.²⁵³

The *Connacht Tribune* also reported Mr O'Ceallaigh as saying that the 'occasion was unique because it has seldom happened that in the midst of a fight for freedom, people came together to unveil a monument to the martyrs who have died in that fight.'²⁵⁴ In addition to the large crowd, the committee members he referred to were: Chairman Mr Larry Fogarty, Ballinderreen; Secretary Miss Margaret Linnane, Kinvara; Jack Murray; Martin Egan; Matt Keenan; Martin Kelly; John Mahon; Patrick Geraghty; P. Murray and Joseph Corless. The rhetoric used during the event was a political statement regarding the 'large-scale repression' as the 'English retain their hold on the country.'²⁵⁵ The timing of this event, in light of the ongoing discord in Northern Ireland, was directly aimed at reigniting the spirit of rebellion. The retelling of the circumstance

²⁵² <http://laochrauladh.blogspot.com/2020/10/tom-mitchell.html> Accessed 19 November 2020

²⁵³ *Connacht Tribune*, 2 December 1961 and *Irish Independent* 27 November 1961

²⁵⁴ *Connacht Tribune*, 2 December 1961

²⁵⁵ *Connacht Tribune*, 2 December 1961

of the brothers' deaths invoked such powerful imagery that it would be difficult for anyone present at the commemoration not to feel emotional or possibly angry. As Lemass was presenting a new 'modern' Ireland to Europe, here was Sinn Féin deliberately taking advantage of historic events to promote their cause. Nonetheless, those from the local area felt a certain pride at having the memorial in their community.

The Gaelic inscription reads:

I ndíl-chuimhe
an bheirt dreáthar
Pádraig & Enri Ó Lachtnáin
a dún-mharbhúigheadh le Gallaibh
annseo Samhain 1920

As ucht Do Pháis & Do Bháis
A íosa déan trócaire ortha

Do chum glóire Dé
agus onóra na hÉireann

The English translation is:

In loving memory of
the two brothers
Patrick & Henry Loughnane
who were murdered by foreigners
here November 1920

By Your Passion & Your Death
Jesus have mercy on them

For the glory of God
and the honour of Ireland.

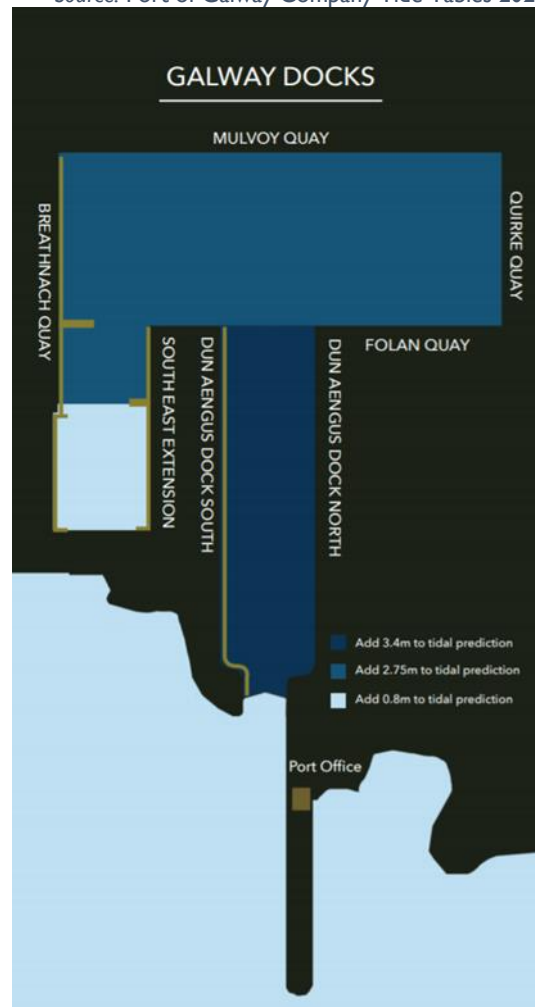
Preparations for the Golden Jubilee for Easter 1916 began a year earlier in 1965. Similar to the Loughnane commemoration, according to Roisín Higgins, the timing was 'significant'.²⁵⁶ Seán Lemass chose to juxtapose the past events with the present current policy of 'looking forwards'.²⁵⁷ Although he also placed an emphasis on the historic events and the great sacrifice the veterans had made for the Republic, he pointed to a new form of activism. As Higgins has suggested, in order to engage the younger generation, 'commemoration activities were to be used to inspire a new type

²⁵⁶ Roisín Higgins, '1966 and All That: The 50th Anniversary Commemoration' in *History Ireland* Issue 2 (Mar/Apr), Vol 14 2006

²⁵⁷ Higgins, '1966 and All That:

of patriotism, one necessary for the new national project'.²⁵⁸ In her commentary on this period, Mary Daly noted that 'one striking feature of the official commemoration was the self-congratulatory celebration of the success of the Irish state, and the emphasis that was placed on future challenges and aspirations.'²⁵⁹

Figure 7.21. Illustration of Galway harbour and the quays.
Source: Port of Galway Company Tide Tables 2020.



Yet, Daly also observed that this was clearly a 'farewell to the founding generation of national leaders, and implicitly a farewell to their preoccupation with the Civil War, partition and language revival.'²⁶⁰ The 600 or so veterans who formed the military parade down Dublin's O'Connell Street may not have agreed with the assessment.²⁶¹

National plans for the Golden Jubilee welcomed representatives from all parts of

²⁵⁸ Higgins, '1966 and All That'

²⁵⁹ Mary E. Daly, *Sixties Ireland Reshaping the Economy, State and Society, 1957–1973* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016) 363

²⁶⁰ Daly *Sixties Ireland Reshaping the Economy* 363

²⁶¹ For a comprehensive analysis of this commemoration, see McCarthy, Chapter 4 of *Ireland's 1916 Rising* 187–273.

County Galway and Galway town into the capital. Commemorations were also scheduled for many parts of the country outside Dublin. In Galway, at the Harbour Board's December meeting in 1965, the Harbour Master, Lieutenant Commander Jim Whyte, proposed that the quays be renamed after 'Galway patriots who died during the War of Independence'.²⁶² Members of the Harbour Board were informed that, 'one hundred dockers at Galway Port are to subscribe to a fund to execute a plaque ... to commemorate Séamus Quirke'.²⁶³ However, there is no evidence that this plaque was ever put in place. Nevertheless, as can be seen in Fig. 7.21, the quays surrounding Galway docks, previously named after points on the compass, were subsequently named as Mulvoy Quay, Quirke Quay, Folan Quay and Breathnach (Michael Walsh) Quay.²⁶⁴

In Williamstown, the townland bordering the home town of Jeremiah Mee, a committee also announced plans to mount a plaque in remembrance of the War of Independence.²⁶⁵ However, this plaque later stated 'In Memory of all who gave their lives in the fight for freedom in the 1916 Rising'. The reason for this change is unknown.

In contrast, in 1967, the year after the Golden Jubilee, Rev. J. Canon O'Dea P.P. Clarenbridge made a plea at the erection of a plaque in memory of Michael Walsh to return to the spirit of 50 years before. The 'spirit' he referred to was Sinn Féin not 'mé féin'. He reminded those present that in 'those days there was only one problem – to win freedom'.²⁶⁶ When he spoke to the younger generation, O'Dea stated that 'they still had the chance to show the world what a Christian nation should be, but jealousy and ambition among their leaders had left them with a permanent 'cold war' among their people'.²⁶⁷ The remembrance plaque was placed on the wall in the area of the Long Walk where Walsh had met his demise. Amongst those in attendance were Walsh's eight children, Sean Turke a veteran, Ellen Folan, sister of Christy, members of the Harbour Board, members of the Fire Brigade and other public bodies. Rev. Pádraic O'Laoid, author of *History of Castlegar Parish*, and Fr. Griffin was present

²⁶² *Connacht Tribune*, 4 December 1965.

²⁶³ *Connacht Tribune*, 4 December 1965.

²⁶⁴ The illustration of Galway harbour and the quays as shown here are not registered on Ordnance Survey Ireland

²⁶⁵ *The Connacht Tribune*, 30 April 1966

²⁶⁶ *The Connacht Tribune*, 27 October 1967.

²⁶⁷ *The Connacht Tribune*, 27 October 1967.

along with several veterans of the War of Independence from a wide area.²⁶⁸ Still, the sense of reluctance to embrace modernity and change was not felt by everyone, as emigrants returned to their hometowns, they wanted change and with it a more viable economy.

Figure 7.22. Commemoration of the First Dáil, the Mansion House, 21 January 1969.
Source: *Irish Press* 22 January 1969



As the civil rights movement gained momentum in Northern Ireland, on 21 January 1969, the Golden Jubilee of the First Dáil was commemorated in the Round Room of the Mansion House (Fig. 7.22). A special sitting of the Oireachtas was held with the President, and members of the Dáil and the Seanad. The attending sense, as communicated by the photograph, is one of political triumphalism from a government in power for over a decade. The black and white photograph was taken from the *Irish Press* and presents the President, Eamon de Valera, addressing the Dáil in front of the survivors of the First Dáil, from left: Joseph O'Doherty, Peadar Mac an Bhaird, James Ryan, Robert Barton, Richard Mulcahy, Ernest Blythe, Séan MacEntee, Brian Cusack, Alasdair MacCaba and Paidin Ó Caoimh, at the rear is Sean Nunan.

In keeping with the ceremonial tradition of the original Dáil, the event commenced with Votive Mass of the Holy Ghost at 11am, with an ecumenical service in both the St Mary's Church (Pro-Cathedral) and St Patrick's Cathedral, once again reinforcing the cohesive relationship. The Archbishop of Dublin, Rev. Dr McQuaid presided over the Mass and members were seated by 3.08pm. The Taoiseach, Jack Lynch, entered at 3.20pm, and at precisely 3.29pm the President was escorted into the room. After the prayer, at 3.35pm, the formal business commenced. Firstly, there was the President's address, followed by speeches from the Taoiseach, Mr. Liam Cosgrave, T.D. and leader

²⁶⁸ *The Connacht Tribune*, 27 October 1967. Pádraic, Ó Laoi, *Fr. Griffin, 1892–1920* (Galway, Self-Published, 1994) and *History of Castlegar Parish*, (Galway: 1998)

of Fine Gael; Mr. Brendan Corish, leader of the Labour Party; and Mr. James Dooge, Leas-Cathaoirleach.²⁶⁹ Divine Service at 6pm in the Synagogue on Adelaide Road concluded the religious ceremonies, followed by refreshments in the Supper Room at 7pm.

There were some protests both inside and outside of the event. Inside, Joseph Clarke, a 1916 veteran, protested at 'what he considered to be the failure of successive governments to institute the social democratic programmes of the first Dáil.'²⁷⁰ He was escorted from the building and 'with his invitation still in his pocket, he made his way along the street to get the first bus home.'²⁷¹ Outside, students were chanting slogans. They joined the Dublin Housing Committee in protesting about the lack of adequate housing as they marched to the GPO. There, they held a mock trial. Although 'elaborate security precautions' were taken in the event of violent disruptions, the event was kept under control and Gardaí were reported as having thwarted reporters by referring them to the Commissioner for any quotes.²⁷²

Using modern media to further enhance the drama, Seán Duignan, an RTÉ presenter, was given the unique opportunity to front the first live broadcast of a Dáil session.²⁷³ As a result, the historic event was witnessed by viewers around the country. The medium of television particularly, though still in its infancy, was 'seen as a major instrument in the shaping of collective memory', particularly on a national level.²⁷⁴ It provided 'a sense of common past, bridging between personal and collective history', especially for those in rural areas unable to attend such events.²⁷⁵ It also served as a reminder to the survivors and those who participated in the War of Independence, that they mattered. Local commemorations tended to be less formal and more community driven. Some were coordinated by republicans or graveside speeches delivered by active members of paramilitary organisations.

As seen in Fig.7.23, a set of stamps were issued in 1969 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the sitting of the First Dáil. Although they are small icons of popular

²⁶⁹ *Irish Press*, 21 January 1969

²⁷⁰ *Irish Independent*, 22 January 1969

²⁷¹ *Irish Independent*, 22 January 1969

²⁷² *Irish Independent*, 22 January 1969

²⁷³ <https://www.rte.ie/archives/2019/01/10/1022429-first-dail-50th-anniversary/> Accessed 3 December 2019.

²⁷⁴ Jérôme Bourdon, 'Some Sense of Time: Remembering Television' *History and Memory*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Fall/Winter 2003), 6

²⁷⁵ Bourdon, 'Some Sense of Time: Remembering Television', 6

culture, stamps project a message both domestically and internationally. They are official documents, whereby consultations and debates surround the design and issuing of stamps. Therefore it could be argued that they are political in nature, involving constructs of national and cultural identity. However, stamp collecting is popular and these particular stamps were reportedly ‘completely sold out a week before the day of issue.’²⁷⁶

Figure 7.23. Set of two used commemorative stamps: Ireland 1969 Dáil Eireann - 50th Anniversary of first sitting of Irish Parliament. Date of Issue: 21 January 1969 - Design: Michael Byrne
Source: <https://www.adams.ie/>



The Troubles in Northern Ireland had advanced significantly and tensions amongst Catholic communities continued to escalate. The more extreme public displays of republicanism had started to become more clandestine in some cases. For example, by comparison with the Easter 1916 commemoration some years previously, the Golden Jubilee of Patrick and Harry Loughnane’s death in 1970 was a more subdued affair. The commemoration commenced with a parade from the village at 4pm and attendees ‘marched behind a colour party drawn from Counties Clare and Galway, followed by the Tulla band.’²⁷⁷ A statement from the Provisional IRA was read after the Rosary, followed by an oration by Thomas Maguire, Mayo, a senior veteran. Once again, the commemoration took place at Easter, not November as the month of their

²⁷⁶ *Nationalist and Leinster Times*, 7 February 1969

²⁷⁷ *Connacht Tribune*, 3 April 1970

death, again marginalising remembrances surrounding the War of Independence in favour of the more acceptable Easter 1916.

As the situation of unrest in Northern Ireland developed, a strange turn of events for the dominant party Fianna Fáil emerged which confirms the politicisation of commemoration. Jack Lynch, then Taoiseach, sacked Charles Haughey and Neil Blaney, two senior ministers over allegations of illegal arms importation (bound for Northern Ireland) which resulted in a major controversy in Irish politics. In July 1970, 'the charges of conspiring to import arms illegally were dropped against Blaney, while Haughey was acquitted of the charges in October 1970 following two trials.'²⁷⁸ This political storm in the south became a distraction for some, for others the riots in Northern Ireland, was to cause a split within republicanism with a more militant Provisional IRA emerging determined to reignite a focused armed struggle. Meanwhile, the fiftieth anniversary of the Truce approached and the Irish government came under pressure to desist from enflaming the situation. This brought about what Ferriter notes as 'serious implications for civil liberties and cultural life in the South to accompany the mounting death toll in the North'. This caused some to reconsider the provocation of past memories. Others used commemorations of the War of Independence to create opportunities to exploit the significance of the same memorials.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the academic field of memory studies has developed as a significant and influential addition to cultural heritage studies. Research of specific historic events can be viewed through the lens of commemoration and remembrance. Here in this chapter, what is chiefly explored is how the memories of 1919–1921 have persisted in County Galway's built and cultural heritages up until 1970, albeit within the context of social and political change.

Despite the apparent success of the War of Independence and the eventual establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, such was the expression of grief and despair in some communities in County Galway that commemorations of the dead

²⁷⁸ <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2020/0505/1136524-arms-crisis-debacle-1970-haughey-blaney-lynch/> Accessed 20 May 2022

was almost immediate. However, these were primarily directed towards individuals and their deaths rather than making significant strategic milestones of the conflict. It is evident that despite successive government attempts to centralise the commemorative process into a single event, Easter 1916, many in County Galway continued to seek remembrance of those individuals thought to have left a lasting impact on family and friends. It is therefore through these repeated commemorations of the deceased, such as Fr Griffin and the Loughnane brothers, that the collective memory established by communities sustains such remembrances. Carville, as discussed here, has theoretically established the connection with the viewer of photographs, memory and the past. In the case of the Loughnane brothers, photographic evidence of the terror endured and had far-reaching implications which remain today. The global reach and implications of such photographs cannot be overestimated. These photographs were used as propaganda; an image is hard to deny, particularly when copied and shared throughout the Western world. During the first half of the century, in the most difficult economic times, veterans in County Galway fundraised, often using their own leadership as evidence, to place a marker for those who had given their lives for independence. These agents of memory soon became the focus for parades and gatherings at ceremonial commemorations. Later they would also serve to promote a more current republican agenda, that of opposing, with physical force, partition of the six Northern counties, albeit in the guise of remembrance.

The intercultural social and political context surrounding these commemorations was a post-war Europe that was reconstructing itself amid a devastating recession. In Ireland, after the coalition was formed, Costello declared the new state a Republic, thereby proving the claim that the Treaty, despite heavily disputed by some, achieved what violence could not. Partly, as a consequence of its support of the Republican struggle during the War of Independence, the Catholic Church secured a firm position in the newly established Free State, reflecting its powerful status in Irish society. However, in County Galway, employment was limited and severe poverty was rife. Farmers had some of the poorest land in the country with yearly heavy precipitation threatening crops. The state struggled to rectify problems of unemployment, emigration, and uneven geographical development. Nonetheless, as the decades progressed, the Irish state began to consider new viable alternatives to alleviate

poverty and address on employment.

Change in Northern Ireland also began when the civil rights movement sought equality for Catholics both socially and economically in line with their Unionist neighbours. Republican activists once again harnessed the unrest to generate anger over partition. Rhetoric at Galway gravesides had in some cases become more politically charged as once again the horror of how the two Loughnane brothers met their demise was used to radicalise a new generation of republicans. However, in some quarters the Troubles also led to a toning down of rhetoric for fear of glorifying violence in the present.

Various ways to record oral histories were employed to document the memories of those involved in the War of Independence, most notably, the Schools' Collection and the Witness Statements. Housed in cultural institutions for safekeeping, this material stores personal accounts of events and incidents that cannot be replaced now the living memory is no longer present. In addition, despite the possible inaccuracies or distortions, these documents have helped historians and researchers alike since their release, and have provided, as shown in this chapter, evidence of events or incidents not otherwise detailed, thereby adding to existing knowledge of conflict.

Conflict poetry has also been recognised around the world as offering significant insight into cultural heritage and identity. It is possible to find human connections that are often difficult to establish in everyday lives. The emotional state of the writers, in this case, those associated with the Loughnane brothers and Fr Michael Griffin, elevate their subjects to the realms of iconic paradigms of piety, despite their roles during this conflict, demonstrating that memory can indeed be selective. Mothers of the dead men, are not themselves honoured, but revered as having been selected to mother these dead heroes.

As seen in this chapter, from the 1920s up until 1970s, despite the State's attempts to secure Easter 1916 as the pinnacle of commemoration, Galway communities, especially in Shanaglish, were determined to remember their own. Sinn Féin had, over these decades, used the platform to continually reiterate their political message that men, such as the Loughnane brothers and Thomas Whelan, had died for the freedom of Ireland and that their deeds were worthy of everlasting memory. Nevertheless, it was not only the politically motivated that attended these remembrance ceremonies,

many non-activists continued to show their support. This is also evident from the fundraising for built memorials and memorial halls. However, as unrest in the North became more widespread and became the subject of front line news, military State commemorations were not considered by many to be an acceptable way to remember Ireland's hard fought independence. In the following chapter, the key aim is to *analyse, how, why, and in what ways memories of the conflict have persisted, from 1971 to the present.*

Chapter 8. Chronicling Memories, 1971–2021

The physical manifestations of civic or public recognition honouring events, individuals or groups, are found throughout the country. Those associated with the War of Independence are also to be found scattered at the side of roads, in fields or along the main streets of Irish cities, towns and villages. Yet, not every community has one. The participation of some individuals is recognised in a more private space within the confines of the family home or, in some cases, within the area of a graveyard. Yet, public memorials are themselves 'landscapes, which make it possible to keep past events alive in the common memory through physical representation in public areas.'¹ Further explored here are questions concerning, how, why, and in what ways memories of this conflict have persisted from 1971, the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the War of Independence, up to and including 2021. In a similar fashion to the previous chapter, by investigating several events over this period, it is possible to consider what these events reveal about the changing nature of commemoration and remembrance. The continuing importance of memory studies within the area of heritage, as discussed in Chapter 2, has stimulated multiple approaches to memory. Here remembrance is also explored under the themes of public and collective memory. However, it is worth bearing in mind that the fallibility and selective nature of memory can also be reflective of an emotional state of mind when in attendance at, for instance, funerals and civic commemorations. As discussed in the previous chapter, these are often exploited and politicised to influence those that attend such events. The collective memory regarding the War of Independence had been somewhat overshadowed following the bitter divisions of Civil War. There was a deliberate attempt to induce a more cohesive national state programme by commemorating the events of Easter 1916 and to a far lesser degree the War of Independence that followed. This resulted in more localised events, often centred around the recognition of certain individuals or groups that had become revered by their family and community. Yet, as the memories of those who participated or lived through these events declined, how and by what means had these memories in County Galway been preserved? For the most part, these continued to include, Father Michael Griffin, the Loughnane brothers and, in some cases, local Volunteers when they died or particular anniversaries, such as Eileen Quinn from Gort.

¹ Ebru Erbas Gurler and Basak Ozer, 'The Effects of Public Memorials on Social Memory and Urban Identity' in *Procedia - Social and Behavioural Sciences* 82 (2013) 858

Commemoration was complicated as the fraught security situation in Northern Ireland escalated when the first British soldier was killed in February 1971. Fear and apprehension amongst both the general population and the politicians in the Republic of Ireland resulted in a reluctance to openly commemorate violent conflicts such as the War of Independence or Easter 1916. Despite the veterans' reluctance to speak openly about their participation in the War of Independence, as shown further in this chapter, they felt it fitting to utilise the opportunity of funerals to remember their comrades. In some cases, families declined offers from local Sinn Féin representatives to officiate, opting instead for a military colour party from Dún Uí Mhaoilíosa (Renmore Barracks).² It is within this context that complex and contested memories are debated in the pages that follow, as newly sourced material is explored and critically analysed. As societal discourse and the varied processes of memory change over time, the question of whether they remain relevant in the present is worth exploring. Worthy of consideration too are the publicly-funded local commemorative projects that provide a significant research contribution by utilising archival material. So too is the extensive amount of non-publicly funded research at community level that has delivered personal insights only known through intimate association. This chapter also acknowledges the importance of various forms of multimedia in the commemorative process, and investigates how this relatively new appreciation for media podcasts has disclosed another aspect of remembrance. Of particular note is how the focus on incidents in Galway can introduce another dimension to the narrative.

Moreover, what, if any, is the role of media in our understanding of memory? Does it, as Erll has argued, subtly reshape the memory?³ Multimedia and the use of digital repositories can both reveal and challenge previously held certainties. The War of Independence, like much of Irish history, has its own contested memories, and in turn, this has sometimes caused aspects of the past to be ignored in the popular mind and a type of amnesia to form. Equally, during the process of nation-building in the early years of the Free State, specific societal gender restrictions led to a collective amnesia

² Oral evidence has suggested that such was the amount of requests received by Dún Uí Mhaoilíosa during the 1970s that a colour party was poised to attend at short notice. Information provided by Colman Shaughnessy, Loughrea Memorial Group.

³ Astrid Erll & Ann Rigney, 'Literature and the production of cultural memory: Introduction,' *European Journal of English Studies*, (2006) Vol 10 Issue 2,

that overshadowed or marginalised some histories. Women's histories were one genre that bore the brunt of this erasure, and although efforts have been made in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries to restore their voice, there is quite some way left before this is to be achieved. Such is the piecemeal nature of references to women, often their agency does not fit easily into a chronological narrative, and is simply left out. This chapter endeavours to address somewhat this issue by recognising the significance of the Military Service Pensions Collection held in the Military Archives has been in recording their activities. Examined too are some of the controversies surrounding recent attempts by the government of Ireland to commemorate and remember members of the Royal Irish Constabulary who lost their lives during the War of Independence. The government's Decade of Centenaries programme had been chiefly successful in its appropriateness and objectivity, taking expert advice on introducing contested history. However, the then Minister for Justice and Equality, Charlie Flanagan tested the ideals of a shared history well beyond the tolerance of many objectors. This included Lord Mayors from Cork City (John Sheehan), Limerick City (Michael Sheahan), Clare (Cathal Crowe), and Galway City (Mike Cubbard), also, the Dublin City Councillors voted 38 to 10 to boycott the event. Faced with such opposition, the commemoration was cancelled. As a result, this debacle may well make it difficult to recover the confidence of those family members with significant historic information who may be reluctant to come forward for future research initiatives.

1970s

The Fiftieth Anniversary of the End of the War of Independence, 1971

The 1970s was a decade that was dominated by social and political unrest. This is the period that built upon the changes in the economy and the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, by generating more focused discussions surrounding issues such as religion and equality and the 'status of women in Irish life.'⁴ Echoing this, the historiographical debates surrounding revisionism and nationalism, as discussed in more detail in chapter 2, also overshadowed the discourse surrounding the revolutionary period as a whole. However, a marked escalation of unrest in Northern Ireland during this decade forced

⁴ Diarmaid Ferriter, 'What's so special about the seventies?' in *History Ireland* Issue 6 (Nov/Dec 2012), Volume 20

cautious deliberations on any remembrance event. However, 1971 was the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the War of Independence. It was, as Mark McCarthy has argued, a significant opportunity in which the government could 'switch the focus of its commemorationist activities to something other than 1916'.⁵ The initiative to reinstate the memory of this period was a shrewd political strategy with such uncertain yet potentially turbulent phases ahead in Northern Ireland. The government established a committee with 'no formal terms of reference' which included Colonel Austin Brennan, Vincent Byrne, Liam Deasy and Seán Dowling, together with four representatives of Departments of State under the chairmanship of Seán F. Lemass.⁶ Their task was to choreograph a national commemoration with the main ceremony to take place at the Garden of Remembrance in Dublin on Sunday 11th July, 1971. To mark the occasion, The Truce (1921) Commemoration Medal (Service Medal) was issued to Veterans of the War of Independence who were still alive. The national event was televised on RTÉ and the audience witnessed the unveiling of Oisín Kelly's Children of Lir 25-foot-high sculpture memorial. The Garden of Remembrance had been inaugurated at Easter 1966 for the Golden Jubilee commemoration of the Rising. The Office of Public Works (OPW) then commissioned Oisín Kelly to design a sculpture for the west end of the garden.

The garden itself was constructed on the northern portion of the former 'New Gardens', or Rotunda Gardens, which was designed by Robert Stevenson in 1749.⁷ Situated close to Parnell Square, the garden's features include the large Christian symbol of sacrifice, the cruciform sunken pool, followed by wide granite steps creating a formal approach to a semi-circular recess where the Children of Lir sculpture sits jutting out of an oval pool. Other features include motifs of trumpets, shields, swords and spears that symbolise Irish culture. The garden has a paved limestone surround, and limestone is also used to form banks around the paved area. The garden is enclosed by four raised glass terraces that lead to the public walkways outside. When Oisín Kelly was appointed as sculptor for the memorial in 1957, he said:

It is my act of faith that while strident voices compel attention and constant reiteration of slogans sells corn flakes or wins elections, it is the quiet voices,

⁵ Mark McCarthy, *Ireland's 1916 Rising: Explorations of History-Making, Commemoration & Heritage in Modern Times* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012) 285

⁶ Dáil Debates, Vol. 251, No. 1, 27 Jan 1971

⁷ Dictionary of Irish Architects 1720–1940,

<https://www.dia.ie/architects/view/5135/stevenson%2C+robert+%5B1%5D%2A> Accessed 21 July 2020

like the grain of mustard seed which change our lives. I should like a memorial which does not attempt to bully my countrymen into having splendid thoughts and noble feelings, but rather one whose message was implicit, a hint rather than a shout. I complained once to a poet that I had been disappointed with Clonmacnoise. He replied, 'You must bring Clonmacnoise with you.' It is that image in the heart which is the only sane purpose of this monument.'⁸

Figure 8.1. Image depicting the Children of Lir Statue in the Garden of Remembrance.
Source: Jolene Hanson



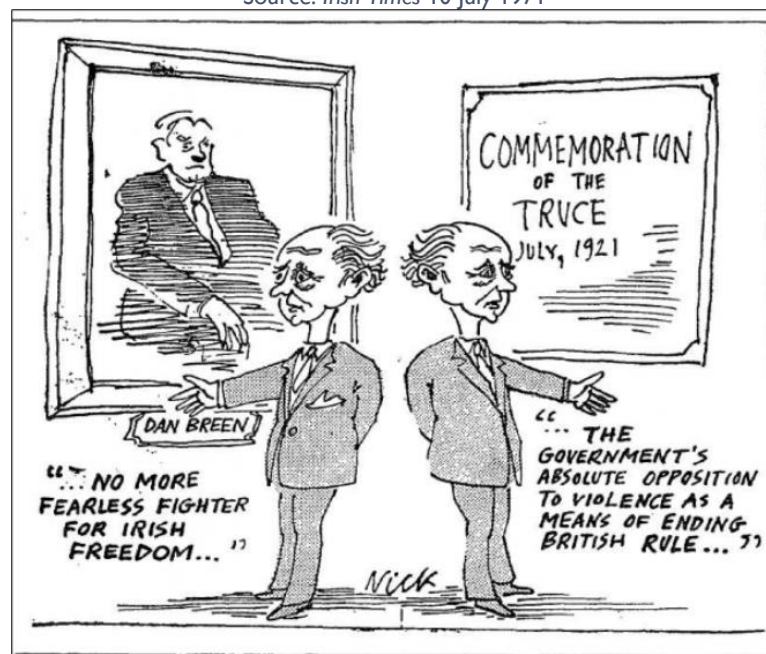
The Children of Lir monument, unveiled by President de Valera, was dedicated to

⁸ Cited in

https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/content/Planning/HeritageConservation/Conservation/ProtectedStructures/Documents/22-11-18%2C%20CAC_Rpt_Garden%20of%20Remembrance.pdf

'Those Who Gave Their Lives In The Cause For Irish Freedom' (Fig. 8.1).⁹ In attendance was Taoiseach Jack Lynch and several other government ministers. The statue depicts four human figures, the children of King Lir, in the process of transforming into swans. Kelly's conception behind the design surrounded a belief that people, at certain moments of history, could transcend the norm, that they are in fact, transformed utterly as suggested in Yeats's poem, 'Easter 1916'. The statue symbolises the struggle that brought about the Easter Rising and the War of Independence and Kelly used the swan as 'a symbol of resurgence and triumph.'¹⁰ In his speech during the ceremony the Taoiseach took the opportunity to appeal for support from the British government in seeking the unity of Ireland.¹¹ His motive was the escalating violence in the North and concern about the probability of the Troubles continuing. Yet, despite continuing requests for peace, four bombs exploded in Belfast during the 12 July celebrations and caused havoc amongst the community.¹² However, Lynch came under a different sort of scrutiny when he featured in a satirical cartoon in the *Irish Times* (Fig. 8.2).¹³

Figure 8.2. Satirical cartoon depicting Taoiseach Jack Lynch
Source: *Irish Times* 10 July 1971



⁹ Inscription at the entrance of the Garden of Remembrance.

¹⁰ <https://www.rte.ie/archives/2016/0628/798667-anglo-ireland-truce-commemorated/> Accessed 18 February 2020

¹¹ *Irish Times*, 12 July 1971, *Irish Press*, 12 July 1971

¹² *Irish Press*, 12 July 1971

¹³ *Irish Times*, 10 July 1971 The reference is made to Taoiseach Jack Lynch launching Dan Breen Memorial Fund for Handicapped Youth while simultaneously rejecting any violence.

It referred to Lynch on the one hand launching the Dan Breen Memorial Fund for Handicapped Youth, a man he knew and respected, while simultaneously rejecting any politicised physical force violence in relation to the North.

Persistent Conflict

Levels of violence escalated in Northern Ireland in 1972. Bloody Sunday, on 30 January 1972, proved to be one of the most controversial events throughout the entire Troubles.¹⁴ Although too complex to discuss here, the root cause of much of the conflict was 'economic discrimination [which] often disadvantaged the large, mostly Catholic Nationalist minority' in favour of the Protestant community.¹⁵ In protest against the British government's policy of interning suspected members of the IRA without trial, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association organised an illegal march. Although Bloody Sunday began as a peaceful march by some 15,000 people, it quickly descended into violent conflict.¹⁶ Another similar incident occurred when a civil rights march clashed with British soldiers in Derry on Sunday 30 January 1972. Subsequently, thirteen men were killed on the day, nine of whom were aged between 17 and 22 and fifteen more were seriously injured (one died later of his injuries).¹⁷ In protest, a strike was called in the South in support of those in the North. On Tuesday, 1 February 1972, the *Irish Press* led with the headline, 'Violence erupts in Dublin as nation protests'¹⁸ The *Connacht Tribune* reported a unanimously-adopted decision in favour of Bernadette Devlin to be made a Freeman of Galway 'for her assault on the British Home Secretary, Mr Reginald Maudling'.¹⁹ In Eyre Square in Galway city a mass rally was held in protest at the shootings. Many businesses and workers in Galway either closed for the day or refused to work including, dockers, health workers, miners and the drilling company, banks and University College Galway. With the continued violence, there appeared to be no appetite for large-scale state commemoration, such as when the Defence Forces paraded down O'Connell Street. McCarthy has suggested

¹⁴ Patrick Hayes, Jim Campbell, *Bloody Sunday: Trauma, Pain & Politics* (London: Pluto Press. 2005) 1

¹⁵ Hayes and Campbell, *Bloody Sunday*, 1

¹⁶ Hayes and Campbell, *Bloody Sunday*, 9

¹⁷ Graham Dawson, 'The Case of Bloody Sunday', in *Memory Ireland: Volume 3 The Famine and the Troubles* edited by Oona Frawley (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014) 197

¹⁸ *Irish Press*, 1 February 1972

¹⁹ *Connacht Tribune*, 4 February 1972

that '1916 commemorations [were] being toned down considerably'.²⁰ In County Galway, Eastertime commemorations were held and 'poor conditions' were blamed for the low attendance at the O'Riordan Memorial in Kinvara, compared to the 'usual large crowd' that attended the Republican plot where the two Loughnane brothers are buried in Shanaglish.²² It appears that the tone of commemoration became more militant in certain quarters. Sinn Féin, now referred to the event as 'Republican Easter Commemorations' with 'a speaker from the six counties', flag bearer, colour party and guard of honour 'drawn from the ranks of the Republican movement in County Galway'.²³ This pronounced display of militarisation and radicalism shown in towns and villages around the country caused considerable unease and deterred many ordinary citizens from attending.

Throughout the rest of the decade, the violence in Northern Ireland appears to have impacted severely upon remembrances of the War of Independence in County Galway. Despite this, local neighbours, friends and members of Sinn Féin still marched to the republican plot in Shanaglish cemetery in honour of the Loughnane brothers at Eastertime, and the annual Mass for Fr Griffin in November, both took place.²⁴ In addition, there were some associated announcements published periodically. One such item was published on 9 February 1976, and it was in response to the death of Pádraig Ó Fathaigh, an IRA veteran.²⁵ At a special meeting of the Old IRA held in Gort to inaugurate a new member, Pat Cloonan, Craughwell, votes of sympathy were passed to the Ó Fathaigh family.²⁶ Ending the short article was the announcement of a fixed commemoration Mass on St Patrick's day with an invitation extended to all attending veterans to wear their medals on the occasion.²⁷ It would seem that it was important

²⁰ McCarthy, *Ireland's 1916 Rising* 278

²¹ For further discussion see McCarthy, *Ireland's 1916 Rising*; Shirley Wrynn, 'Galway and the Easter 1916 Rising: An Investigation of Local Histories, Memories and Heritage Tourism Possibilities'. (Unpublished PhD Thesis Department of Heritage & Tourism, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, 2016). Also for an interesting view on heritage of Northern Ireland see Elizabeth Crooke and Thomas Maguire eds., *Heritage after Conflict* (Oxon: Routledge, 2019)

²² *Tuam Herald*, 18 March 1972 In conversation with John Conneely, Kinvara: Paddy O'Riordan was an active republican with Sinn Féin and although from Galway City he was a major influencer in Kinvara. His death was the result of a motorcycle accident at the age of 23 in 1966. For some years after his death, such was his popularity, local Sinn Féin representatives attempted to memorialise him at Eastertime, however commemorations for the Loughnane brothers always amassed a larger local crowd. It is unknown if O'Riordan is still remembered in Kinvara.

²³ *Tuam Herald*, 18 March 1972

²⁴ *Connacht Tribune*, 7 April 1972

²⁵ *Connacht Tribune*, 12 March 1976

²⁶ *Connacht Tribune*, 12 March 1976

²⁷ *Connacht Tribune*, 12 March 1976

to the War of Independence veterans to remain distinct from those commemorating on a Sinn Féin republican platform.

To the same extent, as the deaths of War of Independence veterans or their relatives occurred, those who knew them took the opportunity to honour their memory by relating their deeds throughout the course of the conflict. Hugh Loughnane, brother of Harry and Pat, died in 1978 and John Fahy Carragh, Gort, died in October 1979. Fahy's funeral was one of the 'largest ever witnessed in the district and was a glowing tribute to the esteem and respect which he enjoyed amongst his neighbours and old comrades.'²⁸ At his graveside Alderman Fintan Coogan, a Fine Gael Galway County Councillor, reminded those present of the sombre events of the period:

when the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries were set loose to pillage, murder and destroy ... the people of the younger generation should know of the murder by the Tans of a young married woman [Eileen Quinn] in South Galway as she stood with her child in her arms at the door of her home. ²⁹

1980s

Decline of First-Hand Living Memory

The following decade, the 1980s, was difficult for the Irish people with unemployment, recession and emigration impinging on every community. The Northern Ireland conflict was still raging and new Provisional IRA 'martyrs' had now taken centre stage amongst the Sinn Féin/republican movement following.³⁰ In a similar vein to the previous decade, the majority of remembrances to the War of Independence appear in the intermittent death notices. However, the *Cork Examiner* reported that the then Taoiseach Charles J Haughey was represented at the funeral of Kerry footballer John Joe Sheehy, a prominent republican and member of the community when the Provisional IRA fired shots over the grave. John Joe Sheehy's political allegiance may explain the presence of the Provisional IRA at the funeral. The report also stated that a political row had broken out and that the Garda Commissioner had been asked to investigate the incident, especially the claim that Gardaí had stepped back and allowed

²⁸ *Connacht Tribune*, 12 October 1979.

²⁹ *Connacht Tribune*, 12 October 1979.

³⁰ *Observer*, 29 September 2002

the shooters to continue.³¹ The significance of this incident is that it could help to explain why commemoration events, previously supported by Sinn Féin, were no longer tolerated. However, other connections with those from the War of Independence also continued to be remembered in death notices. For example, on 1 February 1980, the death occurred of Tom Morrissey. He was brother of Bridget Ruane, Castlelambert, Captain of the Craughwell branch of Cumann na mBan. He was an active participant in the War of Independence and his funeral was well attended. His coffin was draped with the Tricolour and it was followed to the graveside by a large group of family and friends.³² In the same newspaper in the 'Know your Rights' column the writer asked:

Can veterans of War of Independence (1919/21) qualify for free telephone rental or other benefits? Yes, but you must, even after this time-lag, apply for a pension under the Army Service Acts ... You should also get free electricity and [a]TV licence.³³

This was a reference to the difficulty many veterans were experiencing for recognition of their efforts during the conflict. Meanwhile, in contrast to the funeral in Kerry, when Patrick Diskin from Tuam was laid to rest '[m]ilitary honours were rendered by an Army unit from Dun Ui Mhaoiliosa, Renmore'.³⁴ Once again, the families of veterans from the Old IRA would have wanted to avoid any recurrence of controversy during a sensitive time and made efforts to separate the two IRA campaigns.

The following April, there was a large turnout at the wreath-laying ceremonies in both Arbour Hill and Kilmainham Gaol for the Easter commemorations.³⁵ There was no mention, however, of those involved in the War of Independence except for an article in the same newspaper about Tom Barry's experiences and how he had contended that there would be a united Ireland before the century is out.³⁶ In addition, there was a short piece on his wife's (Leslie Bean de Barra) memories of the seven signatories of the Proclamation.³⁷

During this decade those living who fought during the Easter Rising and the War of Independence began to diminish in number as is evident from the death notices. Tom

³¹ *Irish Examiner*, 19 January 1980

³² *Connacht Tribune*, 1 February 1980

³³ *Connacht Tribune*, 1 February 1980

³⁴ *Tuam Herald*, 28 March 1980

³⁵ *Irish Press*, 7 April 07, 1980

³⁶ *Irish Press*, 7 April 07, 1980

³⁷ *Irish Press*, 7 April 07, 1980

Barry died the same year on 2 July 1980.³⁸ Collecting and recording their recollections and memories was critical to a greater understanding of the happenings and events of both conflicts. This is especially true of those women whose part had been ignored and almost forgotten. For example, the death took place of Sister Patricia (Nora) Loughnane on 26 June 1981. The following week the *Connacht Tribune* featured a short editorial on her life and missionary work in Ghana. They also reproduced her recollections, entitled 'Memories of Nights and Days of Terror'.³⁹ This reflection had been written sometime after her brothers' death and listed her movements and thoughts as she searched for her brothers. The memoir is all the more poignant because at eighty-six, she was the last of her siblings to die.⁴⁰

One year later in 1982, John Reynolds, Ballinasloe and Jarlath Hoade, Headford both died.⁴¹ The following year, John (Jack) O'Flaherty, Firpark, Gort was also laid to rest. O'Flaherty was the Commanding Officer of Beagh Company when the Loughnane brothers were killed. His sister, Annie Monahan had been advised by the local Cumann na mBan to warn the thrashers in Shanaglish (home of the Loughnane brothers) to expect a raid. Unfortunately for the brothers, she never made it and met the Cross Tenders full of Black and Tans on their return.⁴² In 1985 the Anglo-Irish Agreement between the British and Irish governments was signed, giving the Republic of Ireland a role in the governance of Northern Ireland. The same year a death notice of Lieutenant, (Dunmore Company), Joe Treacy, Castlefarm, Dunmore was published in the *Irish Press*.⁴³ After his name 'Old IRA' was printed in brackets, once again creating a distinction from the Provisional IRA of the 1980s.

Also in 1985, the song, 'Commandant Louis D'Arcy of The North Galway Brigade' was composed by John Henihan, Tuam in remembrance of the man (see C2 and D8).⁴⁴ Louis D'Arcy, Officer Commanding, Third Battalion had been on the run after a quantity of gelignite and ammunition had been found at his home. His fifteen-year-old brother was also on the run, in fear of his life.⁴⁵ Trying to make an escape to Dublin, D'Arcy was captured at the train station in Oranmore and was immediately handed

³⁸ *Evening Echo*, 2 July 1980

³⁹ *Connaught Tribune*, 3 July 1981.

⁴⁰ *Connacht Tribune*, 3 July 1981

⁴¹ *Irish Examiner*, 14 June 1982, *Tuam Herald*, 21 August 1982

⁴² *Connacht Tribune*, 9 December 1983

⁴³ *Irish Press*, 26 March 1985 No obituaries could be found in regional newspapers

⁴⁴ *Eleven Galway Martyrs* (Tuam: Local Publication, 1985)

⁴⁵ *Irish Independent*, 30 March 1921

over to the Auxiliaries for 'safe custody' by Head Sergeant Murphy.⁴⁶ J. Lowe a temporary cadet, in his evidence to the court of inquiry into D'Arcy's death, stated:

There was three of us on the escort. We were all sitting on the right-hand side of the Crossley with the deceased. When the car stopped on account of a break-down of the ford in front, we pulled in to the left side of the road and immediately the deceased put his foot on the opposite seat and jumped onto the road and started running for a gap in the wall. We called out 'Halt'; he did not halt and we fired at him. He dropped.⁴⁷

When he attended the funeral under great risk, D'Arcy's younger brother was informed that he was no longer a suspect and could return to his home.⁴⁸ This was a small comfort to his grieving mother. Here, in addition to his mother, D'Arcy, is also remembered by his comrades:

Little he dreamt when he left his kind mother,
Little he dreamt when he bade her goodbye,
That an angel of death there awaited his coming,
That alone and unarmed that day he should die.
Farewell, brave Commandant! We never will forget you.
The bright rays of freedom now light up our way.
In spirit you are with us to comfort and cheer us
And hover forever around Clydagh Bay.⁴⁹

The song was later made famous by Matt Keane, a member of a renowned family of musicians in County Galway.⁵⁰ Rebel songs were an integral part of the culture of republicanism in the early twentieth century and as Richard Parfitt argues, 'songs also help to establish who is remembered.'⁵¹ Parfitt also contends that this form of musical culture is part of the 'negotiation and construction of national identity through aspirations to social consensus.'⁵² This argument is well borne out by the recognised appeal of such songs, especially amongst the diaspora.⁵³

The following year, the *Irish Independent* reported the death of Geraldine Plunkett-Dillon, sister of Joseph Mary Plunkett (executed in Kilmainham Gaol) and wife of Thomas Dillon, Department of Chemistry University College Galway. She lived most of her life in County Galway and took an active part in the War of Independence. Her

⁴⁶ <http://theauxiliaries.com/INCIDENTS/D'arcy-shot-mar-21/D'arcy-shooting.html> Accessed 11 November 2019

⁴⁷ <http://theauxiliaries.com/INCIDENTS/D'arcy-shot-mar-21/D'arcy-shooting.html> Accessed 11 November 2019

⁴⁸ *Irish Independent*, 30 March 1921

⁴⁹ *Eleven Galway Martyrs*, 6

⁵⁰ Matt Keane, Muintir Chatháin / The Keane Family, Label Unknown Track 10, 2017 Compact Disk. Also, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9fslShAUFU>

⁵¹ *Irish Times*, 3 June 2020

⁵² Richard Parfitt, *Musical Culture and the Spirit of Irish Nationalism, 1848–1972* (Oxon: Routledge, 2019) 3

⁵³ *Irish Examiner*, 25 March 2016

funeral took place on 15 May 1986 in Glasnevin Cemetery.⁵⁴ The same year a satirical ballad was published by Breandán Ó hEithir, 'The Gentle Black and Tan', in the forward to his book *The Begrudger's Guide to Irish Politics*.⁵⁵

Croke Park and Bloody Sunday
Was our hero's greatest test.
The spectators on the terraces
Nigh impossible to miss.
With salt tears his eyes were blinded
And down his cheeks they ran,
So he only shot Mick Hogan
The gentle Black and Tan.⁵⁶

The ballad is reputed to have been written to provide anti-nationalists with a song of their own. Ó hEithir's ballad also satirises the anti-nationalist revisionist historians of this period by telling the story of the 'solder who carried history's can'.⁵⁷

Three more IRA veterans died in 1988, namely Tom King, 10 January; Michael Feeney, 18 March; and Peter Forde, 16 September.⁵⁸ These and other deaths that occurred during and after this period meant that the first hand living memory of events was slowly fading. Remembrance more often than not, would now be conducted by those in reflection instead of by those who lived through the conflict. The remembrance of past conflicts entered a new phase, which would see successive governments seek to control the memory of, primarily Easter 1916, but also the narrative surrounding the subsequent contested history.

1990s

The 1990s brought about vast changes in Ireland when, as Dermot Keogh posited, 'the buoyant global economy provided the momentum for the Irish economic miracle'.⁵⁹ These external factors included the European Social model, which encouraged a growth in employment. European Union structural and cohesion funds were 'used to good effect', foreign direct investment (particularly from North America) increased and communications improved (as evident from the expansion of the mobile network

⁵⁴ *Irish Independent*, 15 May 1986

⁵⁵ Breandán Ó hEithir, *The Begrudger's Guide to Irish Politics* (Dublin: Poolbeg Press, 1986)

⁵⁶ As cited *Galway Advertiser*, 27 August 2020

⁵⁷ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxVW3F3TI_3c Accessed 21 March 2020

⁵⁸ *Connacht Tribune*, 15 January 1988, *City Tribune*, 18 March 1988, *City Tribune*, 16 September 1988

⁵⁹ Dermot Keogh, 'Ireland at the Turn of the century: 1994–2001' in *The Course of Irish History* edited by T.W. Moody and F.X. Martin (Cork: Mercier Press, 2001) 321

and enhancement of internet connections).⁶⁰ This induced a greater variety of employment, particularly in areas such as the computer industry. As wages increased so too did the living standards for most of the population. However, some social deprivation was still prevalent. One change that many did not foresee occurred when the people of Ireland elected their first female President, Mary Robinson in December 1990. This role had hitherto been almost exclusively retained by former Fianna Fáil senior ministers. It was also the decade when the efforts of the Irish, British and US governments 'collectively saw peace [in Northern Ireland] as a realisable goal.'⁶¹ However, this was not a smooth transition; negotiations needed a level head and endless patience. State commemoration of the War of Independence was not at the top of the agenda. Earlier in the year, another woman, Mary Connolly (nee Fahy), died in the home of her son in Kilcolgan. Mary was a prominent Cumann na mBan member and was remembered during her funeral for the essential work during the War of Independence, such as carrying dispatches to and from locations where Volunteers were hiding out.⁶²

Pat Holland, the then curator of the County Museum in Clonmel, observed that the loss of those connected to the War of Independence meant that some of their individual memories would be gone with them. He therefore set the museum a challenge and put out a call not to dump old items from the attic.⁶³ Amongst the items he requested were accounts of IRA executions of spies during the War of Independence, political matter that 'may never go on display.'⁶⁴ This was a real effort to confront the more problematic accounts of the conflict. Those who had committed such crimes often went on to be pillars in the community. Being reminded of their actions could have caused both public and private upset. Nonetheless, attempts such as this were beginning to unlock some of the more personal items that were kept by families, as the cultural value of items and memorabilia became more apparent amongst a new generation. Regardless of political persuasion, families value their ancestors' narratives; items on sideboards, in shoe boxes or attics bring life to these stories. The

⁶⁰ Paul Sweeney, 'The Irish Experience of Economic Lift Off' at *A Colloquium Celebrating Ireland's Presidency of the European Union, Montreal 27 May 2004*

⁶¹ Dermot Keogh, 'Ireland at the Turn of the century: 1994–2001' eds T.W Moody and F.X. Martin *The Course of Irish History* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2001) 321

⁶² *Connacht Tribune*, 16 February 1990

⁶³ *The Nationalist (Tipperary)*, 13 February 1993

⁶⁴ *The Nationalist (Tipperary)*, 13 February 1993

ongoing conflict in the North, however, caused some reluctance amongst the public.

In 1993, several bombs and shootings by both the IRA and the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF) in a tit-for-tat conflict situation prompted a flurry of talks in an effort to secure a peace settlement.⁶⁵ The *Irish Press* reported on one initiative when Tomás Mac Giolla, Lord Mayor of Dublin, refused a request by Republican Sinn Féin to reserve a room in the Mansion House to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the first Dáil. The room had been booked that weekend for a wedding fair.⁶⁶ Mac Giolla had earlier split from the Workers' Party to form the Democratic Left Party and they were holding a commemoration of their own. It was reported that there was a constraint placed 'on the availability of Mansion House facilities for those who support what is happening in the north'.⁶⁷ It seemed that, unlike his predecessor back in 1919, he determined that only those who promoted a peaceful agenda could use the Mansion House.

However, the wider issue of a State commemoration was problematic and not easily resolved. While various stakeholders sat in peace talks, there was a reluctance to undermine the efforts being made. Commenting on the State's position on commemoration (particularly after 1969), Eunan O'Halpin has observed to,

celebrate twentieth-century Ireland's revolutionary history and risk being accused of promoting the legitimacy of the physical force tradition over that of non-violent politics, and thereby of stirring the Northern Ireland pot; or steer away from all but the most unavoidable or uncontroversial anniversaries, acknowledging them only in minimalist fashion, and be accused of forgetting those who fought to make Ireland free.⁶⁸

Meanwhile some local interest persisted in specific incidents that left a lasting traumatic memory. Padraic O'Laoi's book *Fr Michael Griffin: 1892-1920* was released on 6 May 1994, in the 'hope' of explaining some of the mysteries surrounding his death.⁶⁹ The book was launched in County Galway to facilitate the ongoing interest in the events surrounding the death of Fr Griffin, something which the author could not satisfy with the many talks he delivered. From time to time, the loss of those associated with the War of Independence continued to be intermittently reported in the

⁶⁵ Keogh 'Ireland at the Turn of the century', 321

⁶⁶ *Irish Press*, 17 January 1994

⁶⁷ *Irish Press*, 17 January 1994

⁶⁸ Eunan O'Halpin, 'Commemoration and Memorialisation in Independent Ireland' in *The Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland*, edited by Eugenio F. Biagini, Mary E. Daly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019) 596

⁶⁹ *Galway City Tribune*, 6 May 1994

newspapers and with them small snippets of information. One example, can be seen from the case of Edward O'Halloran, Oughterard, who died aged 101 in 1994. He was buried with full military honours provided by a standing colour party from Renmore. He was also a World War I veteran and was considered a 'crackshot' because of his shooting accuracy. It was this level of experience that led him to be sent to Connemara to train the Volunteers there.⁷⁰ This unfortunately landed him in trouble when an unknown person informed on him and not only was his pension revoked, he spent three years in the Curragh prison camp.⁷¹ Around the country more death notices appeared in local and national newspapers, which regrettably signified that first-hand living memories had evermore declined.⁷²

Sinn Féin's Easter 1916 commemorations on Sunday 16 April 1995 once again acknowledged the Loughnane brothers on the 75th anniversary of their death at a wreath-laying ceremony at Shanaglish cemetery. Likewise, on 17 November, the *Galway City Tribune* featured an article covering the remembrance of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the death of Fr Griffin.⁷³ The local community had arranged a parade from Barna National School to Cloch Scaoilte, where his body was found. Additionally, the same weekend the people of his native Gurteen placed a wreath on his grave and after Mass, they held a tree-planting ceremony 'with refreshments provided by the Ace of Hearts ladies.'⁷⁴ At their commemoration of Fr Griffin, Sinn Féin Poblachtach organised a parade from Barna National School to the Fr Griffin Monument in Cloch Scaoilte.⁷⁵ The President of Republican Sinn Féin, Ruairí Ó Brádaigh used the event to criticise the stance of Provisional Sinn Féin in the current political process and their demand for talks. Claiming that the talks were firmly based on the continuation of British rule in Ireland, Ó Brádaigh stated that loyal republicans would oppose the British government as long as 'their illegal and immoral rule continued in Ireland' a situation that could bring about an armed revolution.⁷⁶ The contrasting events were at opposite extremes in their reflection of Griffin's life, a ceremony of tree-planting

⁷⁰ *Connacht Tribune*, 1 July 1994

⁷¹ *Connacht Tribune*, 1 July 1994

⁷² The last surviving IRA veteran, Dan Keating, died at the age of 105 in October 2007. At the age of eighteen, Dan joined the Boherbue B Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Kerry Brigade, BBC News, 3 October 2007

⁷³ *Galway City Tribune*, 17 November 1995

⁷⁴ *Galway City Tribune*, 17 November 1995

⁷⁵ Sinn Féin Poblachtach is the result of a split in the Sinn Féin party, for a more extensive explanatory description of republican parties and affiliations see <https://ansionnachfionn.com/2017/04/20/a-list-of-current-irish-republican-parties-and-organisations/> Accessed 27 February 2020

⁷⁶ *Connacht Tribune*, 24 November 1995

symbolising life and rebirth and, at the other extreme, a call to arms.

The 75th anniversary of Bloody Sunday (Dublin), which fell on 21 November 1995, was briefly mentioned in the *Connacht Tribune*. The report acknowledged the County Galway man William Cullinane, twenty years old of Cahernashelleeney, who had fled Croke Park when the shots began only to be shot and killed on his return to All Hollows College, where he was studying for the priesthood.⁷⁷

Two bombing incidents in 1996, on 9 February in Canary Wharf and on 15 June in the city of Manchester by the IRA, once again triggered widespread condemnation of violent tactics against civilian communities. The year coincided with the 75th anniversary of the Truce. However, a year later, the *Irish Times* journalist Dermot Kelly reported on the complications of deciding an appropriate date for a State commemoration. He outlined the debate between Bertie Ahern and John Bruton over the differing anniversaries attributed to the foundation of the State:

The Treaty was signed on December 6th, 1921. On December 5th, the Irish Free State Constitution Act was approved by the British parliament, and on December 6th the Free State Constitution came into force. Earlier, Mr Ahern asked Mr Bruton why he did not mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Free State with a State event. The Taoiseach said the Government had approved the issue of 12 stamps this year to mark the event, adding that there were differing views on when the State was established ... [he] did not wish to let 1997 pass without marking in some appropriate way the remarkable achievements of the 1922 provisional government ... he added that a former Fianna Fáil Taoiseach Mr Jack Lynch, had stated in 1971 that he did not accept 1922 as the appropriate date for the foundation of the State. Mr Lynch had believed that the appropriate date was the meeting of the first Dáil.⁷⁸

No date was decided. In June 1997, an election was held and with no party achieving a clear majority, discussions resulted in a government formed by a Fianna Fáil-Progressive Democrat coalition backed by four independent TDs. In addition, Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin was the first Sinn Féin TD to take his seat in Leinster House for the Cavan–Monaghan constituency. RTÉ's coverage from the period stated that prior to the election, Sinn Féin preferred a Fianna Fáil government and was likely to support Bertie Ahern as Taoiseach.⁷⁹ The Good Friday Agreement was signed ten months later on, 10 April 1998. It formed the basis of restoring devolution to

⁷⁷ *Connacht Tribune*, 1 December 1995, see also *Connacht Tribune*, 27 November 1920

⁷⁸ *Irish Times*, 30 April 1997

⁷⁹ <https://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/688-elections/700-general-election-1997/139404-election-success-for-independents/> Accessed 27 February 2020

Northern Ireland and with it the hope of a lasting peace. In Northern Ireland, power-sharing between nationalists and unionists was hard won and a new way to remember and commemorate or re-imagine historic events from a shared perspective began to emerge.

An unexpected discovery on 3 July 1998 solved the mysterious disappearance of the primary school teacher, Patrick (Padraig) Joyce (Fig. 8.3). It was rumoured that Joyce had been shot as a Black and Tan spy during the War of Independence, but the location of his burial had remained a mystery for decades (see B16). The discovery was made by a man searching for artefacts adjacent to Barna Golf course came across a surprisingly well-preserved wooden rectangular box. Its resemblance to the shape of a coffin caused him to immediately inform the local Garda Síochána of the find.⁸⁰

Figure 8.3. Photograph of detectives at the location where the body of Patrick Joyce was found.
Source: *Connacht Tribune* 10 July 1998



Joyce's family had long since left the area and despite repeated requests from the *Connacht Tribune*, they refused to comment.⁸¹ His pocket watch, glasses, chalk and some coins were also recovered and remained with the Garda Technical Bureau in Dublin until collected by his family.⁸² Many of those who had been involved in the incident, including Mícheál Ó Droighneáin, the man who later took responsibility for the killing, would have remained in the same community for several decades.⁸³ Having

⁸⁰ *Connacht Tribune*, 10 July 1998

⁸¹ *Connacht Tribune*, 10 July 1998

⁸² *Irish Times*, 13 July 1998

⁸³ Mícheál Ó Droighneáin, 9 April 1950, BMH, WS No. 1718

such sensitive wounds opened and closed must have caused an emotive response from the families of both the victim and the perpetrators. Seventy-eight years after Joyce was murdered, his ghost was finally laid to rest.

2000s

At the outset of the new millennium, Ireland was economically booming. In turn, this had an effect of increased personal income which launched the so-called Celtic Tiger era. Many communities during the Celtic Tiger era felt the benefit of greater disposable income. In conjunction with the success of the ongoing peace agreement, this may help to explain a certain indifference to commemoration of conflict. However, as the new century commenced, so too did the impetus to reconcile differences with old enemies and reimagine Ireland's history as a shared one. The relationship between Britain and Ireland was never better and the opportunity for a more integrated and reflective approach to commemoration presented itself. However, the first attempts at a more inclusive commemoration from the government of the day, Fianna Fáil, were met with some with scepticism and even fear in 2001.⁸⁴

Rehabilitated Memories: The Reburial of Thomas Whelan, 2001

The cynicism and controversy that ensued was apropos of the reinternment of the remains of 'The Forgotten Ten' from Mountjoy Gaol to Glasnevin Cemetery. The characterisation refers to a group of young men who were executed by the British during the War of Independence. Their bodies were subsequently placed in the prison graveyard. Yet, despite repeated requests from their families, they were so-called 'Forgotten' due to the inert responses from successive governments. The photograph shown in Fig. 8.4, whilst obviously staged, presents Patrick Moran and Thomas Whelan shaking hands, as the prison guard Lester Collins looks on. All the men are smiling, which is difficult to comprehend considering their impending executions. Is it possible that this was intended to be a display of fearless courage or is it possible that they had not heard about the death sentences when the picture was taken? Those buried in the

⁸⁴ *The Guardian*, 15 October 2001; *Daily Telegraph* 15 October 2001; *Irish Times*, 15 October 2001.

Mountjoy plot after the executions were: Frank Flood, Bernard Ryan, Patrick Doyle, Kevin Barry, Thomas Bryan (all from Dublin); Patrick Moran (Roscommon); Thomas (Tommie) Whelan (Clifden, County Galway); Thomas Traynor (Tullow); Edmond Foley and Patrick Maher (Galbally, County Limerick). Tommie Whelan, from Galway, always protested his innocence.

Figure 8.4. Patrick Moran and Thomas Whelan shaking hands, overlooked by Lester Collins (prison guard) at Mountjoy Gaol days before their execution.

Source: National Library of Ireland



His good-natured demeanour and fine singing voice made him stand out amongst his family and friends both at home in Clifden and when working in Dublin City.⁸⁵ His mother was devastated to hear of his arrest and execution, even more so when his body could not be returned home to Galway.

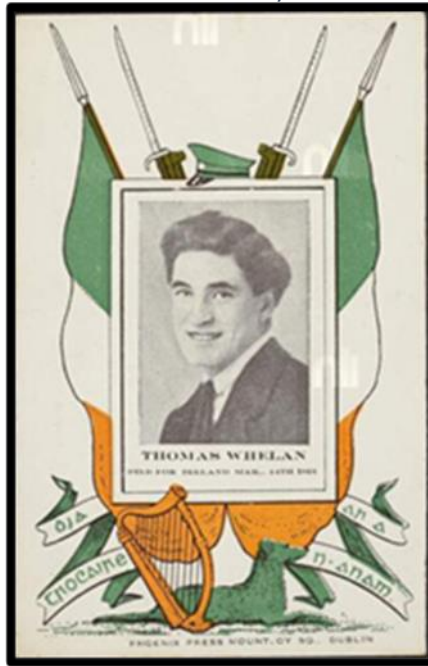
The families of these young men had been campaigning for over eighty years to have them disinterred and granted what they described as ‘a decent burial.’⁸⁶ When the bodies were eventually exhumed in 2001, only Patrick Maher would be returned to his home town. The remaining nine were brought to the Republican plot in Glasnevin cemetery. The state funeral was an emotional occasion for the hundreds of relatives

⁸⁵ Noel Mannion, *Clifden: A Reflection of 200 Years* https://issuu.com/clifden2012/docs/clifden_200_final Accessed 29 January 2020

⁸⁶ *Irish Times*, 15 October 2001.

as differing reports of between five and seven thousand people lined the streets of Dublin.⁸⁷ Outside the General Post Office where the main engagement of 1916 took place, 'the cortege paused as a lone piper played a lament.'⁸⁸ The lithographic card (Fig. 8.5) with Irish flags and harp surrounding Whelan's smiling face in the middle positions him amongst the martyrs of the War of Independence.

Figure 8.5. Thomas Whelan featured on a lithographic card, text printed underneath image . Thomas Whelan died for Ireland Mar. [March] 14th 1921
Source: National Library of Ireland



With a Defence Force's Guard of Honour, the coffins were escorted firstly to Dublin's Pro-cathedral, where President Mary McAleese, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern and other dignitaries joined the families in prayer and then to their final resting place. Ahern, who delivered the oration at the graveside, spoke about the mandate for independence that was received from the General Election of 1918:

Dáil Éireann was formed from those who were elected ... they all understood that war would be the consequence of the Declaration. They were satisfied, if necessary, to fight to liberate the country. The big powers had said that it was for the small nations that the First World War was fought ... The people of Ireland were determined that the principle of national self-determination must also be extended to the Irish nation ... We all understand how much we owe these 10 young men and all the Volunteers. Their sacrifice is not being forgotten by the people of Ireland, and it never will ... War, for whatever cause and whatever circumstances, always has cruel consequences ... If an Irish national democracy could have been established peacefully, through elections, or by passive resistance, that would have been preferable. But a

⁸⁷ *Irish Times*, 15 October 2001.

⁸⁸ *The Guardian*, 15 October 2001,

realistic reading of history shows government determination to prevent that, by force, if necessary.⁸⁹

Ahern, directing his comments at instigators of violence, strongly condemned anybody who burdened the memory of these or any Volunteers 'long after their deaths' with stretching the mandate of 1918 'far beyond its natural term'.⁹⁰ His statement finished with a reminder to the future:

Today's ceremonies relate to the circumstances that led to the foundation of this state, and the sacrifices involved ... We all look to the future in which the people of Ireland can conduct warm and friendly relations with each other and with our neighbours in Great Britain on a basis of equality and partnership.⁹¹

The *Connacht Tribune* reported that the ceremony in Glasnevin was well received by the Whelan and Moran families. The report remarked that both Thomas and Patrick had been 'great friends in life, and they now laid next to each other' in death. The report went on to say that the families were treated with 'the highest respect ... [they] were overwhelmed that such terrific crowds turned out'.⁹² The atmosphere that surrounded this event was one of reconciliation as the relatives of the dead prayed for 'the British victims of the War of Independence and for prison officers past and present'.⁹³

Although not the focus of this research, the commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the 1916 Rising in Dublin City in 2006 is essential to understanding the progression back to large-scale state commemorations of the revolutionary era. Attendance was reportedly estimated at up to 120,000 which, according to Miriam Lord, brought a misting to the eye such was the outpouring of emotion as those 'who lined the streets of Dublin found a common bond, united in a sense of national pride and belonging'.⁹⁴ The whole event was necessitated by what Kate Nevin from the Commemorations Unit explained as being 'the strategic vision of future needs'.⁹⁵ In a communication to the present writer, she noted that 'the interest to make arrangements for the 90th anniversary of the Rising arose from concerns re planning applications and two very

⁸⁹ *Irish Times*, 15 October 2001.

⁹⁰ *Irish Times*, 15 October 2001.

⁹¹ *Irish Times*, 15 October 2001.

⁹² *Connacht Tribune*, 19 October 2001

⁹³ *Connacht Tribune*, 19 October 2001

⁹⁴ *Irish Independent*, 17 April 2006

⁹⁵ Kate Nevin, *pers comm*, 25 February 2020

large construction projects envisaged for O'Connell St on either side of the GPO'.⁹⁶ Cognisant of the inclusive policy, special arrangements were introduced to mark the 90th anniversary of the Easter Rising and also the 90th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. In attendance was the President Mary McAleese and Taoiseach Bertie Ahern who took their seats amongst several other TDs and notable guests. Michael McDowell, the then Minister for Justice and grandson of Irish revolutionary Eoin MacNeill, suggested that the wisdom of holding such commemorations was questioned, as the Rising itself had been. However, he agreed that, it was the results that counted. He went on to say that 'We have to remember that there is one State, one Army, one Constitution.'⁹⁷ In what Guy Beiner refers to as the 'Irish preoccupation with triumphalist commemoration of traumatic experience', McDowell's self-assured statement came from a confident government minister at the peak of an economic boom.⁹⁸ The Social Democratic and Labour Party leader Mark Durkan took the opportunity to add his voice to the day's events,

It is good to see the people reclaiming the memory of 1916 in a positive way. The task of national reconciliation in many ways can be summed up in that challenge of how to do that, because carrying our divided history is very important and it is part of making sure we have a shared future.⁹⁹

According to Wrynn, the 90th anniversary 'signified a new departure in commemorating the Rising as the previous forty years of political, academic and public revisions were laid to rest and the historic event was reclaimed as the turning point in Irish history'.¹⁰⁰ Political sentiments on commemoration now included words such as Bertie Ahern's 'remembrance, reconciliation and renewal'.¹⁰¹ His speech confirmed that this generation still cherished 'the ideals of the courageous men and women who fought for Ireland in Easter Week and during the War of Independence'. However, to illustrate the new principles of reconciliation he quoted Michael Mallin's final letter to his wife: 'I find no fault with the soldiers or police. I forgive them from the bottom of my heart. Pray for all the souls that fell in this fight, Irish and English.'¹⁰² Indeed, for a self-proclaimed staunch republican with a desire for a '32-county united Ireland', this

⁹⁶ Kate Nevin, *pers comm*, 25 February 2020

⁹⁷ Cited in McCarthy, *Ireland's 1916 Rising*, 381.

⁹⁸ Guy Beiner, 'Between Trauma and Triumphalism: The Easter Rising, the Somme, and the Crux of Deep Memory in Modern Ireland' in *Journal of British Studies* Vol. 46, No. 2 (April 2007) 367

⁹⁹ Cited in McCarthy, *Ireland's 1916*, 384

¹⁰⁰ Wrynn, 'Galway & the Easter 1916 Rising: 349

¹⁰¹ *Irish Examiner*, 17 April 2006

¹⁰² *Irish Examiner*, 17 April 2006

revealed a willingness to forgive.¹⁰³ The success of the day could be seen on many levels, in his statement, the Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny wanted to take time to ‘consider the wider implications of today’s event, as we drift towards the centenary celebrations of the 1916 Rising in 10 years’.¹⁰⁴

In the meantime, at a local level in Rosmuc, County Galway, protests by Coiste Ionad an Phiarsaigh were held on Easter Monday at the ‘inaction of the Government, over a promise made ... to develop an interpretive centre close’ to Pearse’s cottage.¹⁰⁵ Once again, this emphasised the importance of remembrance at local level. Communities also wanted to re-establish connections with historic leaders, and Pearse’s significance to Galway’s revolutionary heritage was considered a strong symbolic link. During the War of Independence, this symbolic significance was exemplified when, in 1921, the cottage was burned down by the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries. Although this was a direct reprisal, targeting this cottage in particular was a direct attack on Pearse’s memory within the community. Without communities placing value on such historic sites, a climate of indifference would be inevitable, and the further loss to the cultural heritage within these areas would result. In reflecting on the 90th anniversary it became evident, according to Nevin, that:

the centenary of the World War would require a significant contribution from Ireland to meet expectations with regard to British-Irish relations (both North-South and East-West) and also in relation to the strong European commitment to address this painful shared heritage. It was recognised that the narrative of the Irish experience through the World War and revolutionary period required a comprehensive, inclusive and authentic exploration of the period from the final phases of the Home Rule movement, through Ulster Volunteers and Irish Volunteers, import of arms, descent into war, the Rising, the Somme, Messines, the Armistice, the 1918 election, the 1st Dáil, the IRA, the independence war, the truce, partition of Ireland and the Civil War.¹⁰⁶

The change in Ireland that had occurred over the previous decades was not just social or economic but a political change surrounding commemoration and memorialisation. Critically, the new awareness recognised the need to explore those areas of the narrative that were contested and not as straightforward as previously thought. The commemorations that followed would use this discourse to construct a legacy of

¹⁰³ *Irish Times*, 30 September 2018

¹⁰⁴ *Irish Examiner*, 17 April 2006

¹⁰⁵ *Connacht Tribune*, 21 April 2006

¹⁰⁶ Email from Nevin, to Kavanagh, 25 February 2020

collective remembrances.

The political leaders of Ireland gathered at Dublin's Mansion House in 2009 to commemorate the ninetieth anniversary of First Dáil. As former Taoisigh, 'members of the judiciary, and relatives of the members of the First Dáil' attended this joint sitting of the Oireachtas, the mood, as RTÉ intimated, was 'solemn and dignified'.¹⁰⁷ Two of the attendees at the event were representatives from Galway, Michael D. Higgins (Galway West Labour Party TD) and Éamon Ó Cuív (grandson of Eamon de Valera and Galway West Fianna Fáil TD). Each party leader took to the podium to address the audience and reflected on the lessons that have been learnt in relation to past governments. In his speech, the Taoiseach, Brian Cowen, stated 'that Ireland learned early that the world can be a lonely place for small states. This lesson is as valid today in the depths of a global economic crisis as it was in 1919.'¹⁰⁸ Later that same year, the Irish economy was plunged into a severe depression. Cowen said it 'was the most difficult year of his political life'.¹⁰⁹ It placed any opinions or decisions regarding commemoration far down the political agenda. Nonetheless, Ireland was heading towards a period of commemorative milestones concerning events that had occurred a century before. In the years that followed the shape of a commemorative strategy for the revolutionary era began to emerge.

2010s and Early 2020s

The Decade of Centenaries Programme 2012–2023

The Decade of Centenaries programme (also referred to as the Decade of Commemorations) was initiated in 2012, aiming to 'commemorate each step that Ireland took between 1912 and 1922 in a tolerant, inclusive and respectful way' whilst endeavouring to create a legacy of fresh narratives and initiatives to reflect

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/920-first-dail-eireann-1919/289597-90th-anniversary-of-the-first-dail/>
Accessed 29 November 2019

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/920-first-dail-eireann-1919/289597-90th-anniversary-of-the-first-dail/>
Accessed 29 November 2019.

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.rte.ie/news/2009/1221/125640-politics/> Accessed 27 November 2019 The context of this statement was the publication of The Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse Report; ongoing controversy into Anglo Irish Bank hidden loans; unemployment levels rapidly rising; former Press Secretary to Fianna Fáil Frank Dunlop was arrested; colloquially dubbed 'An Bord Snip Nua', a Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes published their controversial report; the Murphy Report of the Commission of Investigation into the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin was published; and large scale floods hit the country, County Galway and County Cork was severely affected.

contemporary society.¹¹⁰ The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, alongside an Expert Advisory Group on Commemorations (AG) formulated the programme for commemoration in the lead-up to the Decade of Centenaries. As mentioned, the programme focused on several revolutionary events that occurred during the period 1912–1923, which complemented the annual state commemorations of national historic events.¹¹¹ The guidance from the Advisory Group recommended two distinct phases.¹¹²

Phase One encompassed both national and community commemorative events covering the years 2012–2016. These commemorative events involved talks, lectures, symposia, history festivals, and exhibitions on key historic episodes identified by the Advisory Group. Some of the topics included Home Rule, the Signing of the Ulster Covenant, the Dublin Lockout, Gunrunning, World War I, and the story of Roger Casement. Elements pertaining to the Second Phase 2018—2023 are discussed later in this chapter.

However, one incredibly significant launch during 2013 under the Programme was the announcement of the first release of files from The Military Service Pensions Collection (MSPC). Over 9,600 files under three headings—Individual Applications, Organisations and Membership and Administration—were made available to the public online. Files relating to individuals applications contained details of their military activities (1916–1923) and of their social lives following peace. Administration files and material associated with the membership of various organisations such as the Irish Republican Army, Fianna Éireann and Cumann an mBan, offered a ‘vivid contextual background to the entire collection’.¹¹³ Under the section, ‘Administration files’, another set of miscellaneous documents included, documents such as the process of invitations requests, changes of address and curious complaints surrounding the annual commemorative Mass held at Arbour Hill in memory of Easter 1916. However, of particular significance is the content relating to women’s role in the revolutionary period and their attempts to be recognised as participants of the conflict. Many of the

¹¹⁰ John Gibney, “Decade of Centenaries’ website launched’ in *History Ireland* Issue 1 (January/February 2014), News, Volume 22

¹¹¹ <https://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/about/> Accessed 15 October 2019

¹¹² Note: initially the AG had only professional historians appointed to the group. At a later stage, record custodians (both librarians and archivists) and cultural practitioners were appointed

¹¹³ <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/en/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/release-history/first-release>

Pension Applications were written in the years after the foundation of the Free State and highlights the ingenuity of their agency whilst also illuminates the present dire circumstances some find themselves in. In the words of Marie Coleman, the Military Service Pensions collection is 'probably the most comprehensive source we will ever have for charting the role of women in the Irish revolution'.¹¹⁴ For many of these women, their anti-Treaty stance prevented them from even applying and thereby not receiving the appropriate recognition they deserved. Over time, acknowledgement of their contribution had greatly diminished to almost insignificance, and eventually there was a tendency to interpret the contributions as mere acts of maternal instinct or domesticity. This failure to recognise the contribution of women is now being challenged by some historians, as is the previous held notion of little or no sexual violence perpetrated against women during the War of Independence. Women received a type of piecemeal commemorative coverage, unlike those men mentioned previously. Their contribution was forgotten, even lost from collective memory. Why? Margaret Ward, a historian who has significantly contributed to the research of women during this period, argued that it was because women had,

been so marginal in the consciousness of those who have researched events, their significance has remained hidden within historical records, waiting for the understanding of someone who wants to know what women did, what they thought, and how they were affected by the upheavals of the past century.¹¹⁵

As shown in Chapter 2, more and more historians have been producing research centred on the agency of women during the revolutionary period. In addition, a recent increase in the number of papers presented at conferences on the subject of 'Gender Studies' and 'violence towards women' has expanded this debate. More recently, an online initiative of the Decade of Centenaries commemorative programme, Mná 100, was developed to 'document women in our history, particularly their contribution during the Irish Revolutionary period, 1912–1923'.¹¹⁶

Despite this, a certain amount of catch up is evident. For example, in the context of County Galway, the movements, activities and deployments of women were often poorly recorded, with only sporadic, disjointed references surviving. Because of this,

¹¹⁴ Marie Coleman, 'Compensating Irish Female Revolutionaries, 1916-1923' in *Women's History Review* Vol 26, 2017 Issue 6, 915

¹¹⁵ Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 1983) 2.

¹¹⁶ <https://www.mna100.ie/about-mna-100/> Accessed 1 June 2022

it is all but impossible to demonstrate their full contribution within a normal chronological narrative. Therefore, it is no wonder that Galway women that participated during the War of Independence are poorly represented in historical narratives. However, memory studies, as a multidisciplinary field, has assisted in the reassessment of 'the forgotten', and what is meant by 'the forgotten'. Who is remembered and how, will always spark debate and establish dialogue. Contemporary research trends have shown that collective memory should continually come under scrutiny especially in its assessment of what comprises cultural identity, and how this in turn should be exhibited within community spaces. This, after all, is how a living, ever changing community fully embraces its cultural heritage, albeit sometimes contested. Thus it is fitting to include a female narrative and analysis in this chapter.

Re-remembering Women

The amount of attention paid to recording the memories of women or indeed memorialising the role of women during the War of Independence has been meagre. Yet, as already stated, until fairly recently, the historiographical record of Irish women's history has also been poor, and may have contributed to the complete inequality of recording such memories. The wider debate (too extensive to include here) on gender, feminist or women's histories produces some stimulating observations about the revolutionary years.¹¹⁷ Cliona Murphy, for example, has stated that it is 'ironic considering the narrowness of the history that has been at the centre of the dispute – nationalist history. What has been perceived as revolutionary in Irish historiography is merely taking a new angle on an old problem'.¹¹⁸ Instead, she offers, and one that is most pertinent to this chapter, is the example of revisionist history which had an 'impact on the discipline as a whole internationally, has been the attempt

¹¹⁷ The debate surrounds the question whether women historians, are historians of women or feminist historians or should it be gender studies by gender historians or 'separatist', a term for women only writing on women issues. Many female historians refute the latter. For some examples, see David Fitzpatrick 'Women, Gender and the Writing of Irish History' in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 107 (May 1991), 267–273; Cliona Murphy 'Women's History, Feminist History, or Gender History?' in the *Irish Review (Cork)*, No. 12 (Spring – Summer, 1992), 21–26; Catriona Kennedy 'Women and Gender in *The Princeton History of Modern Ireland* edited by Richard Bourke, Ian McBride (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016) 361–381. Also, the issue of gender-based violence has now become the subject of a burgeoning research field with reports from global conflicts of women and young girls treated as weapons of war. See Kirsten Campbell 'Producing Knowledge in the Field of Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict Research: Objects, Methods, Politics, and Gender Justice Methodology' in *Social Politics* (2018) Volume 25 Number 4

¹¹⁸ Murphy, 'Women's History', 21.

to put women into history', to in effect, re-remember them.¹¹⁹ Whilst the examples heretofore have been in other countries such as United States and Britain, in the last few decades Irish historians have begun to fill this dearth in women's history, especially histories surrounding this period.

This continuing body of research permeates through to facilitate this focus on the women in County Galway, who contributed to or were directly involved in incidents during the War of Independence. Fundamentally, the consequences of the sporadic nature of recording the involvement of the women of County Galway has resulted in such lamentable documentation that only a careful reconsideration of those histories would suffice to address several lacunae. Even though brief references were discovered in various areas during research, it is the release of female pension files held in MSPC that has specifically documented references of the movements of Galway women in greater detail. Coleman has further stressed the importance of such a collection:

it will be one of the most detailed archival collections for charting the role of women in any national revolution that will cover the activities undertaken by women as well as the subsequent treatment of female veterans by the state.¹²⁰

Nonetheless, it is not quite that straightforward to simply fit the information within these female pension files into what Valiulis has referred to as the 'traditional patriarchal historical narrative.'¹²¹ This is primarily because, as female veterans, they were originally rejected in their claims. Consequently, their petition for recognition has become a fundamental element in the recovery of their memories. Michael Keane, Project Archivist clarified that 'The 1924 [Military Service Pensions] Act had, through its non-recognition of the service provided by members of Cumann na mBan ensured the almost total exclusion of women.'¹²² The only exception was Bridget Lyons, recognised in her role as army doctor. During the final stages of the bill, at a Seanad Éireann debate on Monday 28 July 1924, Colonel Maurice Moore as a member of the Seanad, requested that the wording should be changed to include either sex.¹²³ The

¹¹⁹ Murphy, 'Women's History', 21.

¹²⁰ Marie Coleman, 'Compensating Irish Female Revolutionaries, 1916–1923' in *Women's History Review*, 2016

¹²¹ Maryann Gialanella Valiulis ed., *Gender and Power in Irish History* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009) 2

¹²² Michael Keane, 'Introduction to the release of the Brigade Activity Files Series', *The Military Service (1919–1923) Pensions Collection: The Brigade Activity Reports* (Ireland: Department of Defence, 2018) 13.

¹²³ As a member of an aristocratic Irish family, Moore had been afforded many of the luxuries of his birth. Later, he became appalled at the civil rights violations he witnessed while serving with the Connaught Rangers in the Boer War. After his return to Ireland he was appointed to the provisional committee of the Irish Volunteers

President objected stating that the term 'person' would suffice. However, Colonel Moore was obstinate in his request and he therefore challenged the committee:

Will the President accept that? It is very well known that women worked with extraordinary vigour and enthusiasm during the whole of that time. They sacrificed themselves more than men. The men would not have been able to carry on the business without them in many cases. Many of these women have suffered in mind and body as a result of this, and to a certain extent are broken down from the work they did. I think it is a great hardship that they should be excluded, if they are excluded, and I understand they are really meant to be excluded from this Bill.¹²⁴

Women were eventually included in the 1934 Act introduced by a Fianna Fáil government. Unfortunately, until all the application files have been processed, a final figure for successful applicants cannot be determined. However, those who were eventually approved did so only after a weary campaign by political representations, referee recommendations, proof of medical complexities, or extreme poverty. They also had to prove a continuous service of a military nature under the following criteria:

In charge of dispatches in a dispatch centre in an active service area or acting as a necessary link in an important dispatch line ... carrying ... constantly ... through dangerous areas.

Important service in connection with places used as a headquarters in an active service area ... Brigade or Battalion Headquarters or for rest purposes between engagements by a column.

In charge of dumps where a considerable supply of arms and other munitions were constantly kept ... claimant with principal responsibility for safety and contents regularly handed out and replenished. Personal responsibility for the care and safety of important documents in claimants own house.

Intelligence work ... Valuable ... pretty continuous and carried out under dangerous conditions.

First aid where a claimant was specially detailed for attending wounded or looked after a wounded man in own house set aside for such purpose the continuity and perhaps danger of service should be evident.

All full-time work of a dangerous nature which was considered essential by Senior IRA officer in command of the area or full-time work undertaken for Cumann na mBan Headquarters.¹²⁵

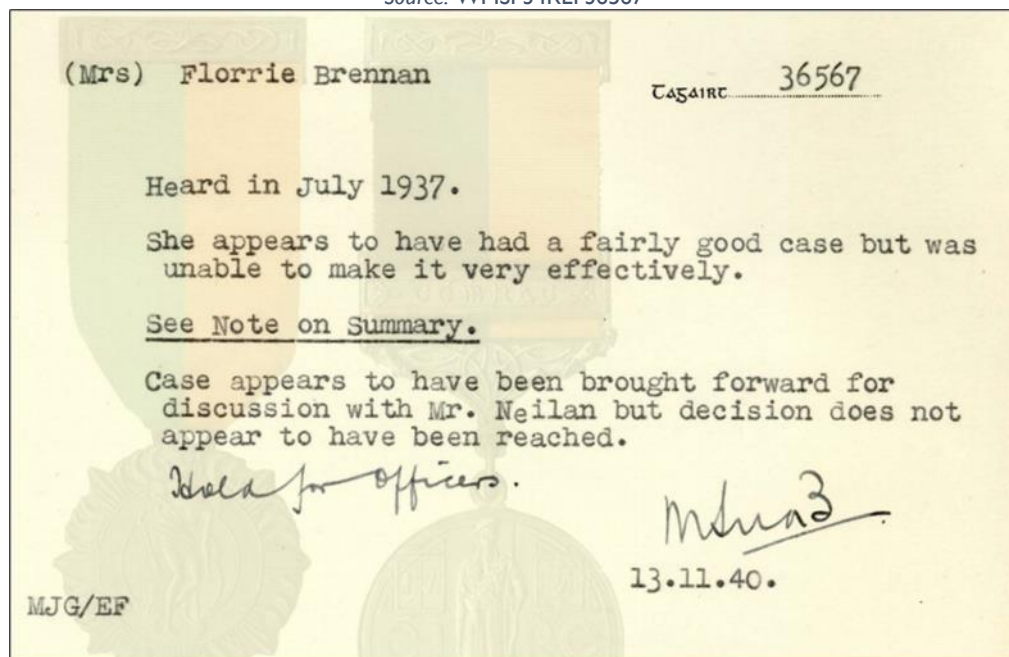
and was active during the War of Independence. He was determined to see similar pension rights for women and men and actively advocated for this.

¹²⁴ <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/seanad/1924-07-28/19/> Accessed 23 November 2019.

¹²⁵ http://www.militaryarchives.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/MSPC/documents/Active_Service/Active_Service_3.pdf Accessed 24 November 2019

There are at least '52 Galway women featured on the [Bureau of Military History] website so far', the majority of those being successful in their claim.¹²⁶ Florrie Brennan, Cregboy was one of these and her case might be taken as being typical. Brennan listed fifteen men she medically attended during the War of Independence. Volunteers came to her suffering with flu, ulcers, a broken nose, bullet wounds, and Brennan nursed them back to health. One referee described Brennan's service as having 'transferred arms and ammunition and explosives from unit to unit, often to and from three to four mile distances'.¹²⁷ She raised funds, canvassed for elections, participated in prison visits, washed, cooked, and cleaned. The list of her contributions is exhaustive. Despite this, it appears that Florrie Brennan, at that time (1937), could not make her case to the satisfaction of the authorities. For such an important decision the note reproduced in Fig. 8.6 has little to say other than that her testimony was ineffective.

Figure 8.6. A note sent to the Pension Advisory Board after Florrie Brennan's sworn testimony. Florrie Brennan (nee Quinn)
Source: WMSP34REF36567



There was, as shown earlier, some who disagreed with women receiving pensions. However, this could have been a delay tactic to postpone payment. The committee was directed to her referees on that occasion, which included Seán Turke, James Folan, MG Malley, Thomas Cunningham, and J.J. Flaherty (all considered prominent actors

¹²⁶ See Appendix (email sent from Military Archives confirming 52 women featured) also, <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx> Accessed 24 November 2019

¹²⁷ Florrie Brennan (nee Quinn) WMSP34REF36567

during the struggle). Still, a further number of appeals were necessary and later included the following references, Michael Newell (1941), Brian Molloy (1941), Mattie Neilan (1942), Thomas McInerney (1942) and Patrick O'Brien (1942). Additional representations were also made on behalf of the applicant by Gerald Bartley, TD and Joe Stanford.¹²⁸ In the autumn of 1942, Florrie Brennan was finally awarded a pension certificate.

Brennan's inability to have her efforts recognised was not unique. Mary Hynes, President of the Kinvara Cumann na mBan branch, had a similar experience. In addition to the duties mentioned above, she carried dispatches long distances throughout the surrounding area often on foot. Her ability to gather intelligence succeeded in preventing several Volunteers from being rounded up during raids and it was her testimony that resulted in the capture, trial and demise of a man named Tom Morris.¹²⁹ The Hynes family were all involved in the War of Independence, and were regarded by the British as a threat, irrespective of their direct involvement. This made them targets. Their house and fields were burned, they were forced to sleep in a 'zinc shed' and frequently shots would be fired at them while around their home or fields.¹³⁰ Mary Hynes also stated that her mother had become seriously ill and died as a result of living outside in the shed.¹³¹ It would seem that her own activities had also resulted in threats from the Black and Tans to 'murder' her and that the anxiety eventually forced Mary to go on the run.¹³² However, considering what she was doing, she was in every sense a legitimate target. Yet, this propensity for violence against women during the period of the War of Independence is another area currently under investigation by researchers in history and other disciplines. Although unpalatable, surprisingly this too has only recently become the subject of increased scrutiny.

Those leading this critical research area have utilised a combination of sources, including the Military Archives. Linda Connolly, Margaret Ward, Marie Coleman, Ann Matthews, Louise Ryan and Mary McAuliffe, have all published papers on the theme of 'gendered and sexual violence during the Irish War of Independence and Civil War.'¹³³

¹²⁸ Florrie Brennan (nee Quinn) WMSP34REF36567

¹²⁹ Morris was thought to have given information to the RIC and Black and Tans. Sworn Statement Made Before the Advisory Committee, 8 March 1941 Mary Hynes, MSP34REF16040

¹³⁰ Sworn Statement Made Before the Advisory Committee, 8 March 1941 Mary Hynes, MSP34REF16040

¹³¹ Mary Hynes, MSP34REF16040

¹³² Mary Hynes, MSP34REF16040

¹³³ Linda Connolly, "Towards a Further Understanding of the Violence Experienced by Women in the Irish Revolution," Maynooth University Social Sciences Institute, Working Paper Series, no.7 (Maynooth:

The historiographical reluctance to confront this topic in the past has been excused as not being 'as significant an issue or problem and there is very little evidence of it occurring.'¹³⁴ The American Commission on Conditions in Ireland, a report that detailed the conditions in Ireland and the atrocities carried out by the British forces in 1920, stated that:

The fact that for four years and a half an army of at least 78,000 British has been occupying Ireland without provoking charges of major sensual offences against Irish women is remarkable. And it would appear the more remarkable when that army is proved to contain drunkards, highway robbers, gunmen and petty thieves.¹³⁵

The Commission's findings was obviously based on their parameters and could be interpreted as at least trying to find evidence of such wrongdoings during their timescale. Once again these fresh perspectives have re-examined the evidence, some of which was available during the conflict. Equally under analysis is how female post-conflict remembrances were achieved and in what way this sheds light on how Irish society developed gender differentials in the process of nation-building.¹³⁶ For instance, Eamon de Valera's graveside eulogy for Margaret Pearse claimed,

but for the fame of her sons the noble woman at whose grave we are gathered would, perhaps never have been heard of outside the narrow circle of her personal friends. Her modesty would have kept her out of the public eye.¹³⁷

Margaret Ward's retort specified that the role of Irish mothers was 'to produce good nationalist sons while staying out of the public arena themselves, unless exceptional circumstances required them to fulfil the work begun by their children.'¹³⁸ Similarly, Ryan has argued that 'stories of the Irish War of Independence emphasize the heroic deeds of brave young men. Women are usually contained within the conventional narratives of grieving mothers or passive, nameless victims'.¹³⁹ The gratitude shown to these mothers, however, did not extend towards approval of Dependant's Allowance

Maynooth University, January, 2019), <https://people.ucd.ie/mary.mcaulif> Accessed on 25 November 2019, Louise Ryan 'Drunken Tans': Representations of Sex and Violence in the Anglo-Irish War (1919–21) in *Feminist Review* September 2000, Ann Matthews, 'The War on Women' in *Renegades: Irish Republican Women 1900–1922* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2010) 266–282

¹³⁴ Connolly, 'Towards a Further Understanding of the Violence Experienced by Women in the Irish revolution', 2

¹³⁵ The American Commission on Conditions in Ireland: Interim Report

¹³⁶ For more information see Siobhra Aiken, *Spiritual Wounds: Trauma, Testimony and the Irish Civil War* (Irish Academic Press: Dublin, 2022)

¹³⁷ Margaret Ward, *Fearless Woman: Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Feminism and the Irish Revolution* (Dublin: University College Dublin, 2019)

¹³⁸ Ward, *Fearless Woman*, 396–7.

¹³⁹ Ryan, 'Drunken Tans', 74

applications in compensation for their sons' lives. Joe Howley's mother was refused a pension on several occasions up to her death. Women it seemed had lost any of the promises of equal opportunities the Proclamation had offered. Worse still, the sufferings endured, or labours referred to by so many was forgotten or dismissed as simple women's work. However, there were comments made at one commemoration regarding females that was obviously considered newsworthy. It was during an Easter commemoration ceremony in 16 April 1933, when the list of female scouts was followed with a report, 'all wearing attractive green uniforms'.¹⁴⁰ No mention of what men wore was evident in the reports.

Connolly maintains that any 'transgressive violence [that] was perpetrated against women ... disappeared from public discourse after the Civil War due to conservative attitudes towards women, sex and sexuality in the new State.'¹⁴¹ Included in a selection of documents in Coleman's book, *The Irish Revolution 1916–1923*, are extracts,

from the report of the British Labour Party's commission that visited Ireland in 1920 [they] highlight the nature of violence carried out against women during the War of Independence by both Crown forces and the IRA. There is a clear hint that some of that violence was sexual in nature.¹⁴²

Of significance here is that the violence was perpetrated by both IRA and Crown forces, which placed women in a situation of constant vulnerability and terror. Included in the report is a reference to 'a young women who was sleeping alone in premises which were raided by the Crown forces [and] was compelled to get out of bed.' Her 'nightdress was ripped open from top to bottom'. Another young woman sick in bed was threatened with a revolver whilst her widowed mother was 'roughly handled' in the room downstairs. An armed IRA party 'took two young girls out in their night attire. They were marched some distance and a court martial held on them for walking out with peelers. They were sentenced to be shot, but it was mitigated, and their hair was cut'.¹⁴³ Another woman was subjected to having 'pig rings put into her buttocks with pincers' for the crime of supplying the police with milk.¹⁴⁴ *The Connacht Tribune* reported in October 1920 that:

A little girl named Kathleen Lyons, Cloonoo, had an ugly experience on her way to the Loughrea convent school on Thursday morning when she was

¹⁴⁰ *Irish Press*, 17 April 1933

¹⁴¹ *Irish Times*, 20 January 2019.

¹⁴² As cited in Coleman, *The Irish Revolution 1916–1923*, 143

¹⁴³ As cited in Coleman, *The Irish Revolution 1916–1923*, 143–144

¹⁴⁴ As cited in Coleman, *The Irish Revolution 1916–1923*, 143–144

accosted by a party of military, one of whom pushed her off her bicycle and asked what religion she professed. The girl replied that she was a Catholic, whereupon another of the party said, 'shoot her'. The girl screamed for mercy, and, softened as it would seem by her piteous appeal, a third man asked that she be allowed to proceed as she was only a school girl. After some hesitation, the child, who was on the verge of collapse, was allowed to pass.¹⁴⁵

It is unlikely that any women were asked directly if they were raped or molested, also 'it is particularly difficult to find verifiable accounts of such violence ... because women were frightened to make official complaints.'¹⁴⁶ Fear of being ostracised by family and community would have prevented such admissions. In addition, it would seem that once the process of establishing a new state began, a collective amnesia took hold. Nonetheless, a century on, and the release of more female pension applications, in conjunction with the Witness Statements (WS) has served to stimulate a reconsideration of such issues. One incident involving yet another young Galway woman corresponding with her RIC boyfriend in County Cork is recollected in the Witness Statements given by Thomas Hussey and Michael Higgins. The woman (name blanked out) had sent a letter to the man giving him all the news from the area. The responding letter was intercepted and in it the man warned that the information could get her into trouble and not to send any more. Con Fogarty and 'few members of Sylane company' visited the family.¹⁴⁷ Her hair was cut in a violent act against her femininity and as a warning not to be passing intelligence to members of the Crown forces, in what Lindsey Earner-Byrne refers to as 'insider violence', people policing their own women.¹⁴⁸ One of the men at least found looking her in the eye difficult:

Brigadier Fogarty gave them a lecture on the gravity of the offence and said she was being treated leniently in having her hair cut off. There was a scene. The girl was crying and her people were sprinkling holy water on her and on us. She was a very beautiful girl before her hair was sheared and I pitied her although I knew I should not in the circumstances. I saw her in Tuam one day shortly afterwards. She stared at me from the door of the RIC barracks and I got out of her view as quickly as I could.¹⁴⁹

Being unable to look the victim in the eye is an indication of the remorse that was present thirty-five years later when he gave his statement. The young woman had only one recourse left open to her, and left her home, her family and her boyfriend. It is

¹⁴⁵ *Connacht Tribune*, 2 October 1920

¹⁴⁶ Ryan, 'Drunken Tans', 92

¹⁴⁷ Thomas Hussey, 26 September 1955 BMH, WS No. 1260.

¹⁴⁸ https://www.historyireland.com/podcast/an-inconvenient-truth-sexual-violence-and-the-irish-revolution/?fbclid=IwAR2PIOkA-u4aLGLjh6JKFf0YUPfV_ym3_xifOuIzAjyqt4-dyIe32TriEM Accessed 4 December 2019

¹⁴⁹ Michael Higgins, 13 September 1955, BMH, WS No. 1247

unknown if she ever returned. Under threat from IRA Volunteers, her uncle states clearly that had he known of the liaison with the young man, he would not have let her into the house. Having her hair cut off was seen as 'lenient'. However, this was a violent act against the young woman, used to humiliate and control her sexuality. Hussey's recollection of the incident seems indifferent:

Her uncle said he knew nothing about the girl's conduct and, if he had known, he would not have her in the house. He said she was about to go to America and pleaded on her behalf. The seriousness of the girl's offence was impressed on him and he was informed that she was being treated very leniently by having her hair cut off, which was done before we left the house. This girl left the district shortly after.¹⁵⁰

In contrast, this statement recounting the same event shows a remarkable lack of remorse, despite the young woman being forced to leave her home. What both statements show was the fear of families who had to witness such brutalities and their inability to control what was happening to their loved ones. Fear of sexual violence in conflict, and the inability to articulate its consequences, must have been devastating for these women, even for those women eager to participate in the conflict.

One very enthusiastic participant was Margaret (Peg) Broderick-Nicholson (see B4 and B27). She was a Section Commander, in Cumann na mBan, Galway. It was during an occasion the police attempted to arrest someone:

We immediately pounced on the police. I remember getting up on one policeman's back and getting my two hands round his throat. He wriggled to knock me off and let his grip on the prisoner relax. Another R.I.C. man intervened and pulled me off. I grabbed the second fellow's cap and beat him on the head with the hard peak, and the other fellow swung round and struck me with his revolver on the side of the head, above my ear. I was half stunned and staggered against the wall, when someone shouted: 'This is no time for fainting'. I shook myself back to life, but by this time they had Sheils inside the barracks and came out firing shots in the air to frighten us.¹⁵¹

One curious line in her statement bears careful scrutiny if taken in the context of sexual violence. She mentions the Black and Tans attempting to burn down their house:

I would like to mention that the Tans saturated every door in the house with petrol, also the ground floor, evidently to burn us all in our rooms, closing every door carefully after examining the occupants instead of ordering

¹⁵⁰ Thomas Hussey, 26 September 1955 BMH, WS No. 1260.

¹⁵¹ Margaret (Peg) Broderick, 27 September 1957 BMH, WS No. 1682

everyone downstairs as was usual.¹⁵²

Other statements mention such ‘examinations’ behind closed doors and infer that some improper searching was conducted. Only a short time later she was taken from her home, whilst still in her night attire, and her hair was cut by a large scissors. Whilst being prevented from helping her daughter, her mother called out ‘be brave Peg’.¹⁵³ The fear and vulnerability felt by both women must have been shocking. Peg’s thoughts after surviving the ordeal was that she should have gone on the run after she was pointed out by one of the Black and Tans and this may well have prevented her ordeal.¹⁵⁴ During the ‘terror’ reprisals in Galway City, five women were reported to have been forcibly taken from their homes and received a similar treatment to Peg. The American Commission questioned a witness, who was a close friend of Seamus Quirke regarding violence against women:

In the case of Cummins, what was done in connection with the house at which he was stopping? A. On the Sunday following they called at this house and called out Miss Madden, and they cut off her hair. They also called at Miss Broderick’s house and cut off her hair also; and they went to a house in College Road, the Misses Turk, and took the two of them out and cut off their hair. They also visited Miss Burke’s house. She was staying in Galway, working in a dry goods store, a house called McDonald’s. She lived about three miles from the city of Galway. They went out there in the morning about half-past five or six o’clock. A military lorry came, and she got out of bed and went out, and they went away. She thought when they went away that they might not come back again, and she went to bed again. She was not there a half an hour when they came back and cut her hair off. She was the sister of Father Burke. Q. When you say they cut her hair off, what do you mean? A. The military did it, because nobody else could be out, especially in a military lorry, at that hour of the morning. Q. Were they soldiers or the Black-and-Tans? A. They were supposed to be the military. Q. Chairman Wood: Was any reason given for cutting off her hair? A. No reason whatever except that they were strong Republicans, all those girls. Q. Were they members of the Cumann na m’Ban? A. Yes, sir, they were members.¹⁵⁵

Geraldine Dillon, in her WS recognised the significance of violent hair cutting by concluding that it ‘was more of a tragedy then than it would be now’.¹⁵⁶ Although some women bravely made an effort to report incidents of rape or assault, many were only too aware of the consequences and were understandably intimidated by what would

¹⁵² Margaret (Peg) Broderick, 27 September 1957 BMH, WS No. 1682

¹⁵³ Margaret (Peg) Broderick, 27 September 1957 BMH, WS No. 1682

¹⁵⁴ Margaret (Peg) Broderick, 27 September 1957 BMH, WS No. 1682

¹⁵⁵ *Evidence on Conditions in Ireland* commissioned by The American Commission on Conditions in Ireland I May 1920

¹⁵⁶ Geraldine Dillon, 14 September 1950, BMH, WS No. 424

occur.¹⁵⁷ Lady Gregory noted in her diary, sometime in November 1920, that after a visit from her physician, Dr Foley, the previous day, ‘the family of the girls violated by the Black and Tans wish it to be hushed up. There has been another case of the same sort in Clare but there also it is to be kept quiet. Peterswell has been undergoing its reprisals’.¹⁵⁸

Figure 8.7. A still from Ken Loach’s film *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*, depicting the violence directed against women during the War of Independence.
Source: *Irish Examiner* 12 September 2017



Other parts of the county had also experienced this sexual violence towards women, nearly always reported as ‘outrages’. Memos and letters collected by Colonel Moore during the period demonstrate the seriousness of this violent behaviour towards women. One note recorded:

On Feb 15, two girls were arrested at their work in Messrs ____ factory, Tipperary. They were paraded through the town to their home under military guard. Their rooms were searched, boxes in one case being broken open. Nothing being found they were marched to the military barracks and there paraded on the square for the benefit of the soldiers for two hours. They were taken to a fireless cell and had to submit to a most degrading search by a masked creature, sex uncertain as even hands were covered, nothing visible but the eyes.¹⁵⁹

Personal testimonies attesting to the violent actions of the Crown forces during the War of Independence, were also recorded. One letter that was sent to the Lord Mayor of Cork is a harrowing read and describes a young girl beaten and her clothes

¹⁵⁷ Ryan, ‘Drunken Tans’, 92

¹⁵⁸ Lady Gregory, *Lady Gregory’s Journals, 1916-1930*, ed. Lennox Robinson, First Edition (Dublin: Putnam & Company Ltd, 1946). 138.

¹⁵⁹ National Library of Ireland (hereafter NLI) Colonel Maurice Moore Papers, 1841-1939 MS 10,556/8/5

'dragged off her' and 'left standing naked in her cell' while police searched her clothes.¹⁶⁰ The letter also gives graphic details of Crown forces that entered the homes of those living in the poor districts late at night on the pretext of searching for dissidents, and raping a young pregnant mother of four as her family were kept outside:

She is young and pretty. The family live in great poverty, the husband totally unfit, and dependant on St Vincent de Paul for the means of sustaining life. There is a growing feeling that attractive looking women of the poorer classes are being marked down as fair game by these midnight ghouls.¹⁶¹

Without the unguarded evidence of women through 'a truth or reconciliation process' it would be impossible to fully understand and record the extent of violence, physical or mental, directed against women during the War of Independence.¹⁶² It is necessary to acknowledge that evidence such as the sexual violence associated with hair shorning or the outrages as mentioned above have become 'part of the continuum of gender-based violence that was inflicted on women in this period'.¹⁶³ Women, their role and experiences, good and bad, throughout the War of Independence must be considered during preparations for commemoration. Historians have at long last begun to redress the imbalance of women's participation. However, the one evident omission that sooner or later must be addressed in more detail is that 'gender-based violence occurred and it is an aspect of the revolution that has been hidden, suppressed and denied for too long'.¹⁶⁴ The highlighting of these women and countless others around the country by way of these Military Service Pension files has led to the re-remembering of their efforts and indeed their struggle for recognition.

Local Commemorations

The centenary of the Easter Rising in 2016 generated such interest from communities across Ireland and beyond that the expectation for a similar reaction was anticipated for the War of Independence. The success, in part, lay in the preparation, in tandem with the intrigue from the public. As the 1916 centenary drew near, the State introduced a Local Authority Programme to engage communities at a local level. In

¹⁶⁰ NLI Colonel Maurice Moore Papers, 1841-1939 MS 10,556/8/4

¹⁶¹ NLI Colonel Maurice Moore Papers, 1841-1939 MS 10,556/8/4

¹⁶² *Irish Times*, 10 January 2019

¹⁶³ <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/social-sciences-institute/news/did-women-escape-worst-brutalities-between-1919-1921-0> Accessed 26 November 2019.

¹⁶⁴ *Irish Times* 10 January 2019

2015, Galway City Council held a consultation workshop in the city and Galway County Council hosted four in, Tuam, Oughterard, Loughrea and An Cheathrú Rua. By 2016, there were other commemorative events scheduled alongside the first Battle of the Somme and the Easter Rising 1916. It was also an opportunity for County Galway to explore its involvement in these key events arose. The varied Galway 1916 Easter Rising centenary commemorations that took place around the county in 2016 were delivered and received with equal measures of success. With a limited budget, events seemed to exceed expectations in terms of imagination and creativity. Some of this success is attributed to the local heritage or historic groups forum set up during the planning and consultation stages. This special assembly of communities was overseen and advised by the County Heritage Officer, Marie Mannion, aided by her contacts, volunteering their expertise to all.

‘Remembering Galway 1916’ saw the running of an extensive programme of events. The largest turnouts of the county commemorations took place at Connemara’s Rosmuc and in Athenry, two key focal point locations associated with the Rising. These two were regarded by many as , the pinnacle of the commemorative calendar. Such was the pageantry and sense of occasion that those who had the chance to attend this formal event in Athenry, would have produced what Oona Frawley has referred to as ‘memory cruxes within the broader memory bank’ of experiences.¹⁶⁵ Particular cultural moments that stand out in the cultural memory of a group. Collective attendance and participation at this event, especially for a younger generation, developed their sense of cultural identity. With an estimated attendance of 8,000, the day commenced at 9.30am and a packed program was advertised which combined several events around the town. This commemoration, one hundred years after the original events, offered any descendants that were in attendance, an opportunity to represent their love ones at such a meaningful memorial and experience the cultural legacy first-hand. Many of those represented also took part in the War of Independence. For them it could have been their first real opportunity to talk about their family involvement. Over the same weekend a series of local ceremonies also took place. Community groups, such as Loughrea Memorial Group, Relatives and Friends of Galway 1916 to 1923, Clarinbridge Heritage Group, and Kinvara Centenary

¹⁶⁵ Oona Frawley, *Memory Ireland Volume 3 The Famine and the Troubles* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014) 1

Committee hosted events within their communities commemorating the 1916 Rising. These events were seen as the beginning of a renewed interest in the revolutionary era and an opportunity to explore in more detail other aspects of their families participation.

Another large-scale national event occurred on 10 and 11 June 2016, spearheaded by Teagasc in partnership with various organisation, agencies and local communities.¹⁶⁶ All attendees were encouraged to dress in a style appropriate to the 1916, era and a life size replica of the GPO was erected inside one of the converted outbuildings for a more authentic visitor experience.¹⁶⁷ The intent of this event was to recreate a rural setting from the period. It is estimated that over 60,000 people from across the country attended the event at the Mellows Campus, in Athenry:

With seven distinct villages, the event was packed with all the activity of a 1916 town, from music, dance and drama to livestock, machinery and history. This event included demonstrations on the working horse and its role for the Irish household, exhibition GAA games in 1916 attire, sports day with traditional children's games and re-enactments of evictions, advisory scenes, schoolhouse and cottage.¹⁶⁸

The atmosphere around the campus was one of celebration and curiosity to learn not only what life was like back in 1916, but about those who participated in the Rising. Several descendants brought artefacts and memorabilia associated with the War of Independence in anticipation of the next commemorative period.

One significant heritage resource, and an ongoing project, is the Galway Decade of Commemoration's website. Developed by Galway County Council, this bi-lingual website is part of the National Museum of Ireland ICAN initiative. In addition, the Galway County Libraries also developed an associated blog as part of the website. Galway County Council provided the training and mentoring required for the input and upkeep of this site.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, an open invitation was extended to the general public to contribute to the website with 'photos, historical information, memories or

¹⁶⁶ Teagasc – the Agriculture and Food Development Authority. For a full list of event collaborators see event programme 'Farming & Country Life 1916: Relive, Reimagine, Remember'. <https://www.teagasc.ie/news--events/news/2016/over-60000-attend-1916.php>

¹⁶⁷ <https://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/category/connaught/> Accessed 10 April 2020

¹⁶⁸ <https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/publications/2017/Teagasc-Annual-Report-2016.pdf> Accessed 1 May 2020

¹⁶⁹ <https://www.galwaydecadeofcommemoration.org/> Accessed 3 March 2020. Some of the groups include: Milltown Heritage Group; Clarinbridge Heritage Group; Oughterard Heritage; Skehana and District Heritage; Abbey and District Heritage and Moylough Heritage Society.

a story'.¹⁷⁰ By utilising community engagement to contribute and edit, the content is enhanced and interpreted for use amongst both local and national domestic and diaspora communities. This award winning site and its contributors have created a platform that provides a digital space to develop the heritages that surrounded the period 1916 in County Galway.¹⁷¹ Moreover, communities around the county were empowered to embrace the ethos behind the Decade of Commemorations and use this platform to promote the heritages of their locality.

Worthy of particular mention is the section on Cumann na mBan and the PDF copy of a publication *Cumann na mBan: County Galway Dimensions*.¹⁷² With such fragmentation of women's histories, this is a welcome addition to the literature. While launched in time for the centenary, this publication moved beyond the narrative of Easter 1916 to instigate an investigation into the contribution of Galway women as members of Cumann na mBan. More generally, it opened up the period after Easter 1916 to further investigation.

Throughout the whole year many different events commemorating the 1916 Rising took place, be they in academic institutions, local communities or civic buildings, too many to detail here.¹⁷³ Several of these were administered by the aforementioned voluntary groups. The significance to this study on the War of Independence is the enthusiasm with which the public embraced commemoration. They planned, researched and disseminated their unique local histories which produced various different events, from re-enactments, to concerts, unveiling of memorials and, poetry readings. Several of these projects would not have been possible without the assistance, expertise, funding, or enthusiasm from those within such organisations as Galway County Council, especially the Heritage section, libraries, the National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG), Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, Teagasc, the National Museum of Ireland, and the many diverse historical or heritage groups around the county. Some of the ways they interpreted the period resulted in booklets, sculptures, plaques, graphic boards, memorial gardens, flag raisings, talks, lectures,

¹⁷⁰ <https://www.galwaydecadeofcommemoration.org/content/get-involved/contribute> Accessed 30 April 2020

¹⁷¹ Galway County Council's Decade of Commemoration was one of the ten winning websites in a project by the National Library of Ireland 'Remembering 1916, Recording 2016' announced by Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Heather Humphreys TD December 2016.

¹⁷² Marie Mannion, Jimmy Laffey, eds., *Cumann na mBan: County Galway Dimensions* (Galway: Galway County Council, 2015)

¹⁷³ For further discussion on 1916 Rising commemorations in County Galway see Wrynn, *Galway & the Easter 1916 Rising*:

panel discussions, exhibitions, concerts, heritage maps, digital maps, guide books and history books. Once again, the contribution of these local groups to heritage or historic related information was significant to the overall memory of the conflict.

The success of the Easter 1916 commemorations in 2016, gave these communities and institutions the courage and impetus to pursue several aspects of remembrance beyond this event and into the centenary of the War of Independence. Locally focused, community driven commemorative events, demonstrated that curiosity and eagerness to discover and remember the heritages of the revolutionary period could recover the stories of other people or locations previously unknown. Memory of the War of Independence had been minimalised in contrast to the annual commemorations of Easter 1916. Restoring public awareness of the incidents, sites, activities and actions of the men and women had stimulated interest in local communities. Commemoration had become popular.

Such enthusiasm was cultivated as other commemorative ceremonies marking centenaries events that took place. Notwithstanding occasions convened in Dublin City, the following events were held in County Galway:¹⁷⁴

21 April 2017	History Ireland 'Hedge School': Now you see them, now you don't: women in the Irish revolution'	Mechanics Institute, Galway
16 October 2017	'Galway 1917: Social conditions and political change'	Loughrea, Co Galway
5 April 2018	Book launch <i>War and Revolution in the West of Ireland: Galway 1913–1922</i>	Mechanics Institute, Galway
21 October 2018	Women: Their contribution to Irish history and society'	Moylough, Co. Galway
3 November 2018	Pioneering women in Irish history	Tuam, Co. Galway

¹⁷⁴ <https://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/category/connaught/> Accessed 10 April 2020

11 November 2018	The armed man: a mass for peace, Galway Cathedral	Galway
15 November 2018	Ireland: Political and social change	Loughrea, Co. Galway
17 November 2019	Loughrea Memorial Group Conference 'Democracy and the People'	Loughrea Hotel and Spa, Loughrea, Co Galway

Decade of Centenaries: Second Phase

In the Second Phase of the Decade of Centenaries, the Advisory Group identified a number of 'historical events and themes from 1918–1923 as particularly significant'.¹⁷⁵ These themes included Armistice Day, Women's suffrage, the 1918 Election, and John Alcock and Arthur Brown's famous transatlantic flight from Newfoundland to Connemara. Following the aforementioned themes, the centenary commemoration in 2019 of the First Dáil began what was referred to as a 'complex period', one that recognised those events which cause contention.¹⁷⁶ Primarily this began with the commemoration of the outbreak of the War of Independence in 1919, and at the time of writing, it is expected to conclude with the centenary of the Irish Free State's admission into the League of Nations in 1923.¹⁷⁷ The report declared:

The objective of the State centenary commemoration programme for the years from 2019–2023 is to ensure that this complex period in our history, including the Struggle for Independence, the Civil War, the Foundation of the State and Partition, is remembered appropriately, proportionately, respectfully and with sensitivity. A key objective of the initiative is to promote a deeper understanding of the significant events that took place during this period and recognise that the shared historical experience of those years gave rise to very different narratives and memories.¹⁷⁸

In Phase 2 the Advisory Group also acknowledged the political and economic challenges of Brexit together with the local significance of many events. It encouraged

¹⁷⁵ <https://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/wp-content/uploads/publications/Guidance2018/Guidance2018/index.html> Accessed 3 March 2020

¹⁷⁶ <https://www.chg.gov.ie/about/special-initiatives/commemorations/decade-of-centenaries/>

¹⁷⁷ <https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2019/01/guidance-from-the-expert-advisory-group-on-commemorations-over-the-remainder-of-the-decade-of-centenaries-eng-1.pdf>

¹⁷⁸ <https://www.chg.gov.ie/about/special-initiatives/commemorations/decade-of-centenaries/>

communities and local authorities to lead the way in the commemorative process. In addition, the group acknowledged that certain community events have been ‘commemorated annually for decades’ and stressed that it would be inappropriate for the state to compete with these established ceremonies.’¹⁷⁹ However, the often thorny subject of how funding would be allocated was not determined. Similar to other counties Galway, had indeed conducted several local remembrances of the period, the Loughnane brothers and Fr Griffin for instance. However, the majority related to the War of Independence in County Galway over the last century (as suggested herein) had been interwoven with commemorations of the 1916 Rising, and in accordance with State commemorations. Nevertheless, this was an opportunity to re-position these historic incidents within their correct chronology and thereby determine, especially for a new generation, a more cohesive understanding of the general period. It also afforded the opportunity to compare and contrast public policy within the centenary commemorations. One relatively recent genre of local history that presented new opportunities for historians and heritage groups alike, was the use of online multimedia and specifically podcasts.

Figure 8.8. Two coins minted by the Central Bank of Ireland to commemorate the centenary of the meeting of the First Dáil in 2019

Source: <https://www.centralbank.ie/news-media/press-releases/Dail100coinlaunch-16Jan2019>



The image on the two coins shown in Fig. 8.8 was designed by Emmet Mullins so as to portray a representation of the TDs and spectators in attendance at the inaugural gathering of ‘An Chéad Dáil’ or the First Dáil.

¹⁷⁹ <https://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/wp-content/uploads/publications/Guidance2018/Guidance2018/index.html>

Recorded Podcasts

The use of internet radio and podcasting as a medium increased throughout Ireland in the early decades of the twenty-first century. The successful upsurge in listenership was due to the free, on demand, easily accessible content. Although traditional media remained ahead in the polls, the *Irish Examiner* reported in June 2019:

The nation has the third highest listenership to podcasts in the world after high-tech South Korea and Spain. The 2019 Reuters report found 37% of Irish people have used a podcast over the last month, just behind Spain at 39% and South Korea at 53% and ahead of the USA at 35%.¹⁸⁰

As people's lives became busier more emphasis was placed on a work life balance and healthier lifestyle.¹⁸¹ Short podcasts grew in popularity as a medium for capturing interviews, discussions and debates surrounding sport, politics and philosophy outside a rigid schedule. Technology created the ability to listen to a favourite podcast whilst walking the dog, running in a forest or waiting to be served in a café. This mobility has transformed its existence. The basic equipment, such as editing suites, that assists in creating podcasts is relatively simple to use and can be accessed nowadays on private desktops. This ease of access resulted in many venturing onto the air.¹⁸² The heritage sector in particular benefitted enormously from this increase in the use of new media. Communities all over the country have utilised recording equipment to chronicle oral histories, describe landscapes and record local folklore that may be lost otherwise. Universities, museums and history festivals record and podcast talks, presentations, lectures, and debates for the wider audience who are unable to attend in person.¹⁸³ One thought provoking podcast was 'Spies, Informers & Intelligence in Galway' by Cormac Ó Comhraí. Recorded at a public talk hosted by Galway City Museum in 2014, this podcast detailed how intelligence was gathered during the War of Independence on both sides of the conflict. Comhraí spoke about informers and spies and the possible reasons behind their deaths. Much of his research was out at the

¹⁸⁰ *Irish Examiner*, 24 June 2019

¹⁸¹ See The Department of Health has publication of the 12th edition of Health in Ireland, Health in Ireland: Key Trends 2019. file:///C:/Users/G00267168/Downloads/45117_6a4f970018d6477bac38f4539f80e927.pdf

¹⁸² For more details see <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/tv-radio-web/how-irish-podcasting-hit-the-mainstream-1.4073135>

¹⁸³ One of the most successful examples of this is the History Hub based in University College Dublin <http://historyhub.ie/history-hub-ie-podcast-series>

National Archive at Kew, London utilising the military and police reports.¹⁸⁴ This talk served as appetiser for his photographic history of the *Revolution in Connacht*.¹⁸⁵

Short documentaries gained more and more popularity and were often serialised for convenient listening. Mainstream media broadcaster RTÉ has produced several ground-breaking documentaries. However, much of what its archives hold is not available to the general public without strict permission. However, the *Documentary on One (Doc on One)* podcast series claimed ‘the largest free online archive anywhere in the world’.¹⁸⁶ The series has won over 200 awards since 2008 and has become one of Ireland’s best loved podcast repositories. Two podcasts in this series focused on County Galway’s War of Independence. The first, ‘Reprisals’, was set just outside Gort during November 1920, the ‘bloodiest month’ of the War of Independence. It told ‘the dramatic story of the short life and tragic death of 24-year-old Eileen Quinn (Fig.8.9).’¹⁸⁷

Figure 8.9. Photograph of Eileen Quinn.
Source: Gerard Quinn



The other ‘Thomas and Tess’,¹⁸⁸ focused on another violent incident in 1921:

In Dunmore County Galway, a town close to the Mayo and Roscommon borders, a pharmacist was abducted from his lodgings in the middle of the night. It was reported the following morning that his body had been found with a sign attached, declaring him to be a spy, shot by the IRA. But the death

¹⁸⁴ <https://www.galwaycitymuseum.ie/galway-city-museum-podcasts-vodcasts/>

¹⁸⁵ Cormac Ó Comhraí, *Revolution in Connacht A photographic History 1913-23* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2013)

¹⁸⁶ <https://www.rte.ie/radio1/doconone/2009/0428/645964-about/> Accessed 21 April 2020

¹⁸⁷ <https://www.rte.ie/radio1/doconone/2019/0816/1069115-reprisals/> Accessed 7 December 2019

¹⁸⁸ <https://www.rte.ie/radio1/doconone/2019/0719/1063966-thomas-and-tess/> Accessed 7 December 2019

of Thomas McEver left the people of Dunmore bewildered and horrified and what happened after he was killed remains in dispute. And for one person in particular, Thomas' fiancé, the trauma of his death left a deep and surreal scar.¹⁸⁹

Other related podcasts included *History Ireland* Hedge Schools 'The War of Independence', recorded in Clifden on 16 March 2012 with Mary Harris, Conor McNamara, Cormac Ó Comhraí and Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc; and 'Labour and the North, and the National Question' recorded at Mechanics Institute, Galway with Emmet O'Connor, Margaret Ward and Brian Hanley. This latter podcast was produced as part of the larger conference 'Labour, Gender, and Class in the Struggle for Irish Independence, 1918–24' and other recordings were created at the time, for release at a later date. In addition, other various radio programmes were podcasted that discuss the War of Independence, such as Myles Duncan's 'The History Show'.¹⁹⁰ in which incidents and events from several counties were discussed. Additionally, they provide an overall national perspective on issues such as gender violence, RIC commemoration, intelligence operations and also associated music and song. As in the case of both Doc on One podcasts, it is one thing to listen to family stories and tales of 'rebellion and derring-do', it is quite another to research and develop the narratives for a public audience.¹⁹¹ The History Show also commissioned a series of BMH and MSPC dramatisations of the records. Amongst these were 'Jeremiah Mee', 'Margaret Broderick Nicholson, Cumann an mBan'; 'Nora and Kate Loughnane: The Killing of Patrick and Harry Loughnane'.¹⁹² These podcasts included a national perspective and mention examples of experiences from several different people, including those from County Galway. The medium of radio or podcast to communicate these snippets of historic and social history, were often from a family's perspective, thus enhancing and humanising its content. This explains why this medium became particularly popular with the general public and increased its listenership. The use of digital platforms for remembrance reflect the change that Ireland has encountered and embraced especially when attempting to reach a wider audience.

There is little doubt that digital platforms played an increasing role in Irish election campaigns over the past decade. Changes to the conventional norms were evident at

¹⁸⁹ <https://www.rte.ie/radio1/doconone/2019/07/19/1063966-thomas-and-tess/> Accessed 7 December 2019

¹⁹⁰ <https://www.rte.ie/radio1/search/?q=Myles+Duncan+the+history+show> Accessed 21 April 2020

¹⁹¹ *Irish Times*, 23 May 2013.

¹⁹² <https://soundcloud.com/military-archives/sets/rte-history-show-bmh-and-mspc> Accessed

the centenary of the First Dáil 2019 when Taoiseach Leo Varadkar stood before the house. Both he and his government had introduced some radical constitutional amendments in the decade since the last commemoration of the First Dáil. Once again, RTÉ televised the event, which included a keynote address delivered by President Michael D Higgins. He spoke of a shared collective history for the island of Ireland, embracing the opportunity,

not only to celebrate a centenary of our democracy but to reflect upon our collective past, our successes, and our failures. We do so as we enter the most difficult part of our Decade of Centenaries. One in which we will commemorate the events which came from the very crucible of our Irish Revolution, our War of Independence and our Civil War ... Our task will not simply be to memorialise the past but to confront the complex legacies of our history with sympathy and empathy ... We can, and we must, require of ourselves and others, a transparency of purpose, an honesty of intent, a serious engagement with historical scholarship, a respect for complexity, and, above all, respect for, and patience with, the beliefs and ideas of others, not only our contemporaries but those who went before, realising that through 1919 and the years that followed wounds were opened and deepened, towards which the task of remembering today must make more than a gesture at healing. We must not be afraid to face the past, including all of the violence and cruelties released from pent-up exclusions, deprivations and humiliations. Let us not look with any trepidation towards the commemorations of the coming years, lest we be tempted to avert our gaze, take refuge in evasion, or seek to ignore the difficult questions they shall raise for us all.¹⁹³

In a similar fashion to those who demonstrated a half a century earlier, he reflected that ‘true nationalism addresses need[s]’ such as housing, health care, education and his tone admonished those who do not embrace this.¹⁹⁴ The unwanted return of an ‘ugly, xenophobic corruption of nationalism’, he argued, ought to be met as a nation within the family of nations.¹⁹⁵ Alongside this concept of a shared history was that of equality of gender and recognising the urgency of climate justice. This, he stated, would ‘demand the very best of all of us.’¹⁹⁶ The President’s interpretation of one hundred years of democracy also offered hope to a bright new generation that reflected Ireland’s future. In his speech, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar considered ‘the influence of the Labour movement on the Democratic Programme’.¹⁹⁷ He expressed how the poetry

¹⁹³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqwb9lqVV5l0> and <https://president.ie/en/media-library/speeches/address-on-the-100th-anniversary-of-the-inaugural-meeting-of-the-first-dail-eireann> Accessed 3 December 2019

¹⁹⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqwb9lqVV5l0> and <https://president.ie/en/media-library/speeches/address-on-the-100th-anniversary-of-the-inaugural-meeting-of-the-first-dail-eireann> Accessed 3 December 2019

¹⁹⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqwb9lqVV5l0> and <https://president.ie/en/media-library/speeches/address-on-the-100th-anniversary-of-the-inaugural-meeting-of-the-first-dail-eireann>

¹⁹⁶ <https://president.ie/en/media-library/speeches/address-on-the-100th-anniversary-of-the-inaugural-meeting-of-the-first-dail-eireann> Accessed 3 December 2019.

¹⁹⁷ <https://www.gov.ie/en/news/ee3030-speech/> Accessed 1 December 2019

of the 'radical' document was put 'into legislative prose', by successive governments, yet it also pointed 'to where the State has fallen short', in particular, in not protecting the children of Ireland:

Industrial schools, illegal adoptions, and Mother and Baby Homes were a betrayal of those ideals. Although today the rate of child poverty in Ireland is only a fraction of what it was one hundred years ago, and is falling, we must do better.¹⁹⁸

Constance Markievicz, he stated, was the only female minister elected to the Dáil within a period of sixty years. This, he continued, 'is deeply shameful'. The Taoiseach, echoing the views expressed at many commemorative events, maintained that, 'as a State we were diminished by the absence of women from positions of power'.¹⁹⁹ Varadkar, a self-professed 'half-Indian' openly gay man, standing in front of an audience of his peers, commemorating that First Dáil, could indeed be considered a demonstration of democracy's success, despite its inadequacies.²⁰⁰ The *Irish Examiner* reported that:

It later emerged that over €930,000 was spent on commemorations and events for the centenary. This included €16,500 on VIP services at Dublin Airport, almost €20,000 in accommodation at two of Dublin's finest hotels, €200 for a harpist, and just over €10,000 for 5,000 Dáil-branded hats for the event.²⁰¹

Considering the issues raised by the Taoiseach above, this could be viewed as an excessive use of public funds. For instance in County Galway during the same period there were ongoing funding debates surrounding issues such as, the Tuam Mother and Baby Home, unearthed by local historian Catherine Corless, chronic flooding in communities, job loses, lack of reliable regional health care, homelessness and gridlocked city roads.²⁰² However, marking such occasions is not mere remembrance. It is an opportunity for cultural and political leaders to reflect and re-evaluate democracy whilst grappling with these sometimes complicated issues. Equally, such occasions would provide an opportunity for communities such as those in County Galway, to reflect and contemplate the 'complexity' whilst being respectful of the

¹⁹⁸ <https://www.gov.ie/en/news/ee3030-speech/> Accessed 1 December 2019

¹⁹⁹ <https://www.gov.ie/en/news/ee3030-speech/> Accessed 1 December 2019

²⁰⁰ *Irish Times*, 18 January 2015

²⁰¹ *Irish Examiner*, 31 December 2019

²⁰² <https://www.rte.ie/news/2019/0131/1026688-special-report-inside-the-tuam-mother-and-baby-home/> , <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/oireachtas/galway-hospital-a-e-not-fit-for-purpose-says-kenny-1.2452181> <https://www.rte.ie/news/connacht/2019/0925/1078144-galway-traffic/>, <http://www.n6galwaycity.ie/>

'beliefs and ideas of others' which assist in the process of 'healing'.

Figure 8.10. Some of the cast of An Taibhdhearc during a parade celebrating the anniversary of the First Dáil, January 2019.

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/an.taibhdhearc/posts/2243952822516038>



So, despite the ongoing difficulties, the mood in the county was also one of enthusiastic commemoration. Without the large budget and more in keeping with their community base, on 21 January 2019, three separate commemorations of the First Dáil took place. Firstly, at 2.50p.m. a colourful parade and re-enactment, staged by An Taibhdhearc and fronted by the Tualla Band, weaved its way through the streets of Galway from Middle Street and into Eyre Square Shopping Centre for a live performance. It was a wet day but as shown in the image (Fig. 8.10) many of the faces were happy and enthusiastic. Stopping at several points along the way, the players gave short speeches. Once they arrived at the Eyre Square Shopping Centre, they took their seats and the crowd gathered in anticipation of what was to happen. In dramatic fashion, the performers conducted the re-enactment in the Irish language to denote the original First Dáil. Later the same day, historian Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh delivered a lecture from the stage in An Taibhdhearc. Similarly, Galway County Council hosted the same two lectures in two separate locations in Galway on 21 January 1919 in order to facilitate the interest shown by members of the public. One was held in its Council Chamber, Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway, commencing at 1pm, the other at The Waterdale Suite, Claregalway Hotel at 7.30pm. The lectures were delivered by Conor McNamara on 'Revolution at the Ballot Box: County Galway and the 1918 General Election' and Síobhra Aiken on 'From Suffrage to Soloheadbeg: Reflections on the First Dáil'.

Figure 8.11. Image depicting the staged recreation of the First Dáil in Eyre Square Shopping Centre by the cast of An Taibhdhearc.

Source: <https://tuairisc.ie/gailearai-fisean-an-chead-dail-athchruthaithe-ag-lucht-na-taibhdheirce-sa-ghailimh/>.



Although limited by the numbers it could accommodate, the event in the Council Chamber at 1pm was fully booked. Amongst those attending were enthusiastic volunteer heritage and history group members from various places around Galway county. Both McNamara and Aiken spoke about the Sinn Féin campaign in the run up to the election and the legacies of their success. McNamara told the audience that ‘Galway’s four politicians had different views on what Ireland should look like’ and how the campaign for Liam Mellows secured his seat while he was still in the United States. It was apparent that McNamara had developed a relationship with some members of the audience when he referred periodically to their family members. This brought a less formal atmosphere to proceedings whilst also corroborating the narrative that was delivered. Aiken stated that Cumann na mBan had updated their policies in the wake of the 1916 Proclamation to reflect the more republican element of the group. This was to empower women and their views. In addition, despite a limited group of women receiving the right to vote, as Aiken stated, in a surprising statistic, only ‘30% of the qualifying women voted’. In the context of how women are not often recognised for their roles in history, she also spoke of Kitty O’Doherty née Gibbons, and how she had been forgotten as the ghost writer of Dan Breen’s *My Fight for Irish Freedom*. When both had finished, the audience was invited to ask questions and contribute to the conversation.

The overall event would have benefitted from a response that reflected an alternative view. For instance, McNamara did reflect on why some women did not

exercise their vote. He suggested intimidation from fathers or brothers. Was this a simplistic answer considering the talk was on suffrage? Equally, the perspective of those intimidated by Sinn Féin representatives during the run up to the election, especially those that objected to land agitation would have contributed greatly to the event. However, refreshments were served in the outside corridor, where the chat continued and new acquaintances were forged in mutual enjoyment of the event.

Figure 8.12. Chief Executive of Galway County Council Kevin Kelly provided the introductory address on 'Democracy and the People', to the Chamber at the commemoration of the First Dáil, 21 January 2019
Source: Eilish Kavanagh



The setting of *Áras an Chontae* Council Chamber for the commemoration contributed to the unique atmosphere that was felt by everyone present. Some family members who had participated in the 1916 Rising commemoration some years beforehand were also present and contributed their memories alongside the speakers. All expressed a regret for not having asked more questions when their loved ones were alive. Nonetheless, this pattern of public history is critical to the comprehension of both the actors and events surrounding the War of Independence in County Galway. Very often it is these family members that can divulge even the smallest of details, such as a grave's location, or bring along cherished artefacts such as photographs, medals or documents and thereby an essential piece of the jigsaw puzzle. Such jigsaw pieces are essential elements to building a heritage picture of this period. The same speakers went on to deliver similar lectures to a new audience later the same day at 7.30pm, in the Waterdale Suite, Claregalway Hotel. In the years that followed Aiken and McNamara contributed to the various events and publications surrounding the timeline of the

War of Independence.

The importance of holding such local events should never be underestimated or ignored. Controversially, one vital area of community funding for the preservation and promotion of similar heritage talks as those mentioned above received a ‘bitter blow’ in 2019.²⁰³ The Heritage Council announced that only those initiatives listed in their new Strategic Plan would receive funding. This was responded to, with a collective letter to the *Irish Times* from heritage professionals working in the communities of Galway and other areas, condemning the move.²⁰⁴ Despite this ‘demoralising’ decision, commemoration of the War of Independence in County Galway had begun in earnest.²⁰⁵

Confronting the Legacy of the Royal Irish Constabulary

In April 2019, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology hosted the annual Dúchas na Gaillimhe – Galway Civic Trust competition for Galway’s Transition Year (TY) students, entitled ‘Capturing Galway’s Heritage’. Amongst the entries was Glenamaddy Community School’s ‘Our Local RIC Officer Jeremiah Mee’. Such pride in the title led passing students, curious to know more, to stop and read the information on the notice boards. The information provided was gleaned from Mee’s memoirs, two distant relatives and online sources such as the 1901 and 1911 Census returns. Photographs included the memorial plaque in Glenamaddy and the site of Mee’s family home, burnt by the Black and Tans after the mutiny and later rebuilt for his parents. One section of the project provided information on how Mee later worked with Constance Markievicz. It was curious and to their great credit, that despite the contested narrative surrounding the RIC during the War of Independence, these students deliberately sought out information on what or who the memorial was dedicated to. These students could in turn begin to understand and create a narrative surrounding their sense of place. As discussed in Chapter 9, Emma Mahe, one of four students who conducted extensive research on Jeremiah Mee for this project, was so captivated by this project that she went on to further investigate Mee and submitted

²⁰³ <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/news/news-features/working-with-communities-our-initiatives-for-2019>
Accessed 15 April 2020. Also see response from heritage professionals in the *Irish Times*, 29 January 2019

²⁰⁴ *Irish Times*, 29 January 2019

²⁰⁵ *Irish Times*, 29 January 2019

this as a final year project. She stated that having a simple piece of built heritage in the form of a memorial plaque, had developed a passion in her local heritage that she intended to pursue long after she has left Glenamaddy.²⁰⁶

Later in the same year, from 19 August to 13 September 2019, Galway County Council offices hosted an exhibition from the Houses of the Oireachtas ‘Dáil 100’.²⁰⁷

Figure 8.13. Poster advertising the 100 years of Parliamentary Democracy in Ireland exhibition
Source: Marie Mannion Galway County Council Heritage Officer



There were four representatives for Galway elected to the first Dáil in January 1919 namely: Pádraic Ó Máille (Connemara, the constituency also included Galway Town), Bryan Cusack (North Galway), Liam Mellows (East Galway), and Frank Fahy (South Galway). The exhibition chronicled the historic role that these men, alongside others, played in those first years of Government. The exhibition charted ‘100 years of Parliamentary Democracy in Ireland, from the first public meeting of Dáil Éireann’ on 21 January 1919.²⁰⁸ Cllr Jimmy McClearn, the Cathaoirleach of the County of Galway

²⁰⁶ As per telephone conversation with Emma Mahe, 12 August 2020.

²⁰⁷ <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/press-centre/press-releases/20190816-dail-100-exhibition-launched-in-galway-as-part-of-dail100-celebrations/> Accessed 16 April 2020

²⁰⁸ Invitation sent by email from Galway County Council Heritage Office, 2 Sep 2019

spoke at the launch of the exhibition. In his speech he recognised that it was:

important to reflect on the legacy of the First Dáil and the fact that Ireland is one of a few new states established in the aftermath of the First World War which has remained a continuous democracy. Therefore, I am delighted that we have been given the opportunity to have this very important exhibition here in Áras an Chontae for the next month. It is an exhibition that tells the story of Dáil Éireann and how legislation and Parliamentary activity has affected Irish society through the past 100 years.²⁰⁹

The exhibition included carefully selected images to record ‘important moments in Irish society and how they shaped the State today.’²¹⁰

This display was first held in the Mansion House, Dublin over three days, from the 18–20 January 2019. In an unusual decision, the Lord Mayor opened the house to the public and those who attended were ‘invited to walk through the House and see the rooms where many significant meetings and decisions were made.’²¹¹ Whilst the open foyer in Áras an Chontae did not have such grandeur, the well-lit space placed the exhibit in prominent position for those entering the building. For those not normally engaged in this type of public commemoration, the local government offices provided a certain authenticity to the exhibition. Equally, by displaying these images outside of the capital, in a more local environment, the curators have contributed to the sense of identity that the Decade of Centenaries committee had hoped to achieve.

Figure 8.14. Memorabilia from the launch of Dáil 100 in Dublin’s Mansion House, 21 January 2020.
Source: Eilish Kavanagh



There was also a limited amount of memorabilia produced by the curators for those attending the exhibition in Dublin (Fig. 8.14). This included, a badge with an image of the First Dáil, a gold-coloured pin with a ball point pen, each with the harp and ‘Dáil 100’ embossed across the surface. The logo ‘Dáil 100’ was displayed prominently to

²⁰⁹ <https://www.dail100.ie/en/news-and-press/media-invitation-launch-of-houses-of-the-oireachtas-exhibition-in-cork-as-part-of-dail-100-celebrations-2/> Accessed 2 March 2020

²¹⁰ Invitation sent by email from Galway County Council Heritage Office, 2 Sep 2019

²¹¹ <http://www.dublincity.ie/2019-marks-centenary-first-d%C3%A1il> Accessed 3 December 2019.

cultivate the brand. The eye-catching story boards offered a welcome distraction to visitors going about their business. Others that viewed the exhibition in Galway County Council's offices included several representatives of the heritage groups based in the county (Fig. 8.15). These groups included representatives from, Loughrea, Abbey, Milltown, Clarinbridge, Skehana, Moylough. Pauline Connolly, from Milltown Heritage, explained that the 'Dáil 100' exhibition held a special interest for several of the attendees, especially her mother. While her mother did not 'have a keen interest in history', Pauline herself was 'surprised how interested she was in this exhibition'.²¹² This indicated the appeal that this particular period of history had amongst the people of County Galway.

Figure 8.15. The representatives of various heritage groups located around County Galway who attended Dáil 100 Exhibition in Galway County Council Offices, Prospect Hill, Galway.
Source: Galway County Council Facebook page



Contested Histories

Although widely considered as the first shots of the War of Independence, the commemoration in Soloheadbeg, County Tipperary did not register with many in County Galway. However, the Minister for Heritage, Josepha Madigan, 'stressed' that the event was another 'significant landmark in Ireland's Decade of Centenaries'. She paid particular tribute to the event's organisers for 'an approach which focused on

²¹² Pauline Connolly, *pers comm* 15 April 2020

reconciliation and the respectful remembrances of all who suffered and lost their lives.²¹³ The event was an ‘inclusive’ programme of events and involved what the *Irish Independent* referred to as a ‘mingled’ selection of relatives.²¹⁴ The report alluded to the families that represented not only the IRA Volunteers, but the two RIC policemen fatally shot in the incident and the often forgotten Tipperary Council workers, one of whom never fully recovered from the mental trauma.²¹⁵ Confronting these ‘complex legacies’, as mentioned earlier by President Michael Higgins, would never be easy.²¹⁶

This, after all, was a painful conflict from many points of view, not least those who were tasked with keeping the peace. Their remembrances, as argued by Terence Dooley, has been one of a supposedly deserved ‘oblivion’.²¹⁷ However, where in an inclusive society does that leave the relatives and friends of RIC members during any proposed State and local commemorations? The political rhetoric thus far has focused on what Guy Beiner refers to as a ‘republican model of martyrdom’.²¹⁸ As shown in Chapters 5 and 6, many members of the RIC had intervened on behalf of not only IRA Volunteers but ordinary citizens in fear of their lives. Also, it is evident from ‘The Collins Papers’ that some intelligence on Auxillaries or the strength of RIC in various stations came from within the police service.²¹⁹ However, despite the organisers’ best intentions, inviting the families of the RIC men to the commemoration at Soloheadbeg stimulated a dialogue surrounding this notion of “them and us”. Fianna Fáil TD Éamon Ó Cuív, grandson of Eamon de Valera , gave what the *Irish Times* referred to as ‘impassioned defence of the motivations behind the ambush, stating that the Irish Volunteers involved had been instructed by headquarters to procure arms wherever they could get them.’²²⁰ Ó Cuív continued that ‘it was “naïve beyond belief”, to believe the British government would cede independence to Ireland without a struggle.’²²¹ On what the *Irish Times* called the ‘other side’, Eamonn McDonnell, the grandnephew of Constable James McDonnell, said that the family were disappointed that the memorial

²¹³ *Irish Independent*, 21 January 2019

²¹⁴ *Irish Independent*, 21 January 2019

²¹⁵ *Irish Independent*, 21 January 2019

²¹⁶ <https://president.ie/en/media-library/speeches/address-on-the-100th-anniversary-of-the-inaugural-meeting-of-the-first-dail-eireann> Accessed 3 December 2019

²¹⁷ Terence Dooley, ‘Historian Terence Dooley previews the decade of centenaries’ *Eolas Magazine* February 2012.

²¹⁸ Guy Beiner, ‘Between Trauma and Triumphalism: The Easter Rising, the Somme, and the Crux of Deep Memory in Modern Ireland’ in *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 46, No 2 (2007) 375

²¹⁹ See The Collins Papers, Bureau of Military Archives, IE_MA_CP_05_01_16

²²⁰ *Irish Times*, 20 January 2019

²²¹ *Irish Times*, 20 January 2019

did not mention the RIC officers that were killed.²²² However, it is worth reiterating the words of President Higgins that ‘remembering ... must make more than a gesture at healing’ in order to ‘confront the complex legacies of our history with sympathy and empathy’.

Figure 8:16. The Necrology Wall at Glasnevin Cemetery.
Source: Fennell Photography.ie



In a similar issue, the Glasnevin Trust also sparked a debate when it erected the ‘Necrology Wall’ within the grounds of its award-winning cemetery in Glasnevin (Fig. 8:16). In a sitting of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht, John Green chairman of Glasnevin Trust, explained the premise of the wall. He stated that it was intended to ‘remember, in a totally non-judgmental manner, all who lost their lives during the struggle for independence in the period 1916–1923.’²²³ Yet, almost immediately after the initial phase of the Necrology Wall was unveiled the controversy began. Firstly, the accidentally (although Gaelic speakers might view this as unforgivable) misspelt word, Easter Rising had been spelt ‘Eírí Amach Na Cásca’ – with the fada placed over the first ‘i’ rather than the ‘E’.²²⁴ The deliberate addition of the names of several British Crown forces, alongside civilians and rebels, all of which were

²²² *Irish Times*, 20 January 2019

²²³ <https://www.kildarestreet.com/committees/?id=2015-11-17a.178> Accessed 4 December 2019

²²⁴ <https://www.thejournal.ie/typo-fada-remembrance-wall-2697528-Apr2016/> Accessed 4 December 2019

‘displayed chronologically, and alphabetically within each date’.²²⁵

The wall was vandalised a year later when persons unknown threw paint over the names of many of the victims, no section of the wall was targeted particularly.²²⁶ The names of others killed in the subsequent conflicts were expected to be added over the remaining centenary commemorations, including the War of Independence. However, in February 2022, after repeated malicious destruction, the board of the Dublin Cemeteries Trust decided to discontinue the wall for safety and vandalism concerns. Once again President Higgins’s request for ‘a serious engagement with historical scholarship’, is arguably the best recourse to understanding this contested history and try to come to terms with the injustices that occurred.

The Historical and Reconciliatory Police Society (HARP), which represents the descendants of RIC members, had requested an open a dialogue surrounding these contested histories. Their request had gathered momentum from around 2009, with relatives and descendants of RIC men joining the lobbying. HARP also submitted repeated requests for a commemoration of RIC members in their roles as a peace keeping force. Specifically, this request refers to the Royal Irish Constabulary and Dublin Metropolitan Police, many of whom were killed during this period. On their website, HARP stated that they, the Society, were ‘born out of the need for a balanced and honest appraisal of the policing history of Ireland.’²²⁷ Membership of the Society is open to all serving or retired members of An Garda Síochána and immediate family members. The society to date has approximately 250 members and a committee of seven, there are no representatives from County Galway. Their first objective was ‘to secure for the members of the main forces, the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) and the Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) and their predecessor forces, who were killed in the course of duty, a suitable monument.’²²⁸

Although some localised plaques or memorials had been put in place previously, such as (Fig. 8:17) Constable Patrick Whelan, killed in County Galway 26 April 1916, discussions for a more national commemorative piece had been ongoing for some years, hence, the formation of the society. The impetus for such a memorial is on

²²⁵ *Irish Times* 9 April 2017

²²⁶ *Irish Times* 9 April 2017

²²⁷ <http://irish-police.com/the-harp-society-constitution-2/> Accessed 6 December 2019

²²⁸ <http://irish-police.com/the-harp-society-constitution-2/> Accessed 6 December 2019

behalf of the more than five hundred members of the RIC and DMP who lost their lives in the years from 1916–1922, fourteen of whom were from County Galway. In his sermon at the first interdenominational commemoration service at Mount Argus, Dublin, the Venerable David Pierpoint, Archdeacon of Dublin, spoke of the service as being ‘a memorial for them, [it] is also a time of ecumenism and peace.’ He continued:

This Church as with many other churches in this wonderful city of ours has seen its parishioners die in carrying out their duty only to be left without memorials because their role in society was seen as supporting the ‘foreign power’ which so many Irishmen and women wished to be released from. This is wrong and is something which needs to be rectified. I call on all members of our political parties to consider these men from the RIC and DMP (just as in recent times those Irishmen and women who fought in the great war and second world war have been recognised), and at the very least erect some memorial to them for undertaking the role of policing in our land and in this city. Many of you here this morning had family members who served in the RIC and DMP or indeed the RUC and this time of remembrance is as important to you as individuals as it should be to the whole nation.²²⁹

This memorial service has continued year on year and has seen the congregation grow.

Figure 8:17. The commemoration record of Patrick Whelan RIC Constable on the HARP Society webpage.
Courtesy of Gerard Love, Harp Society



In their call for a commemoration, HARP made the distinction that the RIC was different from other Crown forces such as Black and Tans or the Auxiliaries force. They were mostly Irishmen. Their proposed RIC commemoration was to remember those who died in the conflict. However, at this stage their petitions were not necessarily in the public domain as they were cognisant that their pleas would result

²²⁹ <https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2014/09/Royal-Irish-Constabulary-and-Dublin-Metropolitan-Police-Members-Honoured-at-Memorial-Service> Accessed 6 December 2019

in a controversy that would most certainly cause consternation for the descendants of RIC members. The conflict in Northern Ireland and the use of British troops to initially suppress the civil rights movement, which in turn led to violent clashes, remained all too vivid in the memories of some Irish communities. Part of their debate is the reference to ‘peacekeepers’ which is an interesting choice of words that uses a retrospective redefinition of their role.²³⁰ In contemporary discourse, a peacekeeper is a role undertaken by a neutral military corps to maintain peace in conflict areas. This was not the memory of many communities across the country. Nonetheless, they were employed to maintain and enforce peace amongst communities. There is evidence that some RIC men remained members despite the ongoing ostracisation, to aid the IRA, passing information, or warning of impending raids. Volunteers, such as John King, Connemara Brigade, stated in his Witness Statement that: ‘The friendly men in the RIC and military were giving us all the information and help they could ... [they] deserve the eternal gratitude of the IRA because they risked their lives each time they gave information to aid us.’²³¹ Peter Folan, a Head Constable in Dublin Castle, was approached by Michael McHugh from County Galway who claimed to be ‘in the inner circle of the National movement, [he was] advised to stay in the job’ as Folan would be of more use to them there.²³² According to Folan’s statement he copied and passed several documents with raids or names of individual spies that would have been seen as critical.

After the Treaty was signed, the RIC was eventually disbanded in 1922 amid continued diminished assignments as the ‘underground administration of the Irish Republic surfaced with a newly-acquired legitimacy.’²³³ Animosity remained towards the 180 members joining the newly-founded Civic Guard, later An Garda Síochána under Commissioner Michael Staines. This was especially the case when they had to enforce policies of the pro-Treaty Government.²³⁴ Despite the attention researchers such as Jim Herlihy, Richard Abbot and Conor Brady put into the personalities behind

²³⁰ W. J. Lowe, W. J., and E. L. Malcolm. ‘The Domestication of The Royal Irish Constabulary, 1836–1922.’ *Irish Economic and Social History* 19 (1992): 27-48. Accessed January 31, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/24341846.

²³¹ John King, BMH, WS No. 1731 date unknown

²³² Peter Folan, BMH, WS No. 316 29 October 1949

²³³ Conor Brady, *Guardians of the Peace* (London: Prendeville Publishing Ltd, 2000) 25

²³⁴ <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2019/0306/1034656-the-ric-the-forgotten-men-of-the-war-of-independence/> Accessed 5 December 2019 and Jim Herlihy, *The Royal Irish Constabulary: A Short History and Genealogical Guide with as Select List of Medal Awards and Casualties* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2016) 138

the RIC, little is really known about the majority of men after they left the force.²³⁵ Some transferred to the newly-formed Royal Ulster Constabulary. Others found careers in the colonial police forces, many of which were trained and led by RIC men.

Figure 8:18. Historian Jim Herlihy who has amassed a vast amount of information on the service life of RIC men during his research.
Source: *Irish Examiner*



A sizeable cohort went to join the Palestine Police.²³⁶ This may have been a logical step once there was no longer a role for enforcing British justice in a colonial administration in Ireland. Not many in Ireland could have tolerated their presence. Equally, no records have come to light to show how the conflict continued to affect their lives. This is once again a symptom of what Terence Dooley describes as, ‘the vanquished oblivion’ mentioned earlier.²³⁷

However, calls for a dedicated commemoration for those RIC that were killed during the struggle for independence had, year on year, gathered traction. Such a commemoration could bring forth an alternative narrative and allow an even greater understanding of this period. David Fitzpatrick has pointed to the lack of acknowledgement of civilian deaths, ‘let alone the Crown forces’ when discussing Easter 1916.²³⁸ His argument stands for the subsequent conflicts up until their

²³⁵ Herlihy, *The Royal Irish Constabulary*; and Richard Abbot, *Police Casualties in Ireland 1919–1922* (Cork: Mercier Press Ltd, 2000)

²³⁶ *Irish Times*, 24 August 2012

²³⁷ Terence Dooley, ‘Historian Terence Dooley previews the decade of centenaries’ *Eolas Magazine* February 2012. <https://www.eolasmagazine.ie/historian-terence-dooley-previews-the-decade-of-centenaries/> Accessed 2 July 2019.

²³⁸ David Fitzpatrick, ‘Historians and the Commemoration of Irish Conflicts’: 1912–1923 in *Towards Commemoration: Ireland in War and Revolution 1912–1923* edited by J. Horne and E. Madigan (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2013) 129

disbandment in 1922. He called on historians to,

do their best to avoid the use of simplistic and exclusive dichotomies or facile attributions of motive; they should raise awkward issues and, above all, seek to broaden the terms of debate in the interminable round of national soul-searching that we now face.²³⁹

In 2016, a 'totally unexpected and unplanned' gesture was made at the HARP societies Easter 1916 commemorations, at Cork Hill Gate of Dublin Castle. Constable James O'Brien was the first casualty of the Easter Rising and during the wreath-laying a young girl approached those surrounding the gates and requested permission to also place a wreath. Freya Connolly was the great grandniece of Sean Connolly, the man responsible for shooting Constable O'Brien. Connolly, himself was killed later that same day (Fig.8.19).

Figure 8:19. Freya Connolly who laid a wreath on behalf of the Connolly family for Constable James O'Brien at a 1916 commemoration ceremony held at Cork Hill Gate of Dublin Castle.

Source: Irish Examiner



The gesture by Ms. Connolly signalled a possible willingness to embrace a more tolerant understanding of past events. The same could have been interpreted when Jim Herlihy, as mentioned above also attended the commemoration in County Galway the same year. Constable Patrick Whelan was the only policeman killed in the West of Ireland during Easter 1916. Herlihy, who has researched the background of many of the RIC, mentioned the irony that the man who shot constable Whelan, had a grandfather who was also in the RIC.²⁴⁰ Both families met in County Galway at the commemoration event and their presence re-ignited the belief that a more inclusive

²³⁹ Fitzpatrick, 'Historians and the Commemoration of Irish Conflicts', 129

²⁴⁰ *Irish Examiner*, 26 December 2016

remembrance event would be more fitting.²⁴¹

The Minister for Justice Charlie Flanagan caused controversy when he attended the annual interdenominational service for members of the RIC and the DMP held at the Church of St Paul of the Cross in Mount Argus in Dublin 14 September 2019. Minister Flanagan was the first government minister to attend the service and spoke afterwards to the *Irish Times*. He is quoted as saying that the RIC were ‘doing their job. They were murdered in the line of duty. As Minister for Justice, I acknowledge that being a policeman is a very tough job. The men that we commemorated were all killed in the line of duty.’²⁴² Herlihy acknowledged that,

the argument that some have made that the RIC were involved with Crown forces, the Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries, in opposing the IRA which was fighting for an independent Irish state. However, he added there was atrocities carried out on both sides in the War of Independence and the majority of atrocities carried out on the British side were by the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries who were drafted in to assist the police in combating the IRA.²⁴³

However, this “argument” has been well explored throughout this study and is also a historical fact in many other areas around the country, the RIC were directed to subdue any dissent behaviour. Equally, as shown in the Constable Mee narrative, the orders to suppress and deliver counter-surgency tactics were at any cost, even if this included innocent local citizens. However, it should be stressed that intergenerational memory of unresolved trauma is often preserved through narratives shared within families and the broader community.²⁴⁴ These deep-rooted memories, ‘shape identities as well as fuel negative perceptions and stereotypes of difference, often hindering reconciliation processes and perpetuating identities of continued victimisation.’²⁴⁵ Cillian McGrattan argues that ‘violent pasts may adversely affect younger generations who did not experience conflict directly or who may not be totally conscious or deliberately choose to ignore recent history.’²⁴⁶ The attitudes and beliefs in the present can be generated by the historical past. Yet, as McGrattan argues, ‘history by itself cannot mould identities; rather, its prime political function is to lend legitimacy and authority ... trauma, [and] politically speaking, can be constructed strategically ... the

²⁴¹ *Irish Examiner*, 26 December 2016

²⁴² *Irish Times* 14 September 2019

²⁴³ *Irish Times* 14 September 2019

²⁴⁴ Cillian McGrattan, *Memory, Politics and Identity: Haunted by History* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2013) 8

²⁴⁵ As cited in McGrattan, *Memory, Politics and Identity* 8

²⁴⁶ McGrattan, *Memory, Politics and Identity* 8

adoption of traumatic language and perception through the selection of particular historical reference points or interpretations.²⁴⁷ This trauma can manifest itself in several ways in the present, such as division, or as in this case, the perspective of ‘them and us’. This obstacle would not be so easily dismantled without serious engagement with historical research from every aspect.

Nonetheless, in what was seen as an impetuous gesture, Flanagan announced his intention to commemorate those who served in the RIC and the DMP as part of the State programme to mark the Decade of Centenaries. The date and venue for the commemoration was Dublin Castle on 17 January 2020, Minister for Justice Charlie Flanagan and Garda Commissioner Drew Harris would deliver the address. The announcement was welcomed by HARP who believed the 525 RIC men killed during the War of Independence were finally being recognised. Predictably, the announcement sparked a major debate. National and local radio stations, newspapers, social media, friends and families all expressed their views on the rights and wrongs of holding such an event, many felt the idea of what was referred to as ‘celebrating’ the Black and Tans would be too much.²⁴⁸ Minister Harris and the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar defended the decision, stating that the Black and Tans were not included in the ceremony and the government’s position was final. Yet, Dublin City Council were not convinced by Varadkar’s defence and voted to boycott the event. They were followed by Cathal Crowe Mayor of Clare County Council and each local government followed suit. In the *Galway Daily*, the Mayor of Galway City, Mike Cubbard, felt equally compelled to comment,

a commemoration should be a celebration of a person or event in history, but that history shows the RIC were often the ‘strong hand of the British state’ who opposed independence. As someone very proud of those who fought for that very freedom over 100 years ago, I think it would be disingenuous and hypocritical of me to attend this event that commemorates those who raided and torched homes, killed and tortured Irish people and throughout the 1800s used battering rams to evict Irish people from their homes.²⁴⁹

Members of the Expert Advisory Group, historians Maurice Manning and Diarmaid Ferriter, also came under fire for including a similar recommendation in the programme. Ferriter stated that what in fact the Advisory Group had recommended

²⁴⁷ McGrattan, *Memory, Politics and Identity* 8

²⁴⁸ Under the hashtag #blackandtans

²⁴⁹ *Galway Daily*, 6 January 2020

was that ‘consideration should be given to the organisation of specific initiatives to commemorate the RIC and the DMP and to acknowledge their place in history’.²⁵⁰

Ferriter continued that,

an academic event, a conference or seminar, that would look at the issue of policing in Ireland during the revolutionary period, including the role of and disbandment of the RIC and the foundation of the Civic Guard, which became An Garda Síochána.²⁵¹

The government did a u-turn on the announcement and deferred the event. The entire initiative was misguided and ill-judged. Especially as it was used in the subsequent election run-up held in February 2020 to hit out at an already heavily criticised Fine Gael government. However, those members of the community, family and friends of RIC members who had willingly put forward their narrative of events during the War of Independence, according to their social media posts, were disappointed at the reaction and became reluctant to reveal their private memories.²⁵² Nonetheless, albeit using closed or private mechanisms, social media groups, such as @RoyallrishConstabulary, did continue to flourish and expand their numbers of relatives of RIC members searching, posting remembrances, attending commemorations all hoping for some recognition.²⁵³ Once again digital media has accommodated interested persons to publish items or events to this private RIC heritage group without fear of online abusive behaviour.

As mentioned earlier, there are several examples of situations where members of the RIC came to the aid of both the IRA and their families during the War of Independence. Many of these were also highlighted in previous chapters. To date, no evidence of a War of Independence RIC commemorative site in County Galway has been discovered during this research process. Nonetheless, the consequences of this failed attempt to open the discourse on the RIC and the wider Crown forces, has the potential to cause untold damage for any future research, as private records are left undiscovered. Considering the negative reaction they received, the descendants may well want their family histories to remain private.

²⁵⁰ *Irish Times*, 7 January 2020

²⁵¹ *Irish Times*, 7 January 2020

²⁵² For individual comments see <https://www.facebook.com/RoyallrishConstabulary>

²⁵³ See <https://www.facebook.com/RoyallrishConstabulary>
https://www.facebook.com/groups/126602292427/?multi_permalink=10158097376557428%2C10158091069057428%2C10158086228972428%2C10158087154812428%2C10158089751907428¬if_id=1604144331879865¬if_t=group_activity&ref=notif and <https://twitter.com/RememberingAnd>

Digital Remembrances

Due to the unexpected outbreak of a worldwide pandemic, Covid 19, many events associated with the commemoration of the War of Independence in County Galway and nationally were cancelled during 2020. Among the events cancelled were ‘Commemorating the Centenary of the Connaught Rangers Mutiny in India 28th June 1920’ and ‘Writing the Irish Revolution: Counties in Perspective’.²⁵⁴ However, as restrictions continued, some events were held using online platforms such as Zoom and MS Teams attendance mechanisms. Podcasts as seen in Fig. 8.20, once again emphasises the effectiveness of using digital media as a way of disseminating cultural heritage.

Figure 8.20. Advertisement of History Ireland Podcasts.

Source: <https://www.historyireland.com/>

HISTORY IRELAND
IRELAND'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

HISTORY IRELAND ONLINE PODCASTS
Available on the History Ireland website (www.historyireland.com/podcast-channel/) or wherever you get your podcasts

Bloody Sunday 1920—the Tipp connection
John Flannery, Aogan Ó Fearghail, Enda O’Sullivan, Jayne Sutcliffe
(Supported by Tipperary County Council and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media under the Decade of Centenaries 2012–2023 initiative)
(Available from 2 November 2020)

The Government of Ireland Act 1920—100 years of partition
Martin Mansergh, Cormac Moore, Margaret O’Callaghan, Brian Walker
(Supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media under the Decade of Centenaries 2012–2023 initiative)
(Available from 1 December 2020)

‘In Mountjoy Jail one Monday morning ...’—the Irish revolution in ballad and song
Liz Gillis, Eunan O’Halpin, Padraig Óg Ó Ruairc, Fintan Vallely
(Supported by the Department of Media, Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport and the Gaeltacht under the Decade of Centenaries 2012–2023 initiative)
(Available now)

North Wicklow in the revolutionary decade
James Scannell, John Dorney, Rosemary Raughter, Brian White
(Supported by Wicklow County Council and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media under the Decade of Centenaries 2012–2023 initiative)
(Available from 7 December 2020)

The West’s awake!—Revolution in Roscommon 1917–1923
John Burke, Brian Hanley, May Moran
(Supported by Roscommon County Council with the County Roscommon Historical and Archaeological Society and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media under the Decade of Centenaries 2012–2023 initiative)
(Available now)

Belfast and the North 1920–22
Marie Coleman, Kieran Glennon, Brian Hanley, Brian Walker
(Supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs; Reconciliation Fund)
(Available from 9 November 2020)

History, memory and Bloody Sunday 1920
Siobhán Doyle, Joe Connell, Brian Hanley, Fearghal McGarry
(Supported by the GAA Museum and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media under the Decade of Centenaries 2012–2023 initiative)
(Available from 18 November 2020)

Listen on
Apple Podcasts

Listen On
Spotify

During the Covid-19 emergency and its aftermath, History Ireland live Hedge Schools are suspended. But they will be recorded and uploaded to www.historyireland.com/podcast-channel/ and <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/history-ireland/id1503109266> or wherever you get your podcasts.

There were also many thought-provoking projects that examined themes such as the relationship between passive, civil and physical resistance, involving speakers such as John Borgonovo, Sarah-Ann Buckley, Kate O’Malley and Pádraig Yeates. *History Ireland* held a Hedge School on the theme of ‘India, Ireland and World War I: The Connaught Rangers 1920 Mutiny and its Socio-Political Dimensions’. This was hosted by Tommy

²⁵⁴ <https://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/category/connaught/> Accessed 3 June 2020.

Graham and contributors included, John Gibney, Cécile Gordon, Brian Hanley and Kate O'Malley. Other events included 'State Formation, Political Violence, Civil Disobedience, Ireland North/South' (hosted by Centre for Cross Border Studies) and 'Decade of Centenaries Lecture Series: Women & the Campaign for Independence' (hosted by South Dublin Libraries).

Galway City Museum's 'Revolution in Galway, 1913-1923' exhibition gallery reopened on 15 September 2020 only to close once again under new Level 5 restrictions on 21 October. However, Brendan McGowan, Education Officer at Galway City Museum went on to publish a series of articles on the museum's website and its Facebook page. Some posts are shared such as, Tom Kenny's articles in the *Galway Advertiser*, others are researched and written by McGowan himself, and are included in the exhibition.²⁵⁵ McGowan's posts included 'Galway Women & 'Bobbing'', 'Galway's Night of Horror' 'The Killing of Michael Walsh, 19 October 1920', 'The Death of Terence MacSwiney, 25 October 1920', 'Centenary Anniversary of Tragedies in South Galway'. Of note was his article entitled 'Wedding of Matthew & Delia Colgan, 10 June 1906', which dealt with RIC Sergeant Matthew Colgan who retired in 1920 citing 'patriotic reasons'.²⁵⁶ This post continued to describe a connection with Patrick (Padraig) Joyce (who was killed as a spy). Joyce had sent several letters to Dublin Castle, one specifically accused both Matthew and Delia of having liaisons with Sinn Féin.²⁵⁷ Another post described 'The Recovery of Michael Walsh, 20 October 1920', in this instance a relative provided additional information to a previous post, which her father had relayed to her as a child.

Michael Healy of Middle Street was among the crowd that gathered on the Long Walk. Healy's daughter was recently in touch with the Museum to share her father's story: 'He decided to climb down to recover the body, when he realised he would not be able to lift the body out by himself he shouted to a man in the crowd he knew to help him, but he refused – obviously afraid. Martin King also in the crowd came forward and they managed to get the body up onto a cart that was left at the side and they pushed the cart up to Michael Walsh's home and brought the body into the public house. Mrs. Walsh told Michael that what they had done was extremely dangerous and told him he would need to leave town. She gave him the fare to go to Liverpool; he left that same day, and didn't come back until it was safe to do

²⁵⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/galwaymuseum/posts/10158605218981544> Accessed 19 October 2020

²⁵⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/galwaymuseum/posts/10158605695751544> Accessed 19 October

²⁵⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/galwaymuseum/posts/10158605695751544> Accessed 19 October

so. His mother told him after he had gone that the Black & Tans were searching everywhere for him.”²⁵⁸

Scholarly activities such as the above contributed further to the historiography of the conflict. The accessibility of these online posts and articles encouraged contributions from the public, especially relatives or descendants of those involved in incidents. The museum provided several photographs to accompany these posts, some of which were supplied by the relatives. McGowan’s work on the conflict culminated with the publication of a new book in 2021 entitled *The War of Independence in Galway, 1920–1921*.²⁵⁹

November, 2020: In remembrance of the Dead

The high profile incidents and deaths that occurred during the month of November 1920 was reflected in the centenary events held in 2020, albeit under restrictive measures. These events brought prominence to the many incidents, violent deaths, and the surrounding context, which led to their occurrence. Historiographical debates centred on varied themes such as women’s histories, British soldiers abroad, and the contents of Military Archive releases. Among those contributing to the discourse were presenters, historians, local authors, archivists and local church representatives.

As part of Galway County Council’s Decade of Commemoration Strategy 2013–2023, a virtual conference on ‘Changing Times’ was organised by the local county’s Heritage Office, in partnership with Loughrea Memorial Group. This included four pre-recorded talks: ‘Galway Soldiers who defied the Crown’ by Dr Conor McNamara; ‘Treating Trauma’ by Síobhra Aiken; ‘Connacht in the Military Service’ by Rob McEvoy; and ‘Terror in County Galway’ by Dr Conor McNamara. Unlike attendances at in-person conferences, these informative talks could be enjoyed by people in their own home provided you had access to the ‘Galway Beo’ Facebook account. However, each talk was quickly published individually on YouTube, with McNamara’s views reaching 488 within two weeks of publishing.²⁶⁰ Social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter made sharing these recorded talks to interested parties or groups instantaneous, thereby increasing viewership. Likewise, the Facebook application on mobile phones

²⁵⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/galwaymuseum/posts/10151783666821544> Accessed 20 October 2020

²⁵⁹ Brendan McGowan, *The War of Independence in Galway, 1920–1921* (Galway City Museum, Galway, 2021)

²⁶⁰ <https://twitter.com/ConorMacHistory/status/1324395187892817930> Accessed 5 November 2020

enabled communities without technical expertise to film and publish live streaming as events happened. For instance, on 8 November 2020 the ‘Barna Furbo Parish’ Facebook page announced a programme of events that included ceremonies and talks to be held in honour of Fr Griffin.²⁶¹ To oversee the events a committee was formed the previous January after a vigil at the memorial site in Cloughscoilte. However, their plans went awry with the pandemic.²⁶² The online events were orchestrated from the Facebook pages of the churches that Fr Griffin had associations with namely, Barna Church; St. Michael’s Church, Gurteen; St Brendan’s Cathedral, Loughrea and St Joseph’s Church, Presentation Road (see C7). This was a reflective commemoration, as distinct from a politically-motivated event. Many visitors joined online from around the world. Those in the vicinity also visited the site of Fr Griffin’s death during the week of his anniversary. Several of the events were conducted bilingually to represent Fr Griffin’s love of the Irish language and his affiliation with the people of Barna. Each of the three historians, Gearóid O Tuathaigh (bilingual), Cormac O Comhraí (bilingual) and William Henry, discussing themes that contextualised the period, Fr Griffin’s life, and the manner of his death. The female historic perspective was delivered by Sally Ann Barrett as a Galway Bay FM two-part radio documentary entitled ‘Who Shot Fr Griffin?’²⁶³ Sinn Féin cancelled its in-person events due to Covid-19 and instead announced an online Facebook lecture delivered by Cormac Ó Comhraí.²⁶⁴

A release from the Military Service Pensions Collection (1916–1923) in November 2020 related to claims lodged by 1,170 individuals, or by their dependants, and contain new information on the War of Independence and the Civil War.²⁶⁵ Forty-three files were linked to people from County Galway. Once again, significant historic evidence was contained within the files. One file related to Nora Duane, Doorus, Kinvara, who could not satisfy the criteria in order to make a successful claim, despite having the references required. Similar to other Cumann na mBan members, Duane had sent packages to prisoners, fed those who hid at her home, carried dispatches and on several occasions and was a sentry for IRA Volunteers.²⁶⁶ However, during this

²⁶¹ <https://www.facebook.com/BarnaFurboParishGalway> Accessed 8 November 2020

²⁶² <https://www.facebook.com/BarnaFurboParishGalway> Accessed 10 November 2020

²⁶³ <https://galwaybayfm.ie/galway-life/who-shot-father-griffin-part-1-and-2/> Accessed 20 February 2022

²⁶⁴ <https://galwaybayfm.ie/galway-bay-fm-news-desk/galway-commemorations-to-mark-100th-anniversary-of-death-of-fr-michael-griffin/> Accessed 18 November 2020

²⁶⁵ <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/release-history/november-2020-release> Accessed 10 November 2020

²⁶⁶ Norah Duane, MSP34FEF39795

centenary period of remembrance, the release afforded those family members, who had not thus far been able to access material on their relative, an insight into their activities. This release was especially welcomed by people that had known their relatives had been involved. However, because they rarely spoke about the conflict, had little information.

The Moore Institute held a live discussion panel via Facebook on 24 November 2020, entitled 'Remembering Michael Moran: NUI Galway marks the centenary of a campus tragedy'.²⁶⁷ This was moderated by John Cunningham, and comprised of Damien Quinn, Military Historian, Jarlath Deignan, author of *Troubled Times: War and Rebellion in North Galway, 1913–23*, Linda Connolly, and Síobhra Aiken.²⁶⁸ The discussion focused on the events, not only of Michael Moran's death, but other violent deaths that took place during the period. Once again the Loughnane brothers, Eileen Quinn and Fr Michael Griffin were mentioned. Deignan pointed out that Moran's death deeply effected his community, especially since it was their belief that this was 'a summary execution'. His memory, he added, had been profoundly overshadowed by subsequent events that took place during the Civil War. Other than his name on a grave headstone, Deignan noted that, there was no other site of remembrance. There was, however, a poem published in the *Tuam Herald* some weeks after his death.²⁶⁹ John Cunningham indicated that a more permanent commemorative memorial was under discussion. Cunningham elaborated that the memorial could be located somewhere in the vicinity between the O'Donoghue Centre (the temporary barracks of the 17th Lancers) and the old handball alley. Quinn explained that the location mentioned was close to this site where the shooting took place. The report indicated that Moran was being escorted from the police barracks in Eglinton Street by three auxiliary officers when he escaped and was shot. However, Deignan, a local General Practitioner in Tuam, claimed that this would have resulted in a shot to the back. However, Moran was shot through the left temple, suggesting the aforementioned alternative scenario of execution.

The interactive panel discussion allowed the conversation to flow seamlessly from one topic to the other. Connolly, for example, following on from the discussion on

²⁶⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/139190969925177/videos/1487924094750090/>

²⁶⁸ Jarlath Deignan, *Troubled Times- War and Rebellion in North Galway, 1913–23* (Lettertec: Galway, 2019)

²⁶⁹ *Tuam Herald*, 18 December 1920

the Eileen Quinn shooting, spoke about violence against women. She reiterated the many incidents that happened nationally, including Galway's Peg Broderick Nicholson. She also reminded the audience that IRA Volunteers had used the same violent tactics to control Irish women within their own communities, establishing a culture of 'policing women'. Whilst this could be seen as common practice during conflict situations, Connolly wanted to dispel the 'assumption that women were not as impacted during this conflict'.²⁷⁰

2021

With so many ordinary citizens still living under Covid-related restrictive measures in early 2021, the circumstance offered some comparison as to the trepidation felt in Ireland during the War of Independence. Although comparing the death toll is fraught with difficulty, the Central Statics Office confirmed a profile of COVID-19 deaths up to, and including, Friday April 30 2021 as, 4,903, of which 121 occurred in County Galway, over double the total casualties during the War of Independence.²⁷¹ Obviously, no citizen was under fire during the threat of contracting Covid-19. Yet the anxiety of death one hundred years later, does offer a perspective that places the conflict into a context of fear. Nonetheless, under the confinement restrictions, people's interest in their local areas blossomed, especially when confined to 2 km and later 5 km from their homes. Those with a passion for local history and heritage were delighted that some events were presented online and accessible to everyone free of charge.

One conference of particular significance apropos this study was organised on 14 March 2021 by Galway County Council in partnership with Clifden and Connemara Heritage Society. It was entitled 'The War of Independence comes to North Connemara: March 1921'.²⁷² Emphasising the north of County Galway, this event featured the execution of Thomas Whelan in March 1921 and the reprisals that followed; the West Connemara Flying Column; an eyewitness account from the

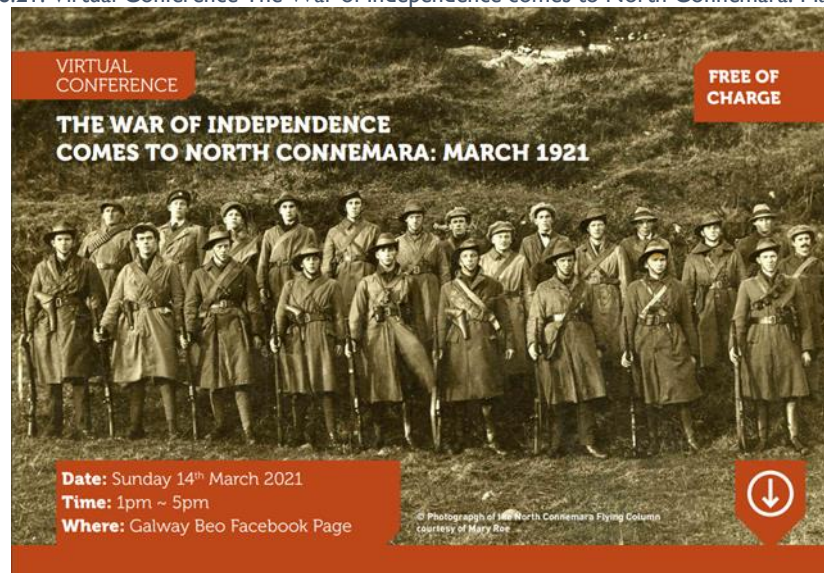
²⁷⁰ Prof Linda Connolly, 'Remembering Michael Moran: NUI Galway marks the centenary of a campus tragedy' Moore Institute, 24 November 2020

²⁷¹ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/br/b-cdc/covid-19deathsandcasesseries30/> Accessed 13 June 2022

²⁷² Virtual Conference 'The War of Independence comes to North Connemara: March 1921'- Press Release. Galway County Council Heritage Office.

unpublished memoirs of local woman Mary Little Kane on events on the Renvyle Peninsula; and a contribution by Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, who as the opening speaker, positioned these events in the context of ‘1921: towards endgame in the Anglo-Irish War’.²⁷³ The conference was held via the Facebook page, Galway Beo, and reached a substantial audience.²⁷⁴ Professor Ó Tuathaigh acknowledged that whilst he found the ‘disembodied medium a little unsettling’, he was grateful to have had the technology to continue with such seminars.²⁷⁵ Nonetheless each speaker presented engaging and insightful papers associated with the period. In his talk, Ó Tuathaigh emphasised the social and political context that surrounded the period. For example, he pointed out that public opinion was important to the British Government. Therefore, Whelan’s execution was best understood as a feature of a decisive turn in the War of Independence in which renewed efforts were sought ‘to create an opportunity for reaching compromise’ between the Dáil leadership and the British Government.²⁷⁶ Professor Irene Whelan, a niece of Thomas Whelan, spoke of his potential as a young man and detailed his arrest, imprisonment, and the controversy surrounding his trial and execution.²⁷⁷

Figure 8.21. Virtual Conference The War of Independence comes to North Connemara: March 1921



²⁷³ Virtual Conference ‘The War of Independence comes to North Connemara’

²⁷⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/Galway-Beo-102500174744778/videos> Accessed 24 April 2021

²⁷⁵ 1921: towards endgame in the Anglo-Irish war by Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5U26XsUmql> accessed 27 April 2021

²⁷⁶ 1921: towards endgame in the Anglo-Irish war by Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5U26XsUmql> accessed 27 April 2021

²⁷⁷ The execution of Thomas Whelan: Mountjoy Jail, March 14, 1921 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7dHum_akeA accessed 27 April 2021

She included a radio interview with Thomas' brother Joe from 1996, on the 75th anniversary of her uncle's execution in which he had recounted his memories of the reprisals that followed the execution. This tragic family narrative also provided revelations about Bridget Whelan (Thomas's mother) and her relationships with people in Dublin and with Maud Gonne McBride.²⁷⁸ In terms of creating a legacy for remembering the War of Independence, this collection of talks and presentations was exemplary in its content and accessibility both at home and amongst the wider diaspora. The image used in the poster, as can be seen in Fig. 8.22, depicts the Connemara Flying Column. What is most curious is in the presentation of the photograph, or more specific, the consistency of clothing and the armaments, considering the constant references to a lack of weaponry, especially in Connemara.

Overall, these events in County Galway, which ironically took place as a result of a forced reorganisation of the communications culture, enabled a much larger audience to attend than would have been possible otherwise. The Irish diaspora, who were in County Galway's heritage could also participate, sometimes recounting their family stories regarding incidents. The online facility created a certain anonymity that possibly gave courage to people, otherwise too shy to participate, to ask questions or make comments during or after a presentation.

To mark key events in Irish history, Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, Catherine Martin announced the 2021 'Programme for the Decade of Centenaries' on 27 April 2021.²⁷⁹ Accompanied by the Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD and Tánaiste Leo Varadkar TD, the programme combined several initiatives that included:

- substantial investment in new exhibitions and artistic commissions in the National Cultural Institutions to mark key centenaries

- State Commemoration to mark the centenary of the Truce

- enhanced funding for 31 local authorities to support community-led commemorative initiatives

- extensive new releases of digitised national and local archival collections

- new creative partnerships, including with Fighting Words and the Irish Poetry

²⁷⁸ The execution of Thomas Whelan: Mountjoy Jail, March 14, 1921

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7dHum_akeA accessed 27 April 2021

²⁷⁹ <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/2d843-taoiseach-micheal-martin-tanaiste-leo-varadkar-and-minister-catherine-martin-announce-2021-programme-for-the-decade-of-centenaries-including-a-permanent-new-20th-century-history-of-ireland-exhibition/> Accessed 28 April 2021

Reading Archive

ongoing support for the Beyond 2022: Ireland's Virtual Record Treasury research project²⁸⁰

Each legacy project was expected to enhance people's knowledge and understanding of the War of Independence. Also, in recognising the vital role played by women, Martin stated that one of the legacies should include a greater understanding of and appreciation for their part in the revolutionary period:

Women were not just background figures supporting some of the more well-known people of this time, but influenced events in their own right as revolutionaries, politicians, thinkers, humanitarians, law-makers, campaigners, strategists, soldiers, administrators and disrupters.²⁸¹

An event commemorating the Truce that ended the War of Independence on 11 July 1921 was included in the final stages of the Decade of Centenaries Programme. This event was held in Collins Barracks, Dublin in accordance with Covid-19 public health guidelines and was not open to members of the public. In his speech the Taoiseach stated that 'on this day we recall the Truce which came into effect 100 years ago. In particular we remember those who died in the War of Independence and subsequent conflict on this island.'²⁸² However, the Taoiseach firmly dismissed the controversies that had arisen over the 'abandoned' RIC event that had been planned for January 2020. He reiterated the government's stance on the importance of understanding the complexities of the past, including the diverse experiences of those who had lived and died during the period from 1919 to 1921.²⁸³ In the government's Press Release, Mr Martin sought to remind the public that:

History cannot be a dehumanised, reductive, simplistic, or self-serving narrative. And when we look back to a period of conflict we must be especially careful to recall that history is the complex story of individual men and women, their lives, their flaws, their strengths, their struggle and their suffering, however they identified, whatever uniform they wore.²⁸⁴

Martin's speech was in a similar vein to public speeches delivered by the President of Ireland, who had also spoken about the need to recognise the complexities of the past. In addition, President Higgins in his series of seminars, 'Machnamh 100' invited

²⁸⁰ *Decade of Centenaries 2012-2023, 2021 Programme* launched 27 April 2021

²⁸¹ *Irish Times*, 27 April 2021

²⁸² <https://www.breakingnews.ie/ireland/commemoration-event-remembers-centenary-of-truce-1155692.html>
Accessed 29 April 2021

²⁸³ *Irish Times*, 27 April 2021

²⁸⁴ <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/2d843-taoiseach-micheal-martin-tanaiste-leo-varadkar-and-minister-catherine-martin-announce-2021-programme-for-the-decade-of-centenaries-including-a-permanent-new-20th-century-history-of-ireland-exhibition/> Accessed 28 April 2021

speakers and audiences alike to reflect on the War of Independence, the Treaty Negotiations, the Civil War and Partition. While a difficult undertaking for many, it is by engaging in such discussions that a more nuanced interpretation and remembrance could emerge.

Conclusion

The latter half of the twentieth century was one of societal change in Ireland. Despite the State's commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the War of Independence in 1971, the outbreak of violence in Northern Ireland precluded remembrances on any large scale. The government feared glorifying violence at a time when the Northern Ireland troubles were ongoing. This was also true of many local community events in County Galway, the exception being the anniversaries of the deaths of the Loughnane brothers. Traditionally, it was the local Sinn Féin branch that held these commemorations. However, those in attendance generally hailed from all sections of the community. With ongoing tensions in the North, there emerged in County Galway a different approach to remembrance. Marching was replaced by the graveside reflections of veterans. As death notices appeared in local newspapers, those remaining members of the Old IRA, as they now called themselves, gathered to reminisce and remember their endeavours. For example, after the death of Pádraig Ó Fathaigh in 1976, his comrades arranged a commemorative Mass outside the traditional Eastertime anniversary. The opportunities for such occasions became more regular as the deaths of those associated with the War of Independence in County Galway continued to occur. And with each one, another possibility to record a first-hand memory of the conflict disappeared. In addition, despite the efforts made by the now covert Republican movement to commandeer opportunities for high-profile graveside eulogies, families in County Galway tried to remain respectful to their loved one's memories.

As the twentieth century drew to a close there was a continued interest in accounts of the War of Independence. For instance, Padraic O'Laoidh published his book on the death of Fr Griffin. He did so, to sustain the constant curiosity of those seeking to understand what had happened to the curate. Also, death notices in local newspapers reflected more and more the passing of those involved in the War of Independence in

County Galway. However, one discovery that garnered much publicity was the discovery of Patrick Joyce's body in a bog. Despite local newspapers attempts to expand the story, the 'no comment' response from his family quickly ended any further speculation on his death. At a national level, one significant event did occur when the 'Forgotten Ten' were finally reinterred in Glasnevin Cemetery in 2001 and given what the families had long campaigned for, appropriate recognition and burial.

The 90th anniversary of the Easter Rising in 2006 began to stir interest in other aspects of the revolutionary era, such as the War of Independence. What began was certainly a change in direction from previous remembrances characterised by parades and rosaries, to debate, discussion, and re-evaluation of previous held views. One such re-evaluation, or in this case, a re-remembering, was the role of women. This was to advantage those researching Galway women who had participated in the War of Independence. Historians, such as Margaret Ward were now interpreting journals, letters and diaries to discover the agency of women outside of domesticity. Another line of investigation, one that had previously been dismissed, was that of gender violence directed against women. Building upon this investigation, this study should also go some way towards redressing this forgotten narrative.

While British and Irish government relations still reflected the mutual merits of a shared history and academics seeking new perspectives on this conflict, one proposal that reflected a contested history, was the notion of including RIC men as part of the commemoration process. The debate sparked huge controversy. It was not, however, held within the academic sphere with an experienced moderator to regulate the discussion. Instead it was played out on the airways, newspaper letter columns, social media sites and on current affair programmes with some members of the public determined to shout down any opposing voices. This was an example of intergenerational collective memory, a concept that McGrattan referred to as 'collective trauma and transgenerational transmission of trauma.'²⁸⁵ As a consequence, this works itself out into whose 'voices are heard and whose are silenced, whose stories are given public acknowledgement and whose are muted'.²⁸⁶ In addition, a political silencing that becomes passive and active. However, some history programmes tried desperately to give a more balanced and informed debate, but those

²⁸⁵ McGrattan, *Memory, Politics and Identity* 8

²⁸⁶ McGrattan, *Memory, Politics and Identity* 8

who shouted loudest eventually got their way, albeit to the detriment of future researchers. Nevertheless, to fully understand the various nuances of this conflict, it is important to consider all the accounts. The Crown forces held no affinity in the communities in which they served, unlike the RIC who, for the most part, were Irish and Catholic. Is it not time to hear their descriptions of this conflict?

One final point concerns challenges to the local commemorations of the critical years 1920–1921 that were planned for County Galway. Building upon the successful centenary of the Easter Rising that whet the appetite of many local heritage groups, Galway’s commemoration of the First Dáil promised to see these same groups excel once more in their remembrances of the years 1920–1921. Due to the unpredicted effects of a global pandemic, this was not possible. However, new ways of promoting heritage digitally began streaming into homes on platforms such as Facebook that never expected to host such projects. It is hoped that those in County Galway, ready to share other commemorative projects, will find a way to utilise these digital resources in the future, thereby creating unique legacy projects that reflect these historic events in the present.

One of the main aims of this study was to analyse what ways memories of the War of Independence have transmitted. Also, an effort was made to explore possible links between the incidents and events that happened during this conflict, to later remembrances that occurred. As shown throughout Chapters 7 and 8, remembrances and commemorations are conducted locally, nationally and internationally by individuals, local communities, local historians, professional historians and the State. Some commemorations are held to honour individual persons that were killed or occasions such as the inauguration of the First Dáil. Over the century, these remembrances were transmitted from generation to generation, each constructing their own representation of a shared past.

Also, explored here was the transmission and ownership of memory. Who for instance is remembering these incidents or events and what are their motivations? For example, political motivations surrounding the Loughnane brothers commemoration manifested in marching bands and graveside orations comparing the IRA struggle in Northern Ireland to the sacrifices of the brothers. Yet, the community of Beagh, the townland in which the brothers lived, came out in force for each commemoration,

despite their personal political beliefs. In the case of Father Michael Griffin, commemorations often centered on his religious life and beliefs. His spirituality dominating any insurgency he may have presented. However, here too there was an element of political overtures in each commemoration held, with Sinn Féin marking their own event with speeches at his memorial in Barna. In the case of State events, these were presided over by professional historians in an advisory role. Many conferences, book launches, lectures and talks took place, each exploring aspects of the conflict utilising new material or fresh perspectives. However, this too had political repercussions, as shown by the aborted proposal for an RIC commemoration by Minister Charlie Flanagan. Overall, despite the passage of time, the transmission of memory of particular incidents such as the killing of Fr Griffin and the Loughnane brothers has persisted.

Chapter 9.
Galway County War of Independence Heritage
Inventory

Introduction

Almost every society has, at some point, engaged in violent war, conflict, or perhaps some form of civil unrest throughout their evolution.¹ The challenge of peace building and conflict transformation have had varied outcomes such as independence, annexation, oppression, unification and afterwards the process of nation building can follow. As argued in this study, in the case of Ireland, it was during the aftermath of the War of Independence that the process of rebuilding an Irish cultural identity continued, a journey of 'self-discovery, as the country re-establishes contact with its traditions.'² But what of the tangible remains of conflict? What form do these remnants take and how do local communities or parishes connect to these traces that have survived? These questions have steered one particular opportunity for research into the creation of a heritage inventory relating to cultural items and sites that have endured from County Galway's War of Independence. No such portfolio has existed thus far, and it seemed a timely undertaking during the concluding years of the Decade of Centenaries. Specifically, the 'Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory', as it is entitled, is categorised into four main sections, namely, Historic Sites, Artefacts & Manuscripts, Memorabilia, and Memorials. The inventory also afforded this researcher the opportunity to capture and exhibit the essence of what has previously been referred to as 'cruxes'.³ That is, individual personal items or places that have inherent memories associated with, in some cases, violent events during this period of profound turmoil for the people of County Galway. Families, friends and neighbours retained these items that have become significant to them and act as memory cruxes of their past. It is this attachment 'to the past [that] encourages people to keep mementos ... as well as fostering the notion of heritage as a shared and collective thing that binds society (or perhaps more accurately, parts of society) together.'⁴ Artefacts can often convey an experience or encounter more effectively than historical writing. Built heritage can also create a sense of place for those who

¹ There have of course been a small number of societies that have long since learned to live in peace. See Douglas Fry, Souillac, G., Liebovitch, L. et al. 'Societies Within Peace Systems Avoid War and Build Positive Intergroup Relationships' in *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 8, 17 (2021) <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-020-00692-8#citeas>

² Neil Buttimer, Colin Rynne and Helen Guerin, eds., *The Heritage of Ireland* (Cork: The Collins Press, 2000) xiii

³ Oona Frawley, *Memory Ireland Volume 3 The Famine and the Troubles* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014) 3 See also Sue McKemmish, 'Evidence of Me' in *The Australian Library Journal*, Vol. 45 Issue 3 174–187

⁴ Rodney Harrison, Graham Fairclough, John H. Jameson Jnr and John Schofield, 'Introduction: Heritage, Memory and Modernity', in *The Heritage Reader* edited by Harrison, Fairclough, Jameson and Schofield (London: Routledge, 2008) 2

discover their meaning.

The Centrality of Memorials to the Personality or Sense of Place

Periodically, as changes in social norms occur, the heritage value of statues, memorials or plaques can come under question. Some are left to fall into disrepair. Alternatively, several communities in an effort to link with the past, have located these plaques and memorials in heavy footfall areas where passers-by have been able to stop and look. This approach seeks to create an affinity that has bonded the relationships between place and time through this medium of memorialisation. When projects have included these heritages as education tools, this affinity has influenced the cultural identity of students.⁵ An example of this are the memorials dedicated to Jeremiah Mee, John Geoghegan and Thomas Whelan.⁶ All three were the subject of local school projects in the last few years, as shown in a previous chapter. Interviews conducted with those involved in the initiatives described their initial curiosity about what or who the memorials were dedicated to. After their initial investigation, a significant interest was established and all the students began to develop an emotional attachment which contributed to what Ashworth and Graham conceptualise as an intrinsic sense of place.⁷ The students' research resulted in the project stimulating a burgeoning relationship with the past that became a resource for their present. It was not necessarily the memorials themselves, several of which are found dotted around the country, but, as Ashworth and Graham have also argued 'we create the heritage that we require and manage it for a range of purposes defined by the needs and demands of our present societies.'⁸ The meaning of these cultural heritages and their value became clearer the more absorbed the students became. Engagement in these heritages of Galway's War of Independence also gave the students an understanding of contested heritages. Emma Mahe, a Transition Year student in Glenamaddy Community School, was one of four students who conducted extensive research on Jeremiah Mee, mutineer of Listowel RIC barracks. Her interest went far beyond a

⁵ G.J. Ashworth, Brian Graham eds *Senses of Place: Senses of Time (Heritage, Culture and Identity)*, (Routledge: New York, 2016)

⁶ See Appendices 9.1, C Memorials - C: 12,13,14

⁷ Chapter 1 'Senses of Place, Senses of Time and Heritage' in *Senses of Place: Senses of Time* edited by G.J. Ashworth, Brian Graham (*Heritage, Culture and Identity*), (Routledge: New York, 2016) 4

⁸ Ashworth, Graham eds *Senses of Place: Senses of Time* 4

simple school paper and led her to extend the project and submit it as her Research Study Report for entry to Leaving Cert History. The significance of a serving RIC member staging mutiny amid what had become the bloodiest period of the conflict was not lost on Mahe. When questioned, she expressed her opinion on the controversy surrounding the 2020 commemoration for the RIC as announced by Minister Charlie Flanagan. She commented that:

you have to keep an open mind and not put your own opinion in, take the facts on what happened, not everyone will support the ideas but it should have been left opened for those who wanted to commemorate, regardless of public opinion. It is just being fair to everyone [in much the same way as] BLM, LGBT, religion.⁹

An interview was also conducted with Grace King, a native of Clifden, who was studying education in Dublin. She described her annoyance at the injustice shown to Thomas Whelan, whom she was convinced was ‘obviously innocent’ and would have been reluctant to seek anything to the contrary.¹⁰ Her interest also began with the memorial, something she had grown up seeing. Although she had queried her immediate family about it, not satisfied, her curiosity created the impetus to enquire further into the narrative surrounding Whelan’s execution. Thus began Grace’s connection to Whelan, a relationship that prompted her to visit his grave in Glasnevin when she moved to Dublin several years later. She complained that she was not taught much about local history in school, other than completing her project. Once the connection with Whelan was made, she explained that ‘it felt nice to visit the grave’, an experience she may have never thought of previously. Grace has since introduced a theme of local history in every school placement she has received. She encourages her students to walk about and see what is around them, record monuments or plaques, this is to evoke a sense of place within her students, she feels this is an important aspect to civil engagement. Active participation by these students, whether they walked past a monument/plaque, read a Witness Statement, collected photographs, visited a museum or interviewed family members, all supports the notion that involuntarily, heritages can become ‘part of the [ir] present.’¹¹ By all accounts these students had a positive experience, one they have remembered vividly and

⁹ Interview with Emma Mahe, 12 August 2020.

¹⁰ Interview with Grace King, 25 September 2020

¹¹ Rodney Harrison, Graham Fairclough, John H Jameson Jnr., and John Schofield, ‘Introduction: Heritage, Memory and Modernity’, in Fairclough, G., Harrison, R., Jameson Jnr., J. H., and Schofield, J. (Eds), *The Heritage Reader* (Routledge, London, 2008) 56

enjoyed immensely.¹²

The Creativity of Local Memory: Poems, Songs, Exhibitions

Lasting examples of the cultural heritages of the War of Independence in County Galway are also captured in the creativity of local and collective memory. Poems, songs, exhibition and digital heritages exemplify Irish cultural heritage. For example, Terry Moylan has comprehensively described, through a selection of over 500 songs, how the politics of republicanism was popularised.¹³ In addition, Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney's examination of literature and the production of cultural memory can also be useful to analyse how poem and song contribute to memory.¹⁴ They argue that these forms of cultural heritage are in themselves, a method of remembrance, both tangible (song books and sheet music) and intangible (orally) objects of remembrance and a specific genre of remembrance. Poetry and song are, in particular, a remnant of an oral tradition when communities were moved to record sorrow and trauma as well as the joy they experienced. Songs were a 'key to understanding our past'.¹⁵ The seemingly simple structure of conflict poetry belies the utter grief that memorialises the dead. By recording the name of the person or place and manner of death, poetry and song places the event in time for future generations. Lastly, the genre of poetry and song, unlike historic literature, can provide the composer with special licence to vent anger or to remonstrate about the events in question. However, specifically composed to reflect 'the beloved', is the poetry recorded after the death of Fr Griffin in November 1920, sacrificed without 'words of comfort in his ear'.¹⁶ All of the poetry catalogued in this study in memory of Fr Griffin evokes similar themes of his gentle vulnerability and saintly personality or the untold sorrow of his mother's pain. Poetry associated with this conflict, especially those that refer to Galway incidents, relocate the reader into the past and allows a brief awareness of the emotion of the time. Similarly, the use of song, often in ballad format can express, or reflect the bravery and heroic deeds

¹² https://www.ouririshheritage.org/content/archive/people/people-general/john_geoghegan Accessed 1 December 2019

¹³ See Terry Moylan, ed., *The Indignant Muse: Poetry and Songs of the Irish Revolution 1887–1926* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 2016), also Moylan hosts a podcast on Near FM <https://nearfm.ie/podcast/the-indignant-muse-episode-1-the-gathering-storm/>

¹⁴ Astrid Erll & Ann Rigney, 'Literature and the production of cultural memory: Introduction' in (2006) *European Journal of English Studies*, 10:2, 111–115,

¹⁵ *Irish Examiner*, 25 March 2016

¹⁶ *Connacht Tribune* 19 November 1921

of men. Apart from the Yeats references to Eileen Quinn, most of the poetry is composed by ordinary community members aching with grief, a reflection on what was happening in the community. In addition, many counties may have specific songs that memorialise local men involved in the War of Independence, however, often these are kept within communities. The same is true in County Galway. Nevertheless, despite an extensive search, this study identified only five that made reference to the War of Independence. Similar to those composed for the Loughnane brothers and Fr Griffin, in the 'Lament for Louis Darcy', the mother is also mentioned, which not only serves as a reminder that he was a mere twenty-three years of age when killed, but it also serves as a metaphor for the feminine entity, Ireland.¹⁷ Other names representing Ireland as a personified woman include, Hibernia, Shan Van Vocht, Kathleen Ní Houlihan, Éirinn. The ballad also promised to preserve his memory forever, 'Oh farewell brave commander, we ne'er shall forget you,' and his memory will 'shine like a beacon around Clydagh Bay'.¹⁸ Returning to the consideration of age, the more lighthearted 'Slashing Jack Keogh' suggested a more dashing romantic rebel that young women tell their mothers they want to wed. While not a focus of this study, it would be worth considering at a later date, the romantic liaisons that occurred during this conflict in County Galway. Music, popular or traditional, has always evoked memories or emotions and the same is true of those inspired by the War of Independence.

Collectively, this inventory of sites and items of cultural importance will provide a significant resource for those interested in the War of Independence today, and in the future. However, within the scope of this research it was not possible to discover every site or artefact, and not every photograph has been reproduced at this point in time. Nonetheless, it is anticipated that once this inventory has been fully digitised and launched to the public, a system such as crowdsourcing will be employed to develop and build upon existing information.¹⁹

¹⁷ UCD Library. UCD Library Special Collections. Colm Ó Lochlainn Collection: Ballads. WI J 2/57
//digital.ucd.ie/view/ivrla:6204

¹⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_PsuMmjz6Zg&feature=emb_logo Accessed 10 October 2020

¹⁹ Crowdsourcing is a method utilised by several cultural institutes such as galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (GLAM) to enlist the help of the public through an open call on a particular topic or project. The collaboration between professionals and the public provides a more open, accessible and 'smart' cultural heritage option albeit under a strict level of quality.

The Project

By discovering *how, why, and in what ways memories of this conflict have persisted, from 1919–2021*, as seen in Chapters 7 and 8, the subsequent aim was therefore, *to generate an original set of heritage initiatives for the general public, thus leaving behind a creative legacy for current and future generations.*²⁰ This ‘Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory’ is an intended output of this research and has been compiled from several diverse sources found either online, in the public domain, and also, within public or private collections/archives. With local communities taking a more active role in safeguarding their heritage it is worth considering that the notion of public heritage should not simply mean the conservation and ‘maintenance of material fabric’ such as public buildings and monuments in State care.²¹ Angela M. Labrador and Neil Asher Silberman offered another useful definition when they stated that,

Heritage protection ... [has] become explicitly social with methods foregrounding public engagement, diverse values, and community-based action. Thus, we introduce the term “public heritage” as a way of bringing together these emerging practices.²²

Once the community feel empowered there is a real sense of investment in and ownership of the heritage-making project.

Likewise, the role of heritage in everyday lives, its development, and its positive ‘influential force in society’ has been well discussed elsewhere.²³ Yet, during the compilation of this inventory, consideration was given to the notion that the protection or interpretation of heritage objects or heritage sites, cannot always focus primarily on, as William Logan and Keir Reeves suggest, ‘the great and beautiful creations of the past: reflections of the creative genius of humanity’, but rather to embrace the reverse, ‘the destructive and cruel side of history [or] difficult heritage’.²⁴ Places or items that represent the legacy of so called ‘painful periods’, are increasingly becoming popular amongst tourists.²⁵ This has led heritage professionals, tour guides and historical groups to revisit and interpret these objects or sites rather than

²⁰ Two aims of this study as seen in Chapter 1

²¹ Angela M. Labrador and Neil Asher Silberman ‘Introduction: Public Heritage as Social Practice’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Public Heritage Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) 1

²² Labrador and Silberman ‘Introduction: Public Heritage as Social Practice’ 1

²³ For example see, Marie Louise Stig Sørensen, John Carman, *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches* (London: Routledge, 2009) 1 also see, David Brett, *The Construction of Heritage* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996)

²⁴ William Logan and Keir Reeves, eds., *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with ‘Difficult Heritage’* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009) 1

²⁵ Logan and Reeves, *Places of Pain and Shame*: 3

disregarding or turning a blind eye to their origin.²⁶ Some examples of popular historic sites that represent painful periods include Kilmainham and Wicklow Gaols, Belfast Black Cab Tours, Portumna Workhouse, Vinegar Hill Battlefield, the site of the Battle of Aughrim and, as mentioned previously those included in the *Galway County 1916 Rising Heritage Trail: Go Explore the Historic Sites and Memorials*. Furthermore, as in the case of this study, the recorded artefacts, memorials and memorabilia can often symbolise the strength, courage or indeed the vulnerability displayed by those at the centre of such notable violent incidents and the wider communities they represented. There are several examples of this within this inventory. They include the careful preservation of poetry that bore witness to the pain and grief experienced by those associated with the violent death of Fr Michael Griffin and Eileen Quinn (D1 and D2). Or the visible and penetrating anguish of those holding the coffins of the two Loughnane brothers in the photograph taken by Tomás Ó hEighin (B31). As cited by Harrison *et al*, Photographs,

furnish evidence. Something we hear about, but doubt, seems proven when we're shown a photograph of it ... a photograph passes for incontrovertible proof that a given thing happened. The picture may distort; but there is always a presumption that something exists, or did exist, which is like what's in the picture.²⁷

Of particular note is the photograph of Margaret 'Peg' Broderick Nicholson inside a brass shell cap after her hair had been cut by Crown forces (B27). Her determination and resilience after this violation continued throughout the rest of the conflict. Writing about injustices or capturing violent scenes allows, according to Willa Schneberg and Frances Payne Adler, those to attest to the lived experience, thereby 'inciting [a] necessary conversation and give words to the unspeakable'.²⁸ For persons who observed the War of Independence in County Galway through poetry, prose, song or visually through photography and paintings, have indeed, transmitted their perspectives into the wider narrative of this conflict. Whilst these items evoke a sorrowful period of Galway's history, the determination to safeguard such heritages has ensured their significance for future generations. Sue McKemmish argues that personal 'record keeping' is a kind of witnessing. On a personal level it is a way of 'evidencing and memorialising our lives – our existence, our activities and experiences,

²⁶ *The Journal*, 14 June 2020

²⁷ Harrison, *et al*, 'Introduction: Heritage, Memory and Modernity', in *The Heritage Reader* 6

²⁸ Willa Schneberg and Frances Payne Adler, 'Why Write Poetry' in *Bridges*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Spring 2011) 18

our relationships with others, our identity, our “place” in the world’.²⁹ Moreover, McKemmish argues that such collections also bear ‘witness to the cultural moment’. She emphasises that,

Research into the phenomenon of the collecting [personal] archives as an example of an institutionalised way of preserving a society’s memory — and of how effectively it functions as a regime for carrying a personal archive beyond the boundaries of an individual life, of how well it fulfils its role of transforming ‘evidence of me’ into evidence of us.³⁰

Documenting and recording items from personal and public archives here in one place and as an output of this study, can potentially impact on perceived ideas surrounding the cultural identity and memory associated with this conflict.

Similarly, there is a cultural significance to recording the historic sites associated with the War of Independence in County Galway. Firstly, it is in recognising that these heritages are an important part of the story with regards to the conflict and the people connected to the sites. Secondly, not all structures survive in modern changing landscapes, and by retaining such a record in this way, it is hoped that local government or other interested heritage parties can make informed decisions on how to safeguard sites of cultural significance. Equally, the social significance provides an opportunity for local community groups and schools to engage with sites in their area, thereby building a sense of civic pride and place. John Harrison provides a list of reasons ‘why’ behind the interpretation of (public) heritage, three are relevant to this study, specifically as shown by the public response to the recent centenary remembrances of Easter 1916.³¹ Firstly, ‘because visitors are attracted to a site already and something is needed to cater for them’; secondly, ‘by a public body as part of its civic duty. Many state and local government agencies have a duty to provide interpretation to the public about the work they do and the heritage for which they are responsible’; and lastly, ‘to help local people and visitors appreciate their heritage and thereby take care of it and preserve it for future generations.’³² Equally, Peter Howard makes the distinction between this public heritage as ‘national’ and the private ‘familial’ heritage as ‘an even more meaningful, unmanaged heritage, behind the scenes in people’s lives’.³³ He

²⁹ Sue McKemmish, ‘Evidence of Me’ in *The Australian Library Journal*, Vol. 45 Issue 3, 174

³⁰ McKemmish, ‘Evidence of Me’ 181

³¹ For the full list see John Harrison, ‘The Process of Interpretation’ in *The Heritage of Ireland* edited by Buttimer, Rynne and Guerin, (Cork: The Collins Press, 2000) 387

³² Harrison, ‘The Process of Interpretation’ 387

³³ Peter Howard, *Heritage: Management, Interpretation, Identity* (London: Continuum, 2003) 1

maintains that ‘identities are made both of public and private heritages, but only the former are the field where professional managers and interpreters become involved.’³⁴ With ongoing advances of digital technologies, interpretation, or in this case, generating and presenting an inventory, these goals can be achieved and also, be easily accessed freely online. Correspondingly, maintaining and supplementing a record of these heritages not only ensures the possible utilisation by associated fields of heritage management, but also encourages public participation at every level. Significantly, studies have revealed ‘the relationship between materiality and memory, has suggested that landscapes and material objects act on the body to evoke particular kinds of memories, which cannot be invoked in their absence.’³⁵ Thus brings about the characterisation that Harrison states is ‘vital’ in association with heritage, that of authenticity.³⁶

Research Design

Heritage-making is a process that can happen under several conditions.³⁷ However, Peter Howard has stated that one ‘very common stage after something has been recognised as heritage is the compilation of an inventory ... [and] is an essential tool.’³⁸ Examples of other inventories could include, folksong, buildings, birds, wedding dresses, or shoes. Notably, it may be the case that ‘the things collected are not regarded as heritage, the fact of collection tends to make them so.’³⁹ Therefore, the presentation and interpretation of this inventory was considered methodically in order not only to maximise the results, but in deliberation of possible users not only today and in the future. Howard has also stated that, ‘heritage is not a static phenomenon; all aspects of it – things which are considered heritage, the markets for it, and identities – all change quite fast.’⁴⁰ Owing to this rapid change that can happen, in particular once heritage comes into the heritage market, the obvious consideration is in the ‘packaging or commodification’.⁴¹ Therefore to make this inventory user friendly and robust into

³⁴ Howard, *Heritage*: 1

³⁵ Harrison, et al, ‘Introduction: Heritage, Memory and Modernity’, in *The Heritage Reader* 7

³⁶ Harrison, ‘The Process of Interpretation’ 388

³⁷ For a more in-depth discussion see Peter Howard, ‘Heritage as Process’ in *Heritage: Management, Interpretation, Identity* (London: Continuum, 2003) 186–210

³⁸ Howard, *Heritage*: 196

³⁹ Howard, *Heritage*: 196

⁴⁰ Howard, *Heritage*: 186

⁴¹ Howard, *Heritage*: 186

the future the format was kept concise and practical. The research design itself involved a set of metadata that was streamlined to avoid ambiguity. This includes Code, Name, Classification, Short Description and Photograph or Image, also GPS Co-Ordinates are provided for Historic Sites, dates are included whenever possible.⁴² The model is based on previous archaeology projects undertaken at undergraduate level by this writer, adapted for each section and the findings therein.⁴³ Each entry includes a short description which provides in many cases the association or connection to a place or person involved and its relevance to War of Independence in County Galway. The breakdown of this inventory is as follows:

Figure 9:1 Breakdown entries per each category of the Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory

Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory			
Part	Description	No of Entries	Percentage
A	Historic Sites	36	
	(i) <i>Attacks on Crown Personnel or Buildings</i>	13	36.11%
	(ii) <i>Attacks on Civilian Population/Reprisals</i>	6	16.67%
	(iii) <i>Attacks on IRA Volunteers</i>	11	30.56%
	(iv) <i>Other</i>	6	16.67%
B	Artefacts and Manuscripts	36	
	(i) <i>Documents/Articles</i>	12	33.33%
	(ii) <i>Photographs</i>	10	27.78%
	(iii) <i>Medals</i>	3	8.33%
	(iv) <i>Composites</i>	2	5.56%
	(v) <i>Weapons/Ordnance</i>	4	11.11%
	(vi) <i>Other</i>	5	13.89%
C	Memorials	16	
	(i) <i>Buildings</i>	1	6.25%
	(ii) <i>Roadside Memorials</i>	3	18.75%
	(iii) <i>Graves</i>	5	31.25%
	(iv) <i>Plaques</i>	3	18.75%
	(v) <i>Commemoration by Multiple Memorials</i>	3	18.75%
	(vi) <i>Temporary Exhibits</i>	1	6.25%
D	Memorabilia	19	
	(i) <i>Poetry and Ballads</i>	10	52.63%
	(ii) <i>Articles</i>	1	5.26%
	(iii) <i>Booklets</i>	1	5.26%
	(iv) <i>Memorial Cards and other documents</i>	3	15.79%
	(v) <i>Collectibles (coins, stamps, other)</i>	4	21.05%

⁴² In some cases dates of photographs or memorabilia have proved elusive. However, rather than excluding such items 'date unknown' has been used.

⁴³ See also *Guidelines for Authors of Reports on Archaeological Excavations* (Dublin: Dept. of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2006)

As can be seen in Figure 9.1, the 'Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory' catalogues 107 entries in total. The inventory was subdivided into the four headings as follows:

- A Historic Sites (36 entries)
- B Artefacts and Manuscripts (36 entries)
- C Memorials (16 entries)
- D Memorabilia (19 entries)

Each individual entry is given a further categorisation to assist the user to find a particular item of interest. For example, in the case of Part A, the Historic Sites are categorised as follows:

- A (i) *Attacks on Crown Personnel or Buildings*
- A (ii) *Attacks on Civilian Population /Reprisals*
- A (iii) *Attacks on IRA Volunteers*
- A (iv) *Other*

In addition, the entries A35 & A36 are grouped together to represent coinciding attacks on both Crown forces and civilians in Clifden. Also, as seen in the table above, the breakdown of the inventory by quantitative entries and percentages are itemised. However, there are some examples that need further classification. Of note in Part D, Memorabilia the categorisation 'Articles' refers to an article that had been kept as memorabilia as opposed to articles in general. Also, 'Poetry and Ballads' is used to denote written verses that may have been written as a poem and later sung to a tune, or written as a ballad and the tune has been forgotten or lost and is now referred to as a poem.⁴⁴ Another example to note is the sub-description 'Events' in Part C, Memorials, this refers to a recent event where a memorial was placed at the altar of Barna Furbo Parish Church in commemoration of Fr. Griffin on the centenary of his death, November 2020. This differentiates it from permanent memorials.

Analysis

All entries on the inventory were surveyed during the course and scope of this study. With reference to the Historic Sites, these are the locations where the most significant incidents occurred during the conflict. In a first analysis, A (i) *Attacks on Crown Personnel*

⁴⁴ Some verses were recorded in print. However, when queried if the text denoted a poem or ballad, no satisfactory reply was received.

or *Buildings* (36.11%), the majority of which account for mostly RIC barracks or administrative buildings, it is possible to conclude that Volunteers were initially successful in these attacks. However, in the third group, *A (iii) Attacks on IRA Volunteers* (30.56%), these attacks tended to be directed at highly effective individuals such as the Loughnane brothers, Michael Walsh and Seamus Quirke and were intended to cause disorder within the IRA. Yet, in *A (ii) Attacks on Civilians* (16.67%), two of which are on towns, Tuam and Clifden, caused so much havoc and chaos that the papers reported the acts of violence as 'terror', encompassing varying beatings, petrol bombs, hair cutting or sexual assaults.

In the grouping, *B Artefacts and Manuscripts*, many of which were discovered online, tended to be personal possessions, consist of (33.33%) *B (i) Documents or Articles* and *B (ii) Photographs* (27.78%). Although it would be difficult to make assumptions why there are more documents or articles than photographs in this inventory, the suggestion offered here is their preservation in archives, such as those donated by Nora Loughnane. Traditionally medals are buried with their deceased owners so a figure of three (8.33%) was not unexpected. Furthermore, B36, Pen and Ink Drawing of what appears to be a memorial dedicated to Patrick and Harry Loughnane, was discovered in a wooden dresser in an outbuilding by the present owners of the Loughnane family home. Their enthusiasm for heritage and their understanding of the significance of such a unique item, compelled them to safeguard the drawing. It is certain that there are more of such items waiting to be uncovered and recorded.

In the case of *C Memorials*, once again the most prominent are recorded here, with the majority in memory of the Loughnane brothers. However, it was difficult to discover memorials dedicated to War of Independence exclusively, most mention or make reference to Easter 1916. In addition, there are many more *C (iii) Graves* (31.25%) for example, not yet listed here (as suggested by death notices) that were inaccessible to this researcher.

Concerning *D Memorabilia*, the majority of which are *(i) Poems and Ballads* (52.63%) these are mostly written with reference to the Loughnane Brothers or Fr. Griffin. This is somewhat surprising considering the tradition of expressing significant events through this creative medium. Also worthy of note, is that some artefacts and memorabilia can be intimately personal to individuals as was discovered when

researching Nora Loughnane's papers held in NUI Galway archives. Nora, expressed the caveat of non-release until some years after her death. Unless more of these items come up for auction, appear in local exhibitions or similar possibilities, they could remain hidden. It is therefore timely that this information will be uploaded onto Galway County Council's Decade of Centenary Website and the general public will be invited to contribute their own personal heritage possessions to the catalogue.

The 'Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory' is a permanent record of the tangible and intangible legacies of the conflict — one that will continue to be added to in the future. This inventory represents a diversity of items and sites from a variety and communities around County Galway. Marilena Alivizatou has commented on the global research trend that has focused on 'the process of capturing and making available in digital format anything of heritage value from artifact collections and personal archives to photographic material and audio-visual recordings'.⁴⁵ She has stated that the 'world's heritage in its different conceptualizations of cultural, natural, tangible or intangible has been given a new existence in the realm of websites, online interactive resources and social media'.⁴⁶ If scepticism existed before, the restrictions surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic has caused people to re-evaluate how the management and dissemination of heritage is achieved when constraints apply. However, whilst there are issues surrounding authority and control, wherever digital heritage has entered the public domain and has been made freely available, to a large extent, the digital interface with people has been a positive experience.⁴⁷

This inventory is a significant output resulting from the research and its display on Galway County Council Heritage Office's website 'Galway: Decade of Commemorations, Exploring the Legacy of Our Shared Heritage' will ensure its longevity.⁴⁸ The website was created in partnership with the National Museum of Ireland – Country Life and was launched in January 2016. It has become 'a repository' for chronicling the pivotal moments during the decade between 1913–1923, which led

⁴⁵ Marilena Alivizatou, 'Digital Intangible Heritage: Inventories, Virtual Learning and Participation' in *Heritage and Society* Volume 12 Issue2 (2019) 117

⁴⁶ Alivizatou, 'Digital Intangible Heritage: Inventories, Virtual Learning and Participation' 117

⁴⁷ Cultural institutions and local heritage groups are pleased with response from public. For further research see Myrsini Samaroudi, Karina Rodriguez Echavarría & Lara Perry Heritage in lockdown: digital provision of memory institutions in the UK and US of America during the COVID-19 pandemic' in *Museum Management and Curatorship* Issue 35, Vol 4 337–361

⁴⁸ <https://www.galwaydecadeofcommemoration.org/> Accessed 1 October 2020

to the foundation of the Irish Free State. The site features engaging information relevant to County Galway under the headings of ‘People’, ‘Places’ and ‘Topics’, which model the Irish Community Archive Network (iCAN) project.⁴⁹ Under ‘Topic’ is ‘Galway County During the Irish War of Independence, 1919–1921 — Digital Heritage Project’.⁵⁰ When the information in this inventory is uploaded, a general call to online visitors to participate and provide additional information will be initiated. Crowdsourcing is a well-established practice for gathering personal or private heritages without requiring ownership, or storage space. It is increasingly popular in ‘memory institutions as a tool for digitising or computing vast amounts of data’ and the general audience is often more knowledgeable than the professionals within an institution on certain topics, especially where personal possessions are concerned.⁵¹ In this case a continuous uploading of information in relation to the War of Independence in County Galway has the potential to provide valuable feedback, such as providing names connected to faces in a photograph or uploading other significant items. Also, as communities can often be displaced, interaction not only with the home communities but also with members of the diaspora can ensure a more comprehensive participation. Those who affiliate themselves with Irish cultural identity and heritage often correspond with pages on social media sites such as Facebook, so as to remain connected to Ireland. It is this researcher’s experience that providing new, interesting material, on a regular basis establishes a sustainable connection and a willingness on the part of the public, to contribute. Some photographic examples or items included in this inventory may not be familiar to the wider communities and could be of interest when local projects are considered. These include, Fr Michael Griffin’s lock of hair and blood soiled stole (B28), or the memorial booklet in Sr Patricia Loughnane’s papers (B14). Others include an insight into the social history of the period as seen in the Hanney Collection – Invitation Dance Cards from Killimor Sinn Féin and Cumann na mBan (B30). Items such as these, alongside others in this inventory, will be essential to the recording of the heritage remains of Galway County’s War of Independence.

⁴⁹ <https://www.ouririshheritage.org/content/category/about> Accessed 6 October 2020.

⁵⁰ <https://www.galwaydecadeofcommemoration.org/content/category/topics/galway-county-during-the-irish-war-of-independence> Accessed 1 October 2020

⁵¹ Mia Ridge, *Crowdsourcing our Cultural Heritage* (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2014) 2

A: Historic Sites

AI	Name: Keane's Public House
GPS: 53.267705,-8.929922	Classification: Attacks on Civilian Population/Reprisal

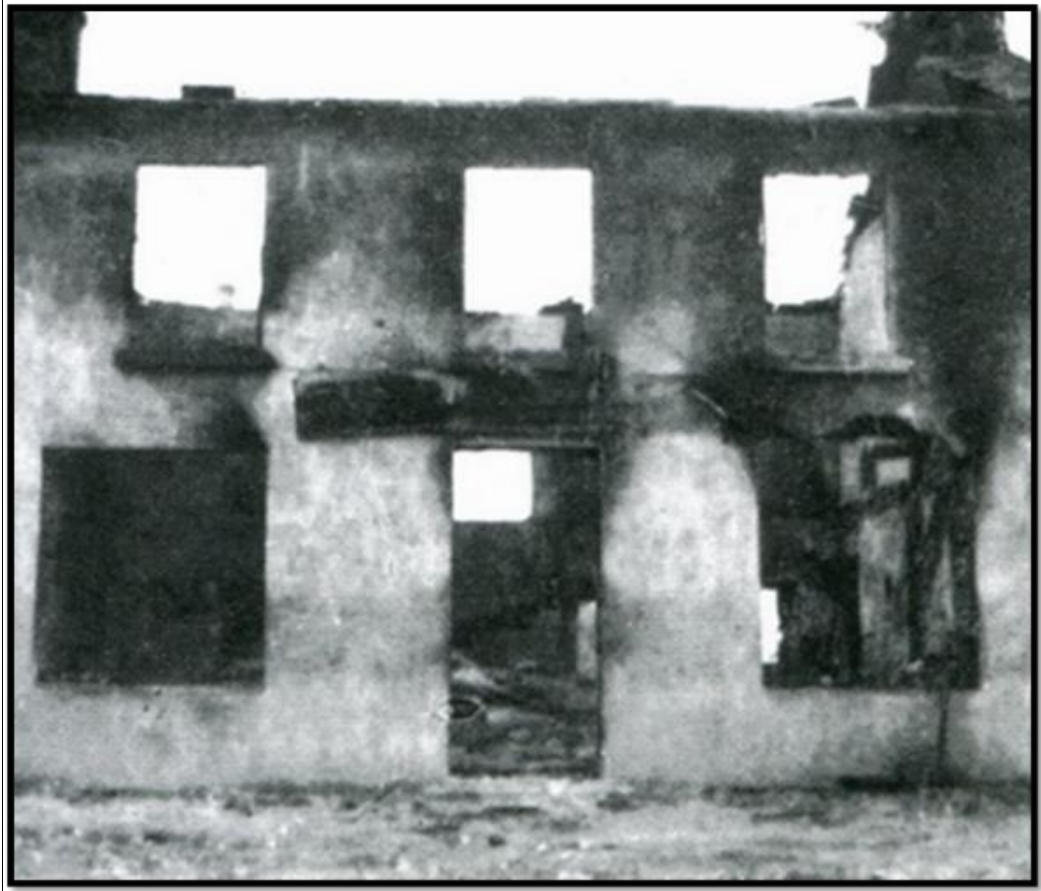
Short Description:

Situated on the main street in Oranmore, Keane's public house was the former home of Joe Howley after his widowed mother married William Keane. In the aftermath of the 1916 Rising, many Volunteers were arrested and interned in prison. Once released the Volunteers returned to their communities whereby they began once more to resume subversive activities. It was in Keane's public house that an initial meeting was held in 1917 with many familiar leaders of the War of Independence. Here they began to plot their next phase. Joe Howley quickly became marked as a dissident, after a planned ambush on six RIC men cycling from Oranmore to Galway left one of the Constables dead. The first port of call for the vengeful police had been to Mrs Keane's premises in search of her son Joe Howley. A large-scale reprisal left many buildings including Keane's public house destroyed. The house burned until only a shell remained.



Historic Sites: Keane's Public House 2019

Source: Alan Carr



Historic Sites: Keane's Public House
Source: Courtesy Alan Carr

Sources:

Thomas Hynes 17 July 1952 Military Archives Cathal Brugha Barracks (hereafter MACBB),
Bureau of Military History Witness Statement (hereafter BMH, WS) No. 714
GPS Coordinates from Google Maps

A2	Name: Ballybrit Racecourse, Ballybrit
GPS: 53.29819287140635, - 8.99685792539204	Classification: Other

Short Description:
 Between the years 1918–1919 Ballybrit Racecourse was used to train Galway Volunteers. In July 1918, a general call was sent out to all Volunteers to muster as quick as possible at the racecourse. Michael Newell from the Castlegar Company later stated that this was a test mobilisation and that most of the company were present before the appointed time. On the evening before the next Galway race meeting Newell also stated that he, along with other Volunteers climbed the telegraph poles around the course to hoist Tricolour flags. Although all flags were removed by the RIC the following day, their efforts were among a series of insurgent polices by the IRA to aggravate the RIC (this photograph is most likely from the 1930s).



Historic Sites: Ballybrit Racecourse
 Source: Courtesy Aisling O'Shea

Source:
 Michael Newell, 6 September 1951 BMH, WS No. 571
 GPS Coordinates from Google Maps

A3	Name: Loughgeorge RIC Barracks
GPS: 53.35754648345674, -8.93078711926391	Classification: Attacks on Crown Personnel or Buildings

Short Description:
 Although later abandoned, the RIC station at Loughgeorge withstood the first attack on an RIC barracks by the Galway IRA Volunteers in May 1919. Volunteers Seán Broderick and Jim Furey both took part in the attack which lasted for several hours. Police reinforcements from Galway city were hampered by blockades along their route. Today, Leacht Seoirse (Loughgeorge) Garda Station is a Divisional Policing Model pilot.



Historic Sites: Loughgeorge RIC Barracks
 Source: Eilish Kavanagh

Sources:
Atlas of the Irish Revolution, eds. John Crowley, Donal Ó Driscoll and Mike Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017).
<https://www.garda.ie/en/contact-us/station-directory/leacht-seoirse-loughgeorge-.html>
<https://claregalway.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/topics/1916-and-the-troubles/1916-and-the-troubles>
 GPS Coordinates from Google Maps

A4	
GPS: 53.48840565022722, - 8.993914188676177	Name: Castlehackett RIC Barracks Classification: Attacks on Crown Personnel or Buildings
<p>Short Description: An attack on Castlehackett took place 8 January 1920, The <i>Freeman's Journal</i> reported:</p> <p>'Late on the night of the 8 January 1920 the RIC barracks at Castlehackett, County Galway was attacked by the IRA, who it was reported numbered over 100 men. Sergeant Higgins was in the room near the gable of the barrack when he heard a noise from a window underneath. Almost immediately, shots were fired into the room and he was hit by pellets. The attackers located behind a ditch ceased firing shouting 'will ye surrender now'. The police refused to accept surrender and returned fire. Some two miles away while on duty Constables Keogh, McDermott, Cregg and Glancy heard the firing and an explosion of a bomb. Taking a shortcut through the fields, they came to the barracks by the rear and began to fire on the attackers. The police tried in vain to apprehend some of the attackers and their searches continued until daylight.'</p> <p>The IRA Volunteers attempted to attack manned police barracks until Black and Tan reinforcement arrived in March 1920. Abandoned barracks were sometimes burned or destroyed to render them unusable.</p>	
 <p style="text-align: center;">Historic Sites: Castlehackett RIC Barracks Source: Google Maps</p>	
<p>Sources: <i>Freeman's Journal</i> 10 January 1920 Michael Ryan, 19 December 1955 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 1320 GPS Coordinates from Google Maps</p>	

A5	
GPS: 53.320841407849784, - 8.855060050100596	Name: Egan's Pub, Coshla Classification: Other

Short Description:
The owner of Egan's pub, Thomas Egan, was shot and killed by the police in front of his wife Margaret. The incident was linked to the shooting of Frank Shawe-Taylor, a local farmer, auctioneer, valuer and land agent. Shawe-Taylor's violent demise was implicated in the local intensive campaign of land agitation, but the connection with Thomas Egan was never determined. The Register of Cases by the Courts of Inquiry had the death listed as 'Gunshot wounds inflicted by P.U.' (persons unknown)



Historic Sites: Egan's Pub, Coshla
Source: Eilish Kavanagh



Historic Sites: Margaret and Thomas Egan
Source: Tom Kenny

Sources:

GPS Coordinates from Google Maps

<http://homepage.eircom.net/~oreganathenry/oreganathenry/lambertbook/clt7themurderoftomegan.html>

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/militaryarchives/31017615767/in/album-72157702285914481>

The National Archives, Kew Military Courts of Inquiry WO 35/162)

Tom Kenny, Kenny's Bookshop

William Henry *Blood for Blood: The Black and Tan War in Galway* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2012) 135-6

A6	Name: Castlegrove Barracks, Tuam Classification: Attacks on Crown Personnel or Buildings
GPS: 53.57597403103736, - 8.95688761905808	

Short Description: An attack on Castlegrove Barracks, Tuam took place in March 1920. It was coordinated by Michael Moran O/C Tuam Battalion. Michael Higgins stated that the attack lasted up to three and a half hours with no injuries or fatalities. The barracks was evacuated the following day when the RIC moved into the larger station in Tuam. The 1911 Census return for Castlegrove lists, one sergeant and five constables. In remembrance of the 1916 Rising, Castlegrove together with other RIC stations, were attacked again the following Easter.



Historic Sites: Castlegrove Barracks, Tuam.
Source: Google Maps

Sources:

GPS Coordinates from Google Maps
Michael Higgins, 13 September 1955 BMH, WS No 1247
[Thomas Hussey 28 September 1955 BMH WS No.1260](#)

A7

GPS:

53.27079062859054, -
9.053500002177932

Name: Custom House, Galway

Classification: Attacks on Crown Personnel or Buildings

Short Description:

One main objective of this conflict was to disrupt and cripple the British government's administration in Ireland. To accomplish this, Volunteers began the campaign of seizing mail throughout the county, cutting telegraph lines and blocking roads. Another stratagem was to destroy vital files which recorded payments of rates, taxes or tolls thereby generating chaos amongst the administration. On the night of Easter Saturday, 4 April 1920, the Custom House in Galway was raided and cartloads of documents considered vital for taxation were removed and burned. There was a large amount of documentation so some were destroyed in the courtyard whilst others were transported to Ragoon Cemetery and burned there. The building was subsequently replaced in 1940. The new extension was deferred and redesigned when archaeological remains dating from the 13th century was discovered in 1997.



Historic Sites: Custom House, Galway
Source: Courtesy Tom Kenny

Sources:

GPS Coordinates from Google Maps

Mid Galway Brigade MA/MSPC/A/21 (3)

Thomas Hynes, 17 July 1952 MACBB, BMH, WS No. 714

Tom Kenny, Kenny's Bookshop

A8

GPS: 53.260407290179025,
-8.626357202957083

Name: Bookeen Barracks, Kiltullagh,
Classification: Attacks on Crown Personnel or Buildings

Short Description:

Bookeen Barracks was attacked by an estimated one hundred men on 1 July 1920. For over two hours seven policemen defended the building while they awaited reinforcements. Assistance did not arrive in time due to several barricades en-route. The roof was eventually set on fire and began to collapse. The policemen inside fought their way out without any casualties. The hand-drawn map from the Brigade report below was found to be very accurate and was used to locate the site.



Historic Sites: Bookeen Barracks



Historic Sites: Brigade Map depicting the planned attack
Source: Courtesy www.militaryarchives.ie

The following Coys. of the ^{3^d} Batt. took part in ⁽³⁾
the attack on Bookeen R. I. C. Barracks
on the 1st July 1920.
Craughwell, Kildonovan, Kellimoredaly.
Craughwell Coy.
Gilbert Morrissy Cahersiveen, ^{now in Australia} Athlery
John Morrissy " " "
Paddy Joe Morrissy " " "
Martin Rooney " " now dead
John Rooney " " "
Jeremiah Deely ^{Hampshamton Craughwell} ^{now in U.S.A.}
Anthony Fahy " " ^{now in U.S.A.}
John Maloney ^{Grinnagh, Craughwell,}
Stephen Furey ^{Cregg,} "
Patrick Hynes ^{Creggan,} "

Actual Participants
(10)

Military Service
Pensions Collection

Historic Sites: List of names of those who took part in the attack
Source: Courtesy www.militaryarchives.ie

Sources:

GPS Coordinates from Google Maps

http://ir.speakingsame.com/house_img.php?id=304973&addr=The+Old+Barracks%2C+Bookeen%2C+Kiltullagh&suburb=Athlery

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/militaryarchives/31017615767/in/album-72157702285914481>

The Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection: The Brigade Activity Reports A21_1_2
Brigade I Western Division

A9

Name: Tyrone House, Kilcolgan

GPS: 53.20704468303899, -
8.909547104032775

Classification: Other

Short Description:

Dating from the 1770s this house was home to the French and St George families. It stands on a prominent site that overlooks Galway Bay. The house was unoccupied at the time when unknown persons entered the premises and set fire to the house in August 1920. Although no reason was ever given for the arson attack, two possible motives have been suggested. Firstly, a possibility that the Black and Tans would use the house as a make-shift barracks. Secondly, if the house was no longer extant, the land would be easier to divide for sale to the Land Commission.



Historic Sites: Tyrone House, Kilcolgan

Source: Courtesy Robert O'Byrne



Historic Sites: Tyrone House, Kilcolgan 2020

Source: Courtesy Robert O'Byrne

Sources:

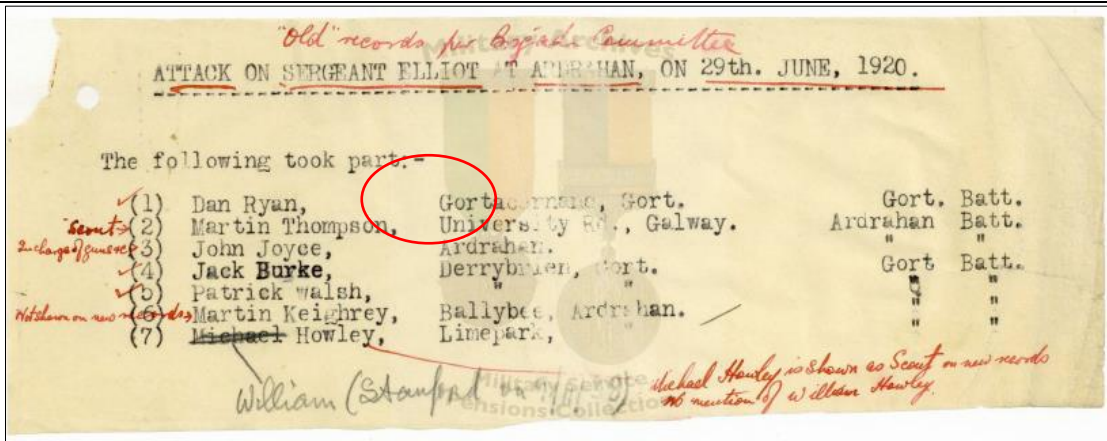
GPS Coordinates from Google Maps

<https://theirishaesthete.com/tag/tyrone-house/>

[Robert O'Byrne, Tyrone House and the St George Family: The Story of an Anglo-Irish Family \(USA: Xlibris, 2019\)](#)

A10	Name: Castletaylor Demesne/Wood, Ardrahan Classification: Attack on Crown Personnel or Buildings
GPS: 53.178343747940495, - 8.794454840588696	

Short Description:
Castletaylor Demesne is a short distance from the RIC barracks in Ardrahan. On 29 June 1920, recently-promoted Head Constable, Sergeant William Elliot was walking to the gate lodge at Castletaylor Demesne on a visit to his sick wife when four men ambushed him. They were directed by Peter Howley, Vice Commandant of the Gort Battalion, to gravely injure but not kill the sergeant. When Elliot, unarmed, neared his destination the men opened fire and believed Elliot to be dead when they dispersed into the surrounding wood. Although the sergeant survived, he did not return to work.



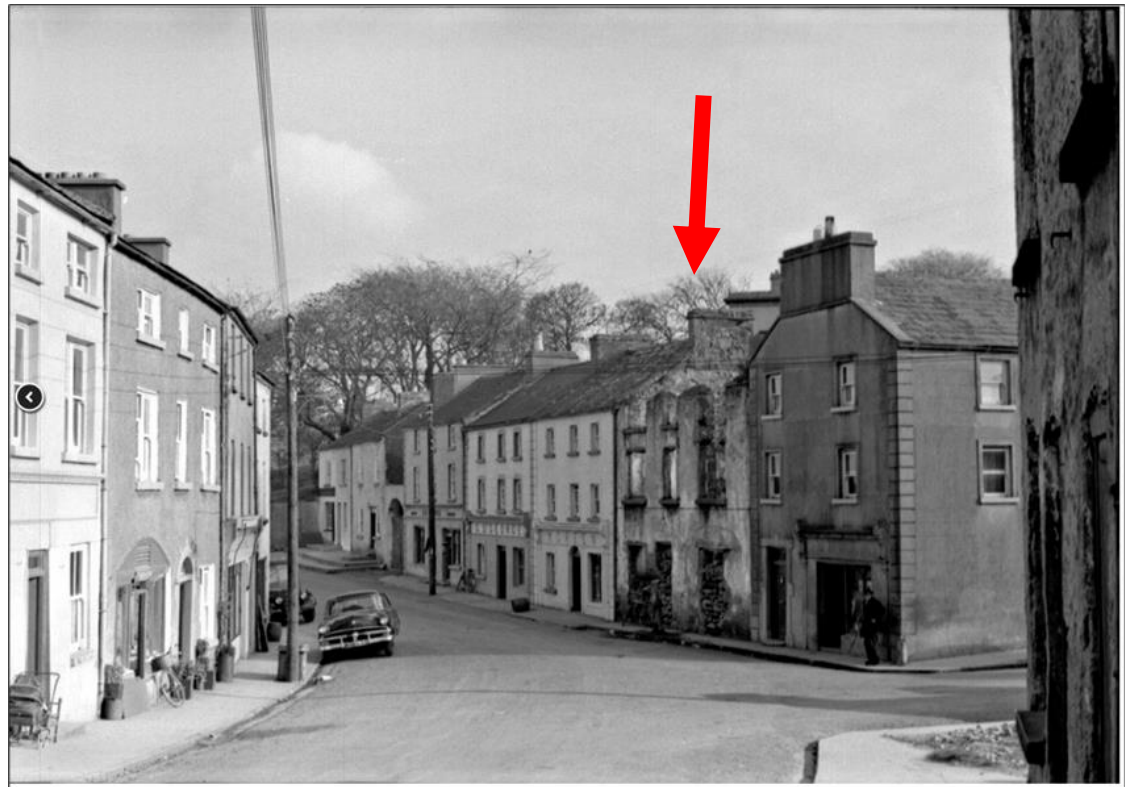
Historic Sites: List of men involved with the attack
Source: Courtesy www.militaryarchives.ie

Sources:
GPS Coordinates from Google Maps
Irish Independent 1 July 1920
Peter Howley, 22 March 1956, BMH, WS No.1379
The Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection: The Brigade Activity Reports A21_I 2
Brigade I Western Division

All	Name: Kinvara RIC Barracks, Kinvara Classification: Attack on Crown Personnel or Buildings
GPS: 53.13889636964051, - 8.936180042293694	

Short Description:

Now a local pub in the ownership of the Sexton family, this building was once an RIC barracks. By mid-1920 the RIC began to withdraw from the smaller police barracks around the county and retreated into the more fortified stations in larger towns. In July 1920, the Kinvara RIC garrison reportedly left the station heralded by the sound of fog horns. Shortly after midnight on the same night, the village was surrounded by 300 Volunteers determined to render the barracks unusable in the future. Thomas Reidy explained how they destroyed the building: 'As it was situated in a terrace it was not possible to set it on fire owing to the danger of the whole terrace being burned down so we removed all the slates from the roof, broke the doors, windows and stairs. We removed the steel shutters from the windows and dumped them. Sometime later we heard that the RIC, were going to occupy the Courthouse, so we did the same with it and burned all the books and records that were found in it.'



Historic Sites: Kinvara street scape depicting burned RIC barracks
Source: Courtesy Robert Cresswell Archive



Historic Sites: Men removing the rubble from Kinvara RIC station
Source: Kinvara 1916 Commemoration Committee

Sources:

<http://kinvara.ie/buildings-old-new/>

Robert Cresswell Archive, as held by Kinvara Community Council

Thomas Reidy 19 November 1956 BMH, WS No. 1555

GPS Coordinates from Google Maps

A12

Name: Kinvara Courthouse, Kinvara

GPS: 53.13928252694716, -
8.937733041308535

Classification: Attack on Crown Personnel or Buildings

Short Description:

In what appears to be a widespread practice during the latter period of 1920, the courthouse in Kinvara was destroyed by fire. The local Volunteers had heard a rumour sometime in August 1920 that the RIC were to occupy the courthouse as a temporary station after the Kinvara barracks was destroyed and set about rendering the building useless. The building is now used as a local gallery and local event venue under the auspices of the Kinvara Area Visual Artists (KAVA).



Historic Sites: Children outside the burned out Kinvara Courthouse

Source: <https://kava.ie/history-of-courthouse/>



Historic Sites: Kinvara courthouse after the roof had been replaced
Source: <https://kava.ie/history-of-courthouse/>

Sources:

GPS Coordinates from Google Maps
<https://kava.ie/history-of-courthouse/>

A13

GPS:

53.51501833822863, -
8.851249552824092

Name: Tuam Town Hall, Tuam

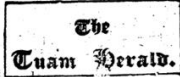
Classification: Attacks on Civilian Population/Reprisals

Short Description:

The 'terror' of Tuam began when news of an ambush and the killing of Constables Carey and Burke by IRA Volunteers on 19 July 1920 created anger and frustration amongst the Black and Tans. Many of them were in outlying positions and decided to descend into the town of Tuam. They searched widely for those responsible only to return empty handed into the town sometime after midnight. Feeling thwarted and aggravated, the police began to wake their dead colleagues. However, at some point later, incensed by their deaths and possibly fuelled by alcohol, the Black and Tans raged terror on the town of Tuam as never seen before. Public houses and grocers were smashed, and the contents pillaged. Some of the townspeople looked out of their windows to ascertain where the ruckus was coming from, only to have shots fired through their upper windows with shouts of 'get back or be shot'. With much of the same frenzy, the Town Hall was burnt leaving only a shell. In a dramatic escape over the rooftop, the local draper, his wife and children narrowly avoided death as their home and business were set alight. Grenades were indiscriminately thrown through the remaining homes and shops in an attempt to inflict as much damage as possible. Homes were raided, and any suspicious young men were taken out and beaten to gain information on those who had ambushed the dead policemen. Only the swift intervention of Head Constable Boules and Constable Colleran prevented the killing of several known Sinn Féin members. The terrifying events lasted for several hours when finally, Tuam once again was quiet.



Historic Sites: Town Hall in Tuam
Source: Courtesy *Tuam Herald*



Not Justice Rest Calm.
THE TOWN HALL WRECKED THROUGH THE GREAT TERROR

A TIME OF TERROR IN TUAM.

Naves in its long and chequered history did this famous old town spring into such unfortunate prominence as was its usually calm life so disturbed as on Monday evening of this fearful week of horrors.

THE TOWN HALL.

The Town Hall of our ancient and historic town, which was such an ornament to the place and the scene of many historic meetings, was built in 1850 during the chairmanship of Mr. Richard Kelly, J.P.

A TALE OF TERROR

Part of Tuam in Ruins

Fearful Destruction of Property.

THE POLICE GET OUT OF HAND

DETAILS OF THE DESTRUCTION.

THE TOWN HALL WRECKED.

"POLICE GOT OUT OF HAND."

The following is the official report received at Dublin Castle.

"After the murder of the two constables, Burke and Carey, a party of police and military went to Tuam and the police got out of hand so being the bodies of their dead comrades. Shots were fired and houses burned.

The police allege that they were fired on.

It appeared that late on Monday night Constable Carey and Constable Burke, Dunmore, were shot dead when returning from Galway in a police motor car.

They left for Galway knowing that morning accompanied by Sergeant Barry and Constable Breen, whom they left at Tuam, from which town they took an additional escort of police.

They returned to Tuam at about 8 p.m. and took Sergeant Barry and Constable Breen on the journey back to Dunmore. Constable Burke was driving.

When nearing Newtown D'Arcy, about 3 miles from Tuam, they found the road barricaded with felled trees.

Before the driver had time to pull up shots were fired from behind a hedge, and as Carey and Burke were jumping

in the glass with their hats and clothes, they were indiscriminately shot at from the windows.

The most sensational stories told are of the arrest of local Sinn Féin men, who were threatened to be shot, a threat which the witnesses believe would have been carried out but for the intervention of Constable Colliers, a popular policeman, who has been stationed in the district for some years, and Head-constable Bowler.

Jack Neville, a young electrician, staying at Mrs. Stier's, High Street, which is out of the track of the wrecked building, said that shortly after five o'clock armed police knocked on his front door, and demanded admission, with threats. Denying hurriedly, he came to the door, and found himself looking down the barrels of 15 rifles.

"Pull the bastards out of the devil," shouted one raider.

"No," said another, "we will give him more money than some of them showed our comrades here."

As they were about to fire Constable Colliers, who was in front with uplifted hands and begged them to desist. Thereupon a group of policemen marched Neville to the barracks, while their comrades discharged a volley of shots over their heads.

In the station the men had a dispute as to what they would do with their prisoners. Ultimately it was decided to return them to the barracks, and they threw him into the breadwell, where he remained in a dazed condition, until Head-constable Bowler came, and, remarking that it was a shame the way he had been treated, released him.

The police also raided the house of James McHenry, but he was out of hours, his terrified mother informed them. They ransacked up to his empty bed, which bears layout marks as a grim evidence of their visit. Shots were discharged at the house.

"Get a soldier's job."

A bomb was thrown into the house of James Casey, who is secretary of the local education committee, and exploded at the far side of the room, occupied by two lodgers, who had taken refuge under two feather beds, which were shattered,

and their bodies were flung to the wall.

The two unfortunate police which Tuam paid so dearly for to Dunmore Police barracks never stationed in Tuam.

It is alleged that the County Inspector were in the Tuam before the police got out of hand.

After Canney's, Brown's mess, the inside of the house finally riddled with bullets.

When the man in the front crested, after several attempts, Town Hall, the first chaser was the second outbreak when the with the tower into the flame the building to go.

Portions of the metal floor, weather gauge on the clock tower, and a souvenir by local Temperance Society, formerly every Society, which contain and valuable books, was burnt.

Mr. Canney, whose house was taken so part in politics and we terms with the police. Two of fought in the war for the small nations.

A motor lorry, with a Lewis thereon, circled the Square on ailing. The gun was trained on standing around. Later, on to Galway, they held up a motor car and the driver was mist.

NOTES ON THE OUTRAGE

The two unfortunate police which Tuam paid so dearly for to Dunmore Police barracks never stationed in Tuam.

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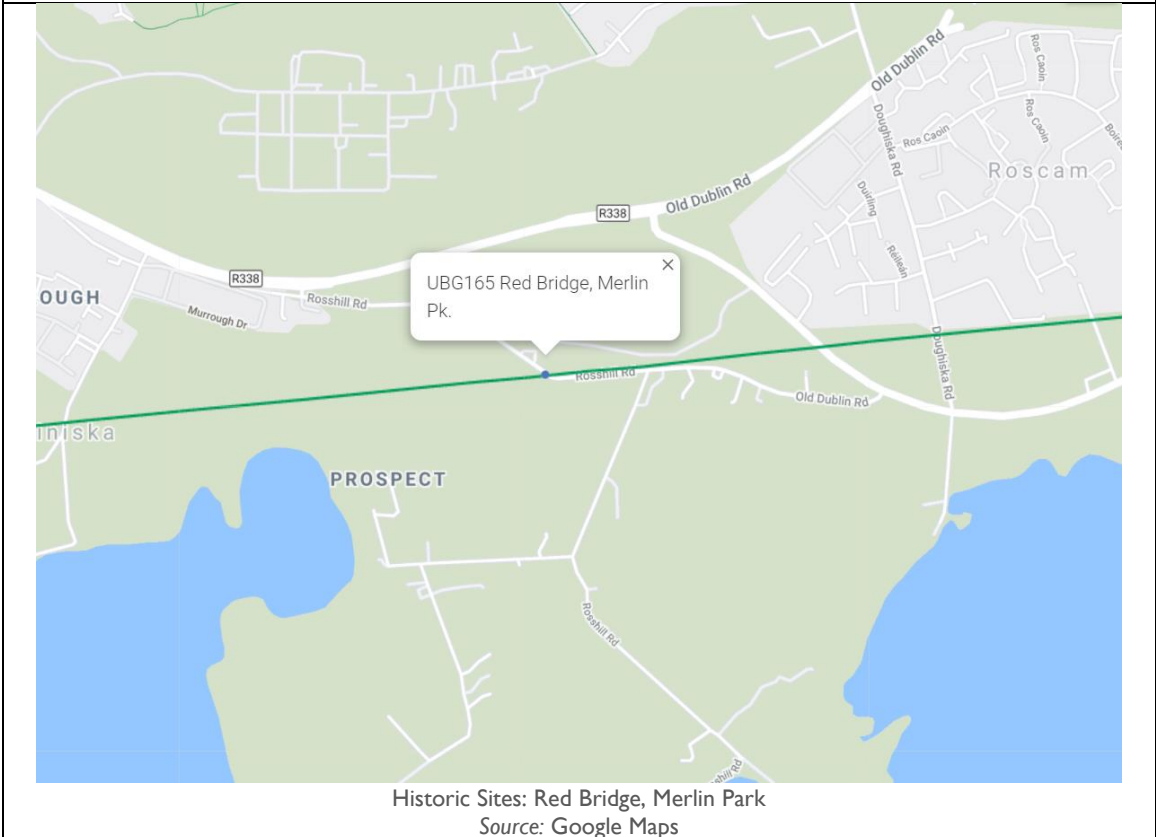
A motor lorry, with a Lewis thereon, circled the Square on ailing. The gun was trained on standing around. Later, on to Galway, they held up a motor car and the driver was mist.

Historic Sites: Headlines recount a tale of terror Source: Courtesy Tuam Herald

Sources: William Henry, Blood for Blood: The Black and Tan War in Galway (Cork: Mercier Press, 2012) The Tuam Herald 24 July 1920 The Tuam Herald 14 August 2019 GPS Coordinates from Google Maps

A14	Name: Merlin Park, Merlin
GPS: 53.273731711294786, -8.963131473299939	Classification: Attacks Crown Personnel or Buildings

Short Description:
 This is the site of an ambush on six RIC constables en-route to Galway from Oranmore. The planned attack involved various Galway companies of the IRA. Those present included Brian Molloy, Thomas 'Baby' Duggan, Maurice Mullins, Michael Flaherty, Sonny King, Paddy King, Tom and John Mulryan, Dan, Bernard and John Fallon, and Ned and Pat Broderick. It was just after midday when the six constables were attacked at an area Seán Broderick referred to as the 'Red Bridge' along the railway tracks. The ambush began prematurely and as a result five of the six constables managed to escape with minor injuries.



Sources:
 Seán Broderick, 15 September 1957 BMH, WS No. 1677
 Thomas (Sweeney) Newell 17 June 1952 BMH, WS No. 698
 GPS Coordinates from Google Maps

A15	
GPS: 53.27347278344874, - 9.046830177065916	Name: Galway Railway Station Classification: Attack on Crown Personnel or Buildings

Short Description:
Late in the evening on 8 September 1920, a large group of people were waiting for the midnight train to arrive from Dublin. The train was carrying the latest newspapers with details about the condition of Terence MacSwiney who was on hunger strike in Brixton Prison, and the racing results. Mícheál Ó Droighneáin, who was also on the train, was returning with badly needed arms. Constable Krumm, a Black and Tan with the reputation for drunken behaviour, began to shoot his pistol. The local Volunteers that awaited the train attempted to seize his gun, however, not before Sean Mulvoy was killed. Frank O'Dowd stepped forward and shot Krumm killing him instantly. According to the Mid-Galway Brigade reports, 'about six shots were fired.'




Historic Sites: Inside Galway railway station c. 1900 Source: Courtesy National Library of Ireland



Historic Sites: Galway railway station 2020 Source: James Kavanagh

Sources:
<http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/brigade-activities/operation/engagement-in-galway-city/>
Coordinates from Google Maps
Mid Galway Brigade MA/MSPC/A/21 (3)

A16	
GPS: 53.27585410850148, - 9.048427581805722	Name: Site of the former home of Seán Broderick Classification: Attacks on IRA Volunteers
Short Description: This was the site of the former home of Seán Broderick OC, 4th Battalion, Galway Brigade, now a retail space. He was taken from his home on 8 September 1920 by Black and Tans and brought to the train station, where a series of shots attempted to secure his demise. He feigned death and managed to reach a Mrs Browne's house at Number 1, Magdalen Terrace and went on-the-run shortly after his recovery.	
	
<p style="text-align: center;">Historic Sites: 15 Prospect Hill, Galway former site of Broderick's home Source: Eilish Kavanagh</p>	
Sources: Galway Advertiser, 16 April 2009 GPS Coordinates from Google Maps	

A17	Name: 5 New Dock Road, Galway Docks Classification: Attacks on IRA Volunteers
GPS: 53.27017745695813, - 9.0516829685492	

Short Description:

After the death of Constable Krumm, the Black and Tans began to seek and punish all known members of the Volunteers living in Galway Town. Seamus Quirke worked for the jeweller Jeremiah O'Donovan at 6 Williamsgate Street. He lodged with Charles Burbidge, a ship's agent and his wife at Number 5 New Dock Road. Sometime after 4am on 8 September 1920, loud knocking and shouts forced Mrs Burbidge to open her door to the agitated policemen looking for Quirke. They pushed past and went up to his room. Without being allowed to fully dress he was marched down the dock toward the Gas Works, stood up against a lamppost and shot several times. Left for dead, Quirke struggled back to his lodgings and died later that morning attended by Father Griffin and Dr William Sands.



Historic Sites: No 5 New Dock Road
Source: Barry Kavanagh

Sources:

1911 Census, National Archives <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/>
GPS Coordinates from Google Maps
Connacht Tribune, 11 September 1920
<https://irishvolunteers.org/seamus-quirke-It-in-the-fianna-eireann-cork/>
Joseph 'Joe' Togher 18 April 1952 BMH, WS No. 674

A18

GPS:

53.14123465880803, -
8.8060409111825

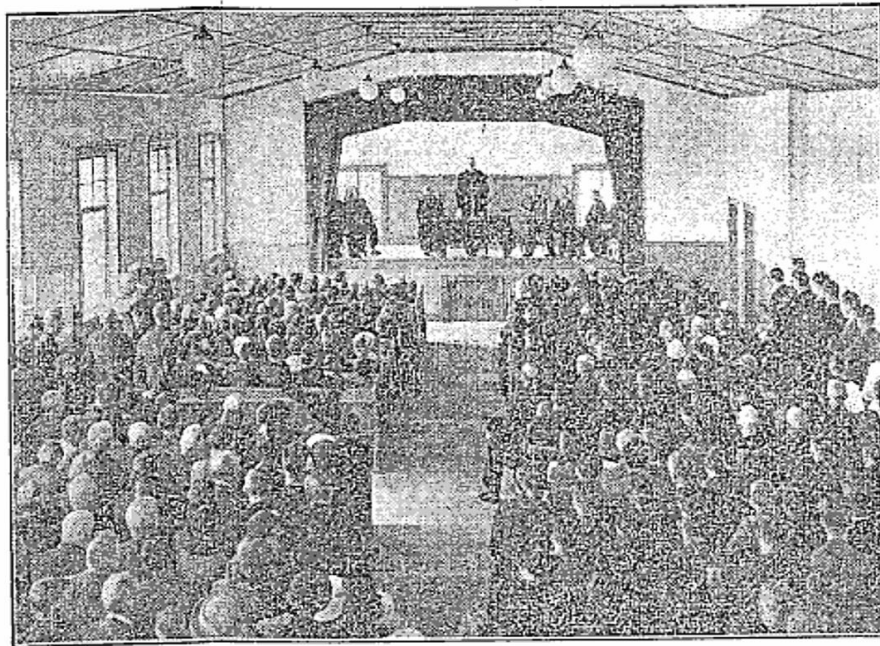
Name: St Teresa's Hall, Labane (now Quinn-Loughnane Memorial Hall)

Classification: Attacks on Civilian Population/Reprisals

Short Description:

According to a report in the *Connacht Tribune*, in the early hours of Sunday 26 September 1920, 'men who it is alleged described themselves as Black and Tans committed much destruction in Ardrahan and the surrounding villages, ill-treated some of the inhabitants, and threw the people into a state of panic and terror.' It was during this particular incident that St Teresa's Hall, Labane was burned down. Only the walls remained standing. Although the parish was compensated, they decided to build a local school with the funds. However, in March 1939, two meetings were held where it was decided to replace the hall in Labane on the same site in the memory of Mrs Eileen Quinn and Harry and Pat Loughnane, all killed in November 1920. Fundraising began immediately and Edward Martyn, a local cultural figure, and Shawe Taylor, a local landowner helped in securing the needed funds. The hall was built the same year using some of the original stone but by 1980 the hall was in poor condition and in need of renovations. A local committee was formed and the hall has undergone several updates and improvements over its lifetime and is today a vibrant committee meeting place.

INTERIOR OF LABANE MEMORIAL HALL



His Lordship, the Most Rev. Dr. Browne, Bishop of Galway, delivering the address at the opening of the Labane Memorial Hall. (TRIBUNE photo.)

Historic Sites: Interior of new hall Labane
Source: Courtesy *Connacht Tribune*

Sources:

GPS Coordinates from Google Maps

Connacht Tribune, 2 October 1920

Connacht Tribune, 2 April 1939

Connacht Tribune, 23 August 1940

The Clare Champion, 17 December 2009

A19

GPS:
53.26781, -9.07475

Name: Lenaboy Castle, Taylor's Hill
Classification: Other

Short Description:

The style of this castle is described by the Landed Estates Database as early to mid-19th century Tudor Gothic and is situated in the civil parish of Ragoon. It was commandeered by the counter insurgency unit, D Company of the Auxiliary Division in October 1920 and housed upwards of seventy men at any one time. The location was strategic and allowed a quick response to incidents around the county. Reprisals against the IRA increased and became more violent after their arrival. It was this particular division that was considered culprits for many of the violent incidents that occurred during what was widely reported as the 'terror' of Galway and surrounding areas. After the Truce, the Castle was transferred to the Sisters of Mercy and was used as a Mother and Baby home. Today, there are efforts being made by Galway City Council to secure the site for planned youth amenities.



Historic Sites: Picture of Lenaboy Castle when the home of O'Hara family
Source: Courtesy National Library of Ireland

Sources:

Clonbrock Photographic Collection, National Library of Ireland CLON509
DM Leeson, *The Black & Tans British Police and Auxiliaries in the Irish War of Independence, 1920–1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 47
<http://landedestates.nuigalway.ie/LandedEstates/jsp/property-show.jsp?id=636>
<https://www.advertiser.ie/galway/article/73682/the-auxiliaries-in-galway>
Irish Independent, 7 October 1920
Galway Daily, 12 February 2019
GPS Coordinates Google Maps

A20

GPS:

53.2720928655563, -
9.053423073550212

Name: Ó Máille Shop, site of Old Malt House, 16 High Street,
Galway Town

Classification: Attacks on IRA Volunteers

Short Description:

The Old Malt House was the home and business of Michael Walsh (Mícheál Breathnach), his wife Agnes and their eight children. Walsh was a Sinn Féin councillor in Galway Town. In addition to this he was an officer in the IRA and was always considered by his comrades to be a target for the Crown forces. The pub was raided on several occasions, such as 22 September 1920. Unable to arrest Walsh on this occasion, the Black and Tans terrorised his wife and children by firing shots and exploding grenades. The damage was later estimated at £1,000. However, Walsh was not easily intimidated and defied their harassment. Almost one month later on 19 October 1920, they returned for him and this time they made it clear that he would not return by jeering his request for a drink and refusing to call his priest. He was marched through the streets of Galway, onto the Spanish Arch and along the row of houses known as the Long Walk. Shots were heard by those living in the houses. The Crown forces returned to the pub to loot the premises and steal Walsh's overcoat. Early the next morning his body was found in the water close to where shots were heard the night before. He had one gunshot wound to the head.



Historic Sites: Ó Máille Shop, site of Old Malt House

Source: Eilish Kavanagh


Sources:

William Henry, *Blood for Blood: The Black and Tan War in Galway* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2012)

The American Commission on Conditions in Ireland: Interim Report.

GPS Coordinates Google maps

Connacht Tribune, 30 October 1920

A21	
GPS: 53.269142876812886, - 9.052990208122546	Name: The Long Walk, Galway Classification: Attacks on IRA Volunteers
Short Description: The Long Walk is a row of houses close to the water's edge, yards away from the famous Spanish Arch. Michael Walsh was an urban councillor and proprietor of the Old Malt House at 16 High Street, Galway. He was taken by force from his premises and marched down the Long Walk on 19 October 1920 by Black and Tans. His body was found the morning after by local fishermen. The development of the 'Long Walk' promenade is attributed to Edward Eyre.	
	
<p>Historic Sites: Photograph taken in 1908 of an early morning scene along the Long Walk Source: Courtesy Lillian Bland Archive</p>	



Historic Sites: Photograph of the residents of the Long Walk 1908
Source: Lillian Bland Archive

Sources:

<https://theportofgalway.ie/history-of-the-port-of-galway/>

Photographs with kind permission of Lillian Bland Archive <http://www.lilianbland.ie/>

[GPS Coordinates](#) [Google Maps](#)

A22

GPS:

53.13578582036895, -
8.717096900324801

Name: St Teresa's Church, Castledaly

Classification: Attack on Crown Personnel or Buildings

Short Description:

Castledaly Church is situated six miles from Gort towards Loughrea. It was on this stretch of the road that forty-eight IRA Volunteers laid an ambush. On 30 October 1920, five RIC men, Sergeant O'Driscoll and Constables Horan, Keane, Dunne and Gilmartin, were returning to Loughrea Barracks from Peterswell when the waiting Volunteers attacked them. Constable Timothy Horan was killed and Constable Dunne was wounded. After a hand-to-hand struggle, the surviving policemen fled to the barracks at Kilcreest to summon help. Constable Horan's body was later recovered from the graveyard within the church grounds.



Historic Sites: St Teresa's Church, Castledaly

Source: Eilish Kavanagh

Oct. 30th. Police patrol of five ambushed at Castledaly, Galway.
One killed and one wounded.
Five houses burned as a reprisal.

Historic Sites: RIC report on the Castledaly incident

Source: www.findmypast.ie

AMBUSH AT CASTLEDALY, OCTOBER 31st. 1920.

102

The following took part:-

(1) Thos. McInerney,	Southpark, Ardahan.	2nd. Battn.
(2) Peter Howley,	Limepark, Peterswell.	" "
(3) Martin Tannian,	Lissatuna, Gort.	" "
(4) Martin Dooley,	Granna, Ardahan.	" "
(5) Martin Holland,	Roxboro Kilchreest.	" "
(6) Martin Murphy,	Issertkelly, Ardahan.	" "
(7) Jack Niland,	Raheen, Gort.	" "
(8) Michael Callinan,	Roxboro, Kilchreest.	" "
(9) John Joyce,	Ardahan.	" "
(10) Paddy Sylver,	Castletaylor, Ardahan.	" "
(11) William Howley,	Limepark, Peterswell.	" "
(12) John Quinn,	Prospect, Gort.	1st. Battn.
(13) Jack Fahy,	Issertkelly, Ardahan.	" "
(14) Mattie Fahy,	Church St., Gort.	" "
(15) Jack Healy,	Hollymount, Peterswell.	" "
(16) Jack Glynn,	St. Colman's Terrace, Gort.	" "
(17) Thos. Fahy,	Caherlinny, Kilchreest.	" "
(18) Mattie Fallon,	U.S.A.	" "
(19) Thomas Slattery,	Dunally, Peterswell.	" "
(20) Martin Thompson,	University Rd., Galway.	" "
(21) Sonny Madden,	Kilderry, Peterswell.	" "
(22) Joe Madden,	" "	" "
(23) Paddy Cahill,	Coola, Gort.	" "
(24) Martin Nolan,	Corker, Gort.	" "
(25) Joe Cahill,	Ballyaneen, Gort.	" "
(26) Ben. Shaughnessy,	Rinrush, Gort.	" "
(27) Dan Ryan,	Gortacarnane, Gort.	" "
(28) Pat Glynn,	Ballyturn, Gort.	" "
(29) Tom Keely,	Kiltartan, Gort.	" "
(30) John Keely,	Kilcrimple, Gort.	" "
(31) Michael Rielly,	Ballyturn, Gort.	" "
(32) Martin McGrath,	Seehan, Gort.	" "
(33) Peter Burke,	Issertkelly, Ardahan.	" "
(34) Johnny Deely,	U.S.A.	" "
(35) Pat Hynes,	U.S.A.	" "
(36) Paddy Flynn,	Derrybrien, Gort.	" "
(37) John Scully,	" "	" "
(38) Jack Burke,	" "	" "
(39) Pat Walsh,	" "	" "
(40) Michael Cummaire,	" "	" "
(41) Michael Slattery,	" "	" "
(42) Joe Stanford,	Ballybane,	" "
(43) Patk Ruane,	U.S.A.	" "
(44) P.J. Piggott,	Avenue House, Gort.	" "
(45) Jack Flaherty,	Gerda S., Birr.	" "
(46) John Forde,	Creeg Demeane, Tubber.	" "
(47) Tom Regan,	Gilroe, Tubber.	" "

* (48) Michael Healy (16038) added by Mr. Stanford.

* Not included in new records.

Mr. Sylves (Jorr) is included in new list.

Historic Sites: List of IRA men involved in the attack at Castledaly
Source: Courtesy Military Archives

Sources:

The Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection: The Brigade Activity Reports A21_1 2
Brigade I Western Division
Irish Independent, 2 November 1920
GPS Coordinates Google Maps

A23	
GPS: 53.106048298620905, - 8.806782407157607	Name: Former residence of Eileen Quinn, Gort Classification: Attacks on Civilian Population/Reprisals
Short Description: It was market day in Gort on 1 November 1920, when Mrs Eileen Quinn, heavily pregnant, sat in her front garden playing with her three children waiting on her husband to return from the day's busy events. Two lorries containing several members of the Crown forces leaving Gort fired shots indiscriminately as they passed the Quinn household. Mrs Quinn got shot into the groin and staggered towards the house. She was placed upon a chaise lounge in the sitting room and attended to by two local doctors – Dr Sandys and Dr Foley. Unfortunately, she died here some hours later from her wounds.	
<div> </div> <div> <p>Historic Sites: Former residence of Eileen Quinn, Gort Source: Eilish Kavanagh</p> </div>	
<div> </div> <div> <p>Historic Sites: Photograph of Eileen Quinn Source: Courtesy NUI Galway James Hardiman Library</p> </div>	
Sources: NUIG Digital Archives GPS Coordinates Google Maps <i>Connacht Tribune</i> , 13 November 1920	

A24	Name: Former home of Fr William J O'Meehan and Fr Michael Griffin, 2 Montpellier Terrace, Sea Road
GPS: 53.268413887414354, - 9.062626833295075	Classification: Attacks on Civilian Population/Reprisals

Short Description:

This was the former home of Fr William J O'Meehan and Fr Michael Griffin, curates of Rahoon parish. Although both men lived modestly, each priest had their own bedroom and sitting room with a communal kitchen. Barbara King was the curate's live-in housekeeper. As a result of his involvement with Sinn Féin, Fr O'Meehan had received several death threats and spent his nights as a 'patient' in the nearby Nursing home. On the evening of the 14 November 1920, Fr Michael Griffin, was playing cards with his close friends, Fathers Nicholas Donnelly, James O'Dea and Andrew Sexton. They had an enjoyable evening and at 10pm, O'Dea and Sexton left. Fr Donnelly remained to complete the arrangements for an anniversary High Mass for Archbishop McCormack scheduled for early the next morning. By the time Fr Donnelly was leaving it had turned into a stormy evening with wind and rain. The streets were empty. Fr Michael Griffin went to bed at around 10:30pm. At about 11:40pm that evening he was woken by heavy knocking on his front door. Both the housekeeper and the next-door neighbour heard the knocking and the subsequent hushed voices, but assumed that Fr Griffin had been called to attend a sick parishioner. Suspicion arose when Fr Griffin did not return the next morning for Bishop McCormack's Anniversary Mass. Soon afterwards a search party was established involving his fellow priests, and locals. His body was found days later in a shallow grave shot through the head.




Historic Sites: Former home of Fr William J O'Meehan and Fr Michael Griffin
Source: Eilish Kavanagh



Historic Sites: Brass plaque set in the pathway outside the former home at Montpellier Terrace
Source: Eilish Kavanagh

Sources:

Pádraic Ó Laoi, *Fr Griffin 1892–1920* (Galway: the author, 1994)
GPS Coordinates Google Maps

A25	Name: Boggy site in Cloughscoiltia, Barna where Fr Griffin's body was found
GPS: 53.268506, -9.157282	Classification: Other
<p>Short Description: Buried just beneath the muddy surface, close to the road, William Duffy discovered the body of Fr Michael Griffin late on Saturday evening, 20 November 1920. Fearing discovery by the Black and Tans, his body was washed in a shallow pool some hundred yards away from the road and a wake was convened with several local men in vigil. Surreptitiously, early the next morning his body was then removed to St Joseph's sacristy for an autopsy and preparation for his funeral.</p>	
	
<p>Historic Sites: The site where Fr Griffin's body was found Source: Eilish Kavanagh</p>	
<p>Sources: Pádraic Ó Laoi, <i>Fr. Griffin 1892–1920</i> (Galway: the author, 1994) GPS Coordinates Eilish Kavanagh</p>	

A26	
GPS: 53.14329434124512, - 8.842860890891952	Name: Drumharsna Castle, Ardrahan Classification: Attacks on IRA Volunteers

Short Description:
 Drumharsna Castle is a rectangular tower house located in South Galway. As seen by the photograph below, there were a series of outbuildings to the north-west that accommodated the Auxiliary Division of the RIC from Galway's D Company who arrived in late September 1920. It is possible that the Loughnane brothers were kept in the ground floor area of the castle tower in a make shift prison. The guard assigned to keep watch over the two prisoners stated at their Court of Inquiry that they managed to escape and disappeared from their custody. The two men were not seen alive after being held in Drumharsna Castle.



Historic Sites: Drumharsna Castle with Crown force billets
 Source: Thomas Quinn

Sources:
<https://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/>
 GPS Coordinates Google maps

A27	
GPS: 53.06727503382143, - 8.81727853974492	Name: District Headquarters RIC Barracks, Gort Classification: Attacks on IRA Volunteers
Short Description: The two Loughnane brothers Pat and Harry along with Michael Carroll from Tubber were brought to Gort Barracks after their arrest on 26 November 1920. They were all subjected to a severe beating. Pat Loughnane had difficulty speaking at this stage, Carroll guessed that his jaw had been broken. One eye was swollen shut and blood was streaming from both ears. His brother Harry, tore at his own shirt to try stem the flow of blood, but Pat was heard to say, not to worry about the bleeding as they needed to kneel and say the Rosary. Finally, the three prisoners were ordered into the day room where a room full of RIC men waited for them. Carroll later recalled that he and the Loughnanes were beaten until the RIC sat exhausted from their efforts.	
<div> </div> <div> <p>Historic Sites: Gort Garda Station 2021 Source: Dr Mark McCarthy</p> </div> <div> </div> <div> <p>Historic Sites: District Inspector Michael John Carney and his district force at Gort Barracks, may have been taken prior to disbandment Source: Courtesy Peter McGoldrick</p> </div>	
Sources: Peter McGoldrick. (The Royal Irish Constabulary Forum) https://irishconstabulary.com/ GPS Coordinates Google Maps	

A28	Name: Shallow pond at Umbriste, Ardrahan
GPS:	Classification: Attacks on IRA Volunteers
<p>Short Description: Michael Loughnan and Jack Halloran from Gilroe found the two charred bodies of the Loughnane brothers in a shallow pond at Umbriste. They quickly left to get help and inform the Loughnane family. Later some members of the Kinvara Company arrived and removed the bodies to a local barn in preparation for a community wake. The stone wall at the roadside had been impacted by a vehicle thought locally to have been the Auxiliaries from Drumharsna Castle. Nora Loughnane, sister to the two brothers, returned later to this site and removed what she described as pieces of flesh and scraps of clothing, which she subsequently buried in their grave.</p>	
	
<p>Historic Sites: Shallow pond where the Loughnane brothers were found Source: Courtesy NUI Galway Digital Collections</p>	
<p>Sources: NUI Galway Digital Collections https://digital.library.nuigalway.ie/islandora/object/islandora%3A7393 Chief Supt. Henry O'Mara, 22 July 1957 BMH, WS No. 1652</p>	

A29

Name: Moy O'Hynes' Wood, Ardrahan Rd

GPS:

Classification: Attacks on IRA Volunteers

Short Description: After the journey towards Drumharsna Castle on the evening of Friday, 26 November 1920, it is believed that Pat and Harry Loughnane were eventually shot dead at a secluded spot at Moy O'Hynes' Wood. This woodland, which has since been felled, was located beside the public roadway at Carrowgarriff North, midway between Kinvara and Ardrahan. The site is located approximately two and a quarter kilometres to the north-west of the castle. Local accounts suggest that four shots were fired at this secluded spot, with Harry surviving until the following morning. Attempts by the IRA to find the Loughnanes were thwarted by rumours. Pádraig Ó Fathaigh later recalled that inconsistencies in local gossip 'disconcerted the search parties'. In the mid-1930s, a small Celtic cross was erected in memory of the Loughnane brothers alongside the public road that ran beside the woodland. This memorial, which stood for nearly twenty-five years, was replaced by a larger Celtic cross on Sunday, 26 November 1961 – forty-one years after the killings. At present, this two and a half-metres-high cross is enclosed within a white wall and green iron railings.



Historic Sites: Unknown boy at the new Celtic memorial cross at Moy O'Hynes' wood
Source: Courtesy NUI Galway Digital Collections



Historic Sites: Kate and Nora (Sr Patricia) Loughnane standing beside the original Celtic cross memorial site
Source: Courtesy NUI Galway Digital Collections



Historic Sites: Wall along the roadside at Moy O'Hynes Wood, Ardahan
Source: Courtesy NUI Galway Digital Collections

Sources:

NUI Galway Digital Collections

<https://digital.library.nuigalway.ie/islandora/object/islandora%3A7393>

Pádraig Ó Fathaigh, 23 October 1956 BMH, WS No. 1517

Supt. Henry O'Mara, 22 July 1957 BMH, WS No. 1652

A30	Name: St Coleman's Church, Kinvara Classification: Attacks on IRA Volunteers
GPS: 53.140332639163084, - 8.955331704887803	

Short Description: The removal of the two Loughnane bodies to St Coleman's Church did not happen until midnight on 6 December 1920. This was to make sure of no Crown force interference. When they reached the church, the Volunteers began the vigil. The photographs taken by Tomás Ó hEighín, an Irish teacher, at the church depicts the true horror of what happened to the two men. Taken outside in the church doorway, these photographs have become the embodiment of terror the Black and Tans inflicted on the people of County Galway. The photographs reached an international audience and many families still hold copies in their personal archives.




Historic Sites: St Coleman's Church Kinvara

Source: Robert Cresswell Archive

See also Appendix 10.2. Loughnane Brothers ArcGIS ESRI StoryMap for iconic photographs

Sources:
Tomás Ó hEighín Photographs (Courtesy Thomas Quinn)
GPS Coordinates Google Maps

A31	
GPS: 53.01236055247472, - 8.838956819752894	Name: St Anne's Church, Shanaglish Classification: Attacks on IRA Volunteers
<p>Short Description: St Anne's Church is situated across the road from the former Loughnane family home in Shanaglish. Fr Nagle, was the parish priest and had known the brothers well. It is here that the brothers bodies were brought after they left Kinvara. Despite his own discomfort, he waited with Nora and Kate Loughnane for the remains of Pat and Harry to arrive. Once the funeral cortege neared the church, he crossed the road to receive their remains. Prayers for the dead were recited and afterwards as Fr Nagle began to inform the congregation what had happened to the brothers, 'he wept and the congregation wept'.</p>	
 <p style="text-align: center;">Historic Sites: St Anne's Church, Shanaglish Source: Courtesy NUI Galway Digital Collections</p>	
<p>Sources: Courtesy James Hardiman Library, NUI Galway POL4/1/1 I: Material relating to Sr. Patricia Loughnane GPS Coordinates Google Maps</p>	

A32	Name: Loughnane Burial Plot, Shanaglish (new) Cemetery, Shanaglish
GPS: 53.01469476320982, - 8.844713608331954	Classification: Attacks on IRA Volunteers

Short Description: this is the grave of brothers Pat and Harry Loughnane. Joe Stanford stated in his Witness Statement that ‘When word was brought to Gort that the bodies had been found, Dan Ryan, Pat Glynn, John Coen, Jack Flaherty and myself went to the parish priest of Shanaglish and asked him for leave to mark out a Republican plot in the new cemetery there. This request was readily granted. So we prepared and made their grave, waiting in a nearby wood to receive their remains.’

On the afternoon of 7 December 1920, at approximately 2pm, the coffins of the two Loughnane brothers were closed for the last time and the procession began from St Anne’s Church the short journey to the cemetery. The large gathering solemnly stood while Fr Nagle officiated. They knelt for the rosary as the grave was filled by local men before the green sods were finally put in placed surrounded by laurel wreaths. Three shots were fired into the air.



Historic Sites: Celtic cross memorial over the grave of the Loughnane brothers
Source: Eilish Kavanagh



Historic Sites: Crowd that gathered for the funeral of Pat and Harry Loughnane
Source: Thomas Quinn

Sources:

GPS Coordinates Google maps

Joe Stanford, Date Unknown, BMH, WS No. 1334

Connacht Tribune, 11 December 1920

A33	Name: Ballyturin House, Gort Classification: Attacks on Crown Personnel or Buildings
GPS: 53.055642714281056, - 8.753912639524936	

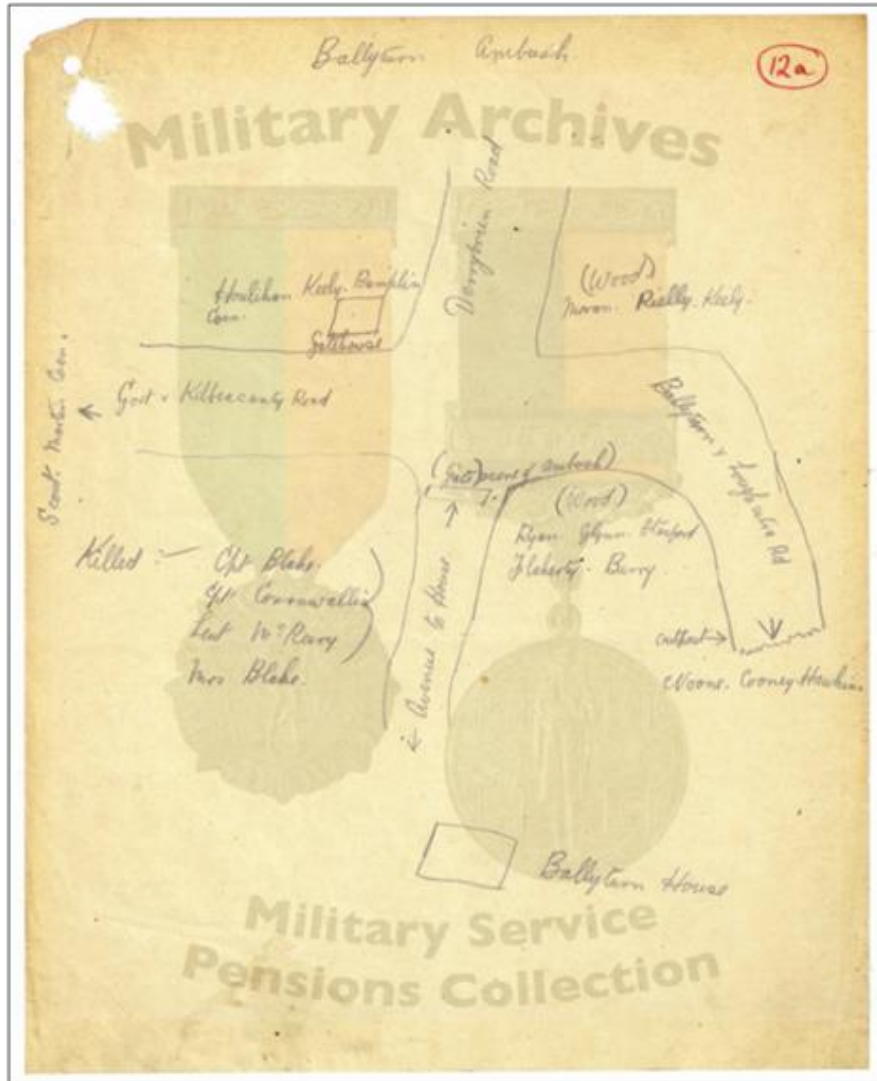
Short Description: On 15 May 1921 John Bagot and his wife Anna had invited a party of guests to their home, Ballyturin House, for a tennis match on the lawn. After a pleasant afternoon, District Inspector Blake, his partner Eliza Williams (reported as being pregnant), Captain Cornwallis and Lieutenant Creery from the 17th Lancers and Margaret Gregory, the widowed daughter-in-law of Lady Gregory of Coole Park, were returning home when they were ambushed by the IRA. Only Margaret Gregory survived the attack. The house later fell into ruins.



Historic Sites: Ballyturin House, Gort
Source: Courtesy Robert Byrne



Historic Sites: Ruins of Ballyturin House, Gort
Source: Courtesy Robert Byrne



Historic Sites: IRA map of the Ballyturn ambush
 Source: Courtesy Military Archives

Sources:

Military Archives MSPC/A/21(1) <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/brigade-activities/operation/ballyturn-house-ambush/>
<http://theauxiliaries.com/INCIDENTS/ballyturn-ambush/ballyturn.html>
<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=rm&ogbl#search/Ballyturn+house/WhctKJVZrXmsXclfRHtFvxbQIXzCNJFXzbcnKXtNIPVRdhXsBrsWwJvZMTRsnncXRHTDVHl>

GPS Coordinates from Google Maps

A34	Name: Cashel House, Connemara (Residence of Alice Cashel during the War of Independence)
GPS: 53.41973852428896, - 9.807959411343342	Classification: Other
<p>Short Description: Alice Cashel was a Sinn Féin activist and County Councillor. Prior to the War of Independence, Alice had become known to the RIC after taking several active roles including Chair of Cumann na mBan in Cork. She became ill in the summer of 1919 and moved to Cashel House, the home of her sister and brother-in-law while they were away in America. Still closely watched by the police she was eventually arrested for possessing illicit material. Upon her release she became Vice Chair of Galway County council. She also took on the role of Parish Justice in Connemara when the alternative parish justice system was established by Sinn Féin.</p>	
	
<p style="text-align: center;">Historic Sites: Cashel House, Connemara Source: Eilish Kavanagh</p>	
<p>Sources: GPS Coordinates Google Maps Information courtesy Mark Humphrys https://humphrysfamilytree.com/Cashel/al.html</p>	

A35 &36

GPS:

53.48837216365614, -
10.023003656824072

Name: Main Street Clifden

Classification: Attacks on Crown Personnel or Buildings
and also Attacks on Civilians/Reprisals

Short Description:

After the execution of Thomas Whelan in 1921, two local Constables, Charles Reynolds and Thomas Sweeney were shot in retribution. This in turn provoked yet another reprisal from the Black and Tans, this time in Clifden. Thirteen houses were set alight and several witnesses reported shots directly fired upon them. Mrs Bartley was ordered to leave her home before it was scuttled by a grenade. John McDonnell was shot and killed and Peter Clancy was seriously wounded. The Auxiliaries moved into the Railway Hotel and posted a notice on the outside wall of Edward King's bar stating: 'Clifden will remember: the RIC will not forget. Shoot another policeman and up goes the town.' Afterwards, the IRA units in Connemara were forced to form small groups or flying columns as they attempted to evade capture whilst continuing their campaign.



Historic Sites: RIC Barracks in Clifden
Source: Eilish Kavanagh



Historic Sites: Main square in Clifden. Railway Bar (Foyles) and McDonnell's Hotel
Source: Eilish Kavanagh

Sources:

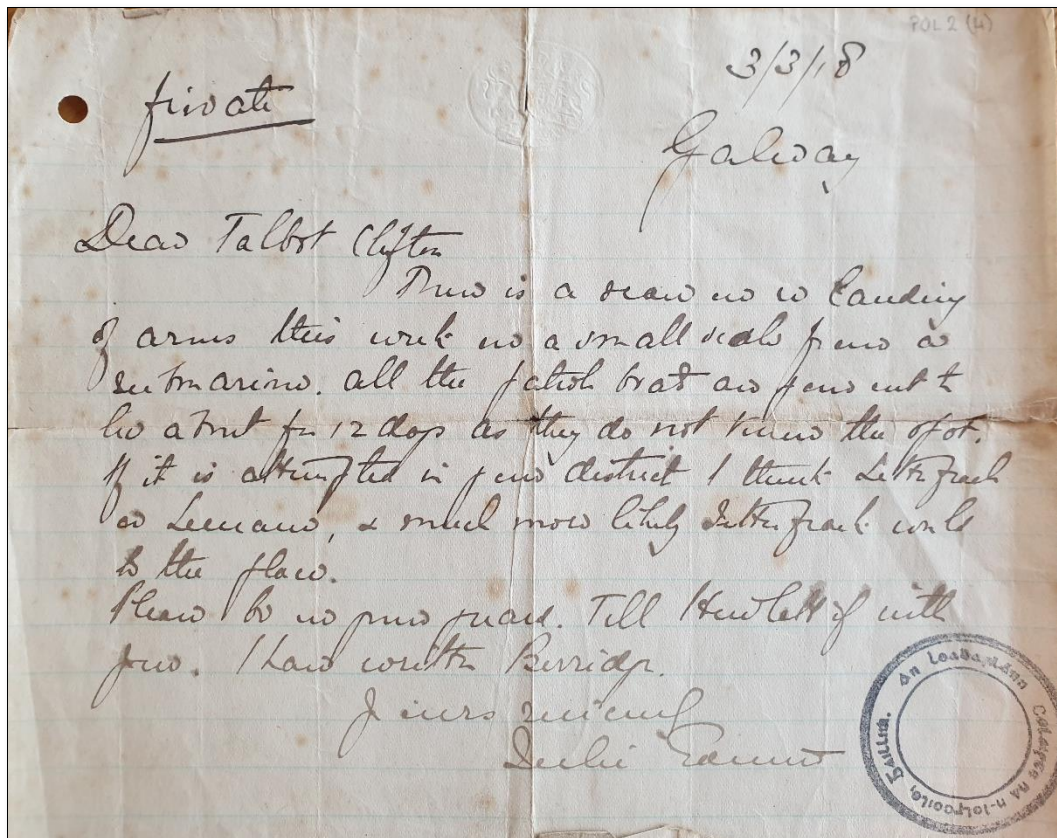
GPS Coordinates from Google Maps

Kathleen Villiers-Tuthill, Kathleen, *Beyond the Twelve Bens: A history of Clifden and district 1860–1923* (Connemara: Girl Publications, 2006)

B: Artefacts and Manuscripts

B1	<p>Name: Letter from Leslie Edmonds to Talbot Clifton regarding the landing ashore of arms.</p> <p>Classification: Documents/Articles</p>
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Short Description: Leslie Edmonds lived in Clifden House and he was the Chief Inspector for the Congested Districts Board in County Galway. On 3 March 1918, Edmonds sent a short letter to Talbot Clifton who lived in Kylemore House with his wife and five children to warn of the possibility of rifles landing ashore in either Letterfrack or Leenane. According to Danny Denton, Clifton had already irked the local IRA by moving into Kylemore House and 'had already been commissioned a lieutenant in the Royal Navy Reserves (RNVR) in 1917 so that he could wear naval uniform while patrolling the west coast of Ireland in his own yacht, on the lookout for German submarines'. The letter was delivered shortly before the arrests in connection with the German Plots.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Letter from Leslie Edmonds to Talbot Clifton regarding the landing ashore of arms
 Source: NUI Galway: James Hardiman Library Archives: Pol 2 (4)

Sources: NUI Galway: James Hardiman Library Archives: Pol 2 (4)
 Danny Denton 'On the Truth of the 'German Plot' in *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* Vol. 59 (2007) 122–133

B2

Name: Photograph of Eamon de Valera at a political rally in Gort
Classification: Photographs

Short Description: Although the date of this photograph is unknown, it is locally believed to have been taken during a Sinn Féin local election rally in July 1917. Eamon de Valera stood on a podium in the town's square and told those gathered 'we now recognise that we can no longer help Ireland in the House of Commons. Parnell said that "England has no right in Ireland, and can never have any right in Ireland: that English law has no moral force in Ireland," and if Ireland goes to that Parliament, we, in fact, say that we are satisfied with that Parliament and give it a semblance of legality.' This rhetoric would continue at general election rallies up until Sinn Féin's success in 1918.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Photograph of Eamon de Valera giving a speech in Gort town square

Source: Courtesy Thomas Quinn

Sources:

Connacht Tribune, 7 July 1917

Thomas Quinn, Kinvara Commemoration Group

B3

Name: Letter from retired RIC constable, John Phelan for the position of postmaster in Kinvara 1919
Classification: Documents/Articles

Short Description: Letter dated 8 May 1919. John Phelan, a retired RIC Constable living in Kinvara applied for the position of Postmaster in Kinvara. Although many RIC men were coerced to leave the role in order to disrupt the establishment, Phelan had been retired since 1909. However, he describes that he was a recruiting sergeant in the Gort, Ardrahan and Kinvara area for three years during the war. John Phelan served as Postmaster in Kinvara from 1 April 1920 until his death on 16 March 1922. His widow Mary took up the position and served the town of Kinvara until her retirement 17 July 1961 at the age of 77.

Kinvara
Co. Galway.
8th May 1919.

Sub Postmastership of Kinvara
Post Office.

The Postmaster,
Galway.

Sir,

I desire to apply for the position of Postmastership of Kinvara Post Office, which is now vacant. I am residing in Kinvara village, and believe my residence is in every way suitable for Post Office.

I am a retired member of the RIC Constabulary, in which force I served for 25 years. I left on Pension - with an excellent character - on 17th July 1906, and since that date I have had to depend almost solely on my pension. I can furnish papers, and recommendations from Rth Authorities under whom I served to bear out above statement as to character if such is required.

During the late war, I served as a recruiting sergeant for almost three years for Gort, Ardrahan and Kinvara areas, and was successful in enlisting a considerable number of men in various regiments. The Military Authorities under whom I served expressed their high appreciation of my labours, and they will be willing to bear testimony to my character, if necessary.

I shall feel deeply grateful for your invaluable assistance in connection with this matter.

Should the Postmaster General feel pleased to give me the appointment sought, I shall deem it a great privilege and I promise faithfully to conduct the office, and perform my official duties to the satisfaction of all concerned.

I am, Sir, faithfully,
John Phelan

The Postmaster,
Galway.

Artefacts and Manuscripts: Letter from retired RIC constable, John Phelan for the position of postmaster in Kinvara 1919

Source: Courtesy Martin Green

Sources:
Martin Green, Kinvara
Trácht 1987

B4	Name: Photograph of Peggy Broderick-Nicholson Classification: Photographs
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Short Description: The date of this photograph is unknown. Margaret ‘Peg’ Broderick-Nicholson was the Section Commander, Cumann na mBan, Galway. Her role involved intelligence, fundraising, carrying dispatches and watching RIC patrols. Women like Peg were often assigned as carriers of guns and ammunition from one area to another sometimes long distances and this resulted in them or their homes becoming targets for Crown forces. They attacked her family home in 1920 and only for the quick reaction of her neighbours her family may well have perished. She used her wits another evening at a dance when the Black and Tan entered unannounced and began to search for Volunteers and guns. Peg quickly hid two revolvers in her knickers and calmly left the hall. Only when outside did she realise the enormity of her task and almost fainted. In her Witness Statement lodged in the Bureau of Military History, Peg gave a detailed account of a particularly nasty assault directed toward herself by the Black and Tans. This was hair shorning. She states that the Black and Tans burst into her house and she was refused to be allowed to dress, ‘I went down and snatched a coat from the hall-stand. My mother shouted after me: “Be brave, Peg”: I thought at first they were going to shoot me, but they took me out and closed the door, then grabbed my hair, saying “What wonderful curls you've got” and then proceeded to cut off all my hair to the scalp with very blunt scissors.’ Peg went to the hairdresser the next day to try and even out the cut.



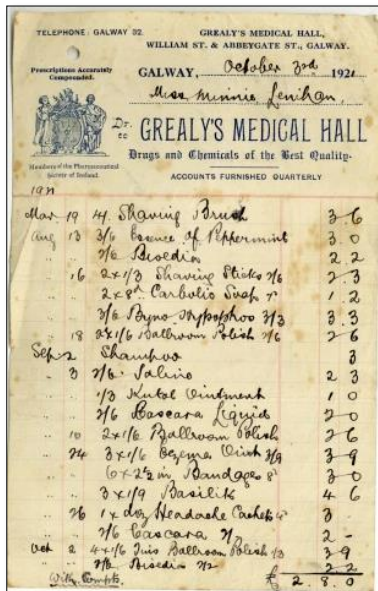
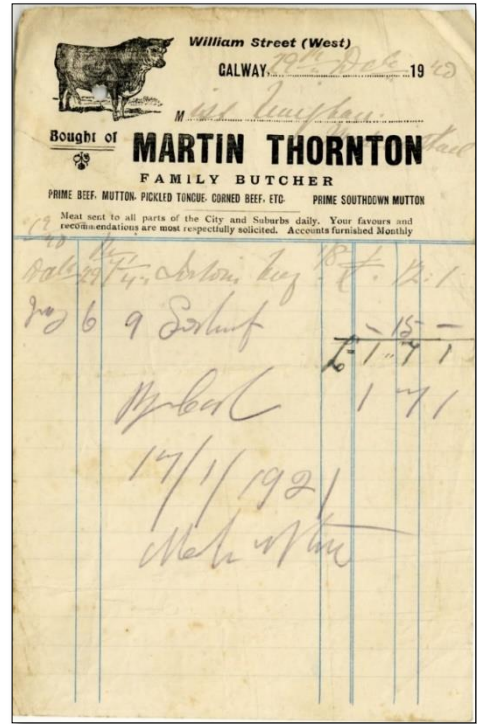
Artefacts and Manuscripts: Photograph of Margaret (Peg) Broderick-Nicholson
Source: Tom Kenny

Sources:
Tom Kenny
Kennys.ie <https://www.kennys.ie/old-galway/1619-74peg-broderick-nicholson-the-war-of-independence-02-07-2015>
<https://www.kennys.ie/old-galway?start=8>
Margaret (Peg) Broderick-Nicholson 27 September 1957 BMH, WS No.1682

B5

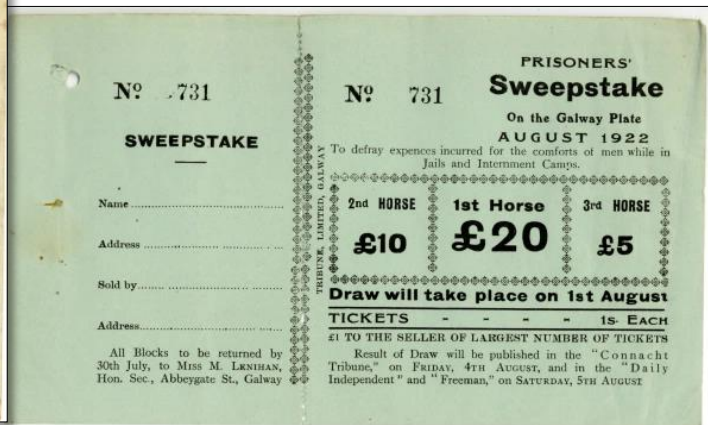
Name: Photograph and artefacts belonging to Minnie Lenihan
Classification: Composites

Short Description: Minnie joined the Galway Town branch of Cumann na mBan in September 1917 and was engaged in routine activities including collecting funds, organising dances and running First Aid lectures, following training she received from Dr Frank Cusack. In early 1918 she was appointed Officer in Charge of the Prisoners' Committee which she held until it broke up in 1919, after which she continued the work on her own until her arrest in 1923. Below are receipts for the purchase of supplies. In 2019, the name Minnie was adopted by the Ladies Connacht Rugby Team's mascot in honour of Minnie Lenihan.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Photograph and artefacts belonging to Minnie Lenihan

Source: Courtesy Military Archives



Sources:

<https://militarypensions.wordpress.com/2018/07/12/women-in-intelligence-part-3-minnie-lenihan/>

Ciara Cooney, Ireland/Wasps Rugby Club

B6

Name: Shotgun was in the possession of Captain John Burke, Kinvara Company prior to his death

Classification: Weapons and Ordnance

Short Description: In an effort to procure arms, many Volunteers actively sought out those within their neighbourhoods who may have any sort of guns or ammunition. This shotgun, not a conventional military weapon, was an example of how any available guns were used in the conflict. Although the gun had been since rendered useless, it was retained by the family as a reminder of Captain Burke's efforts in both the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence. This photograph was taken at an exhibition commemorating the Centenary of the 1916 Rising and the Kinvara Company.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Shotgun in a display case alongside medals and photographs

Source: Eilish Kavanagh

Source:

Burke Family, Kinvara

Kinvara 1916 Commemoration Group

B7

Name: Steel box recovered from an RIC barracks on the Galway/Clare border.
Classification: Weapons and Ordnance

Date: This is British Army portable strong box. The broad arrow or 'crow feet' is a symbol associated with the Board of Ordnance, and later the War Department. The box may have had several varied uses, such as wages, ordnance, explosives for mining or rock removal, or may have contained chains used in surveying land. The box was recovered from an abandoned RIC barracks on the Galway/Clare border.

Photo/Image:



Artefacts and Manuscripts: A portable army strongbox

Source: Eilish Kavanagh

Sources:

Enda Mongan, Kinvara
Kinvara 1916 Commemoration Group

B8

Name: Bayonet used by Volunteer Michael Kilkelly, Kinvara
Classification: Weapons and Ordnance

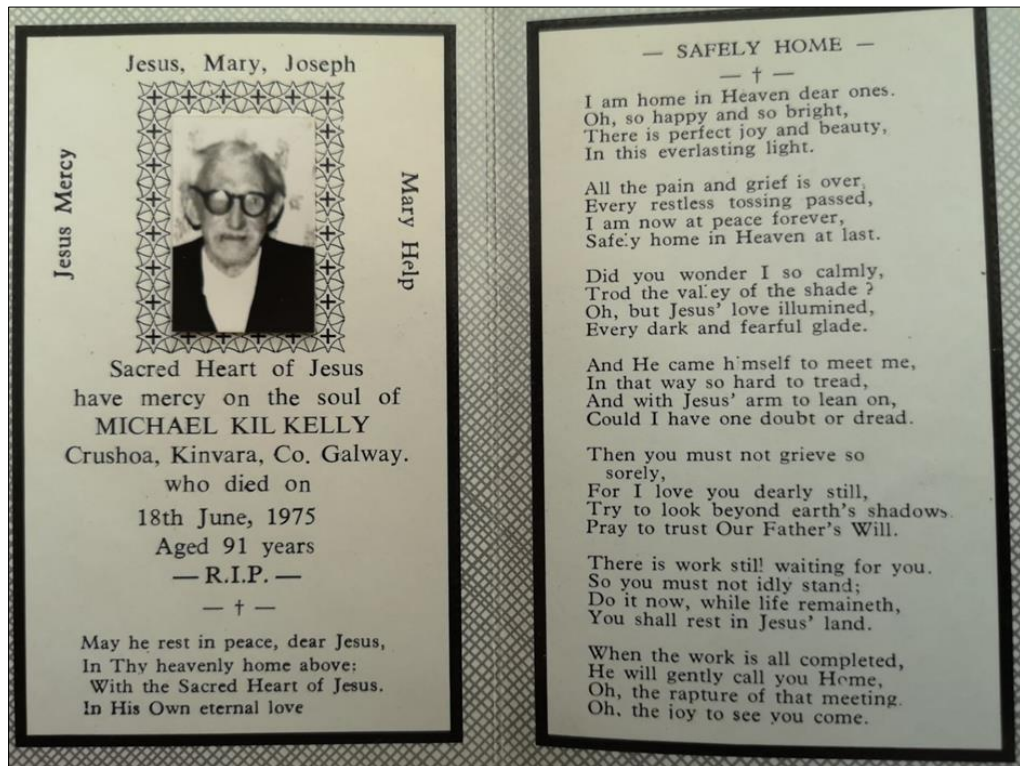
Short Description: This bayonet was in the possession of Volunteer Michael Kilkelly, Kinvara Company prior to his death. The Kilkelly family were, according to the *Connacht Tribune*, 'a remarkable family'. Michael, Padraig and Joe were all Irish Volunteers during the 1916 Rising, War of Independence and the Civil War. As was their sister Annie (listed as Norah or Honor) Reidy. An older sister Margaret, had previously emigrated to America and was a State Lawyer for the White House. It is unknown what the four marks on the handle are for, but family lore suggest a list of some kind.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Bayonet used by Michael Kilkelly
Source: Eilish Kavanagh



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Handle bears four angled marks with a strike through
Source: Eilish Kavanagh



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Mass card for Michael Kilkelly

Source: Johnny O'Dea

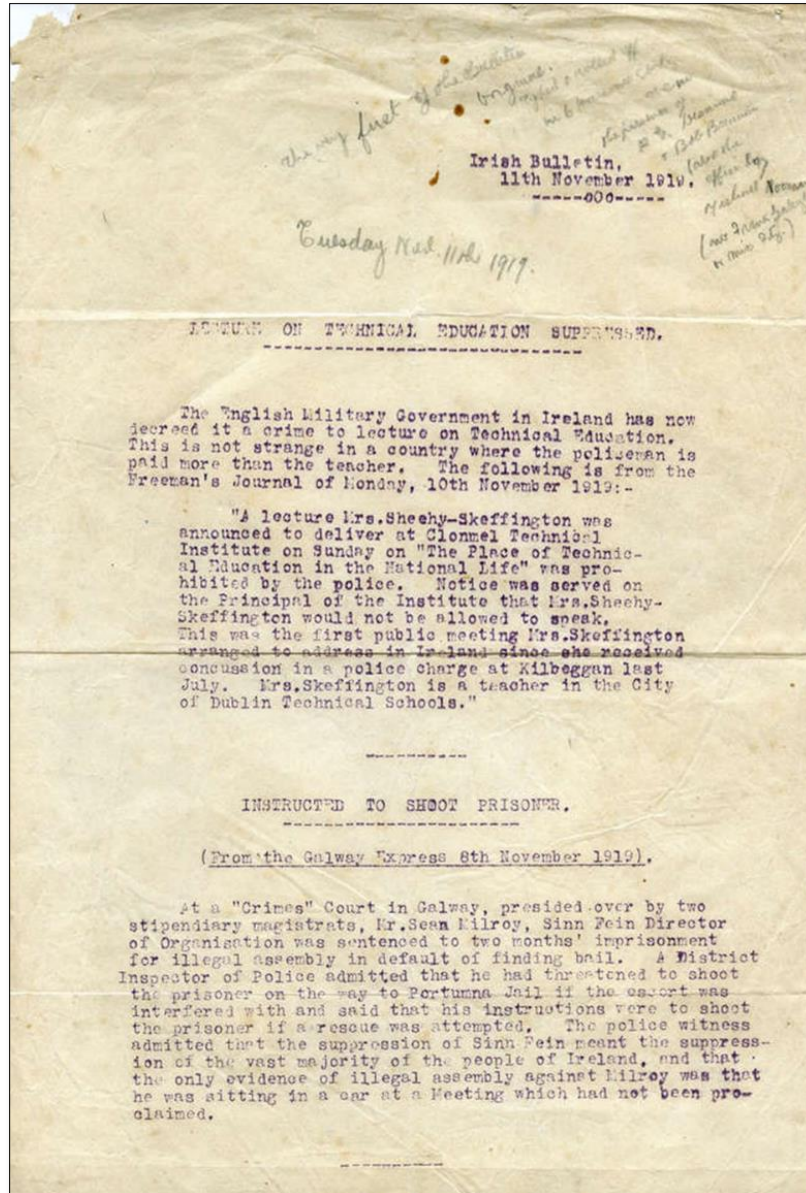
Sources:

Johnny O'Dea
 Kinvara 1916 Commemoration Group
Connacht Tribune, 27 June 1975

B9

Name: First Issue of the *Irish Bulletin*
Classification: Documents/Articles

Short Description: First Issue of the *Irish Bulletin*, 11 November 1919. The paper recounts an article that was first printed in the *Galway Express* regarding the transportation of prisoners. It reported that the District Inspector had orders to shoot the prisoner Sean Kilroy, Director of Operations Sinn Féin, if a rescue attempt was made on their way to Portumna Jail. His arrest was made in an effort to suppress any insurgence in Galway at the time.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: First Issue of the *Irish Bulletin*, 11 November 1919

Source: Adams Auction House, Dublin

Source:
Adams Auction House, Dublin

B 10

Name: Webley revolver used in the shooting of Edward Krumm
Classification: Weapons and Ordnance

Short Description: This gun is a donated standard issue service pistol, Webley revolver, used in the shooting of Edward Krumm at Galway Train Station, on 9 September 1920. While many civilians waited in the train station for the early papers, Krumm, reportedly drunk, began shooting. When a struggle to disarm Krumm began both Volunteer Sean Mulvoy and Krumm were killed. The Crown forces, enraged by Krumm's death, began a series of reprisals that resulted in other deaths and violent incidents throughout Galway Town.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Webley revolver used in the shooting of Edward Krumm

Source: Courtesy of Galway City Museum

Sources:

D. M. Leeson, 'The Curious Case of Constable Krumm' in *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* Vol. 36, No. 2 (Autumn, 2010), 114–137

<https://www.galwaycitymuseum.ie/webley-revolver/>

https://guns.fandom.com/wiki/Webley_revolver

B 11

Name: Hynes family home and barn, Kinvara
Classification: Photographs

Short Description: The photograph depicts the Hynes family home and barn that was burnt by Crown forces in October 1920 after a series of reprisals. The two brothers Michael (Mikie) and William (Willie) Hynes were active members of the local Kinvara Company and had on several occasions engaged with the Crown forces. Despite having been arrested on several times, Willie Hynes thwarted the police when not enough evidence could be produced for a conviction. They, along with other Volunteers were closely monitored by the police. In December the same year, the bodies of Patrick and Harry Loughnane were taken to the Hynes barn to be waked before Mass in St Coleman's and removal to Shanaglish.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Photograph (L-R) of Joe Kilkelly, Pádraig Fahy, Michael (Mikie) Hynes, and James (Seamus) Davenport outside the Hynes family home after it was burnt.

Source: Thomas Quinn

Sources:

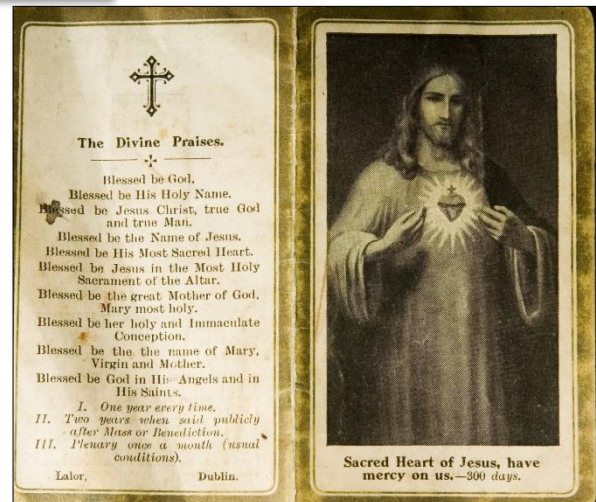
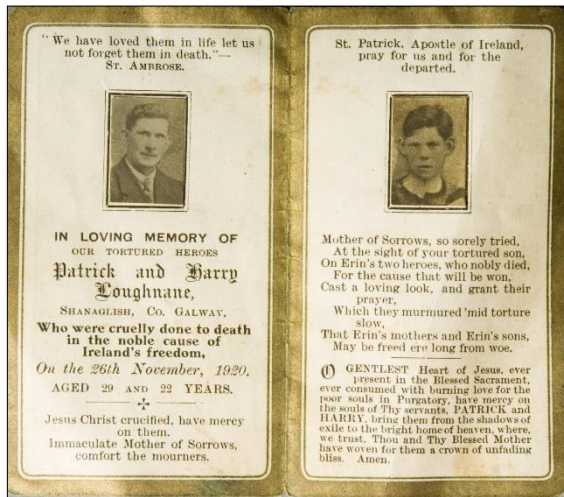
Connacht Tribune, 3 July 1920

Thomas Quinn, Kinvara

B12

Name: Memorial Card for Patrick and Harry Loughnane
Classification: Documents/Articles

Short Description: The brothers, Pat and Harry from Shanaglish, Co Galway, were arrested by a mixed force of RIC and Auxiliaries on 26 November 1920. After several days of searching for the two brothers, their family was reportedly told by the RIC that they had escaped. Ten days after they were arrested, Pat and Harry Loughnane's bodies were found in a shallow pond at Umbriste. Their family and friends were overcome with grief when they witnessed the brutality inflicted upon their bodies. The memorial cards contain the words, 'cruelly done to death in the noble cause of Ireland's freedom'.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Pat and Harry Loughnane's memorial card

Source: Courtesy Clare County Library

Sources:

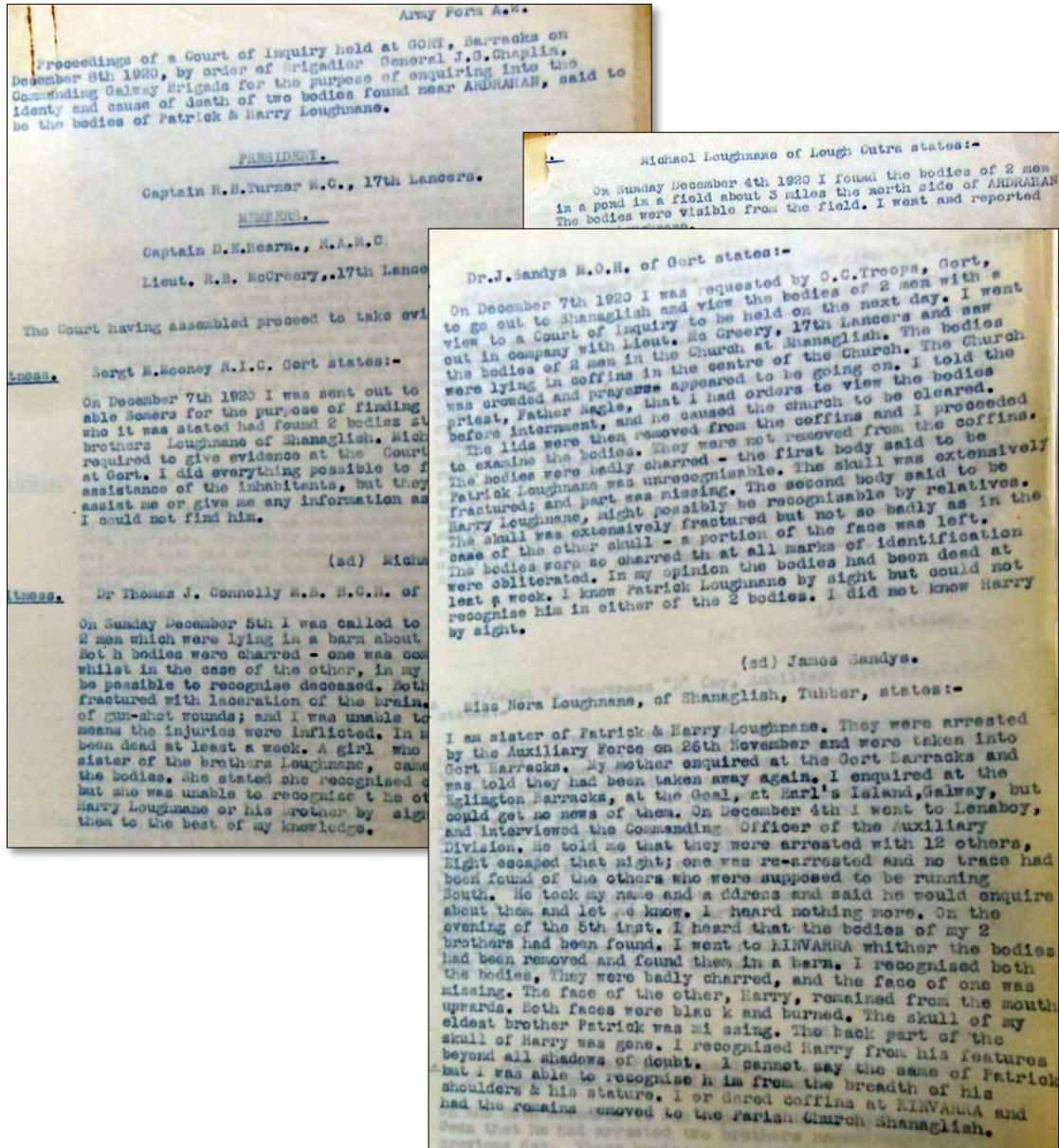
http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/claremuseum/acquisitions/patrick_harry_loughnane_mem_card_lge2.htm

B13

Name: Court of Inquiry reports of Patrick and Harry Loughnane
Classification: Documents/Articles

Short Descriptions:

'The Restoration of Order in Ireland Act 1920 (section 1.3(f)) allowed for the suspension of coroners' inquests. Regulation 80 was adopted under the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act in August 1920. It stipulated that the operation of coroners should be suspended in several (but not all) counties, and [be] replaced by Military Courts of Inquiry.' The reports here contain the proceedings of the Court of Inquiry on the deaths of Pat and Harry Loughnane held on the 8 December 1920. Evidence given by witness's detail the harrowing nature of their deaths in addition to the sentry that claimed they escaped while under his watch.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Court of Inquiry reports of Patrick and Harry Loughnane

Source: www.findmypast.ie

Sources:

Gerard Quinn, 'The Killing of Eileen Quinn' in *Law Society Gazette* Quinn, November 2020

<http://theauxiliaries.com/INCIDENTS/loughnanebrothers/LoughnaneBrothers.html>

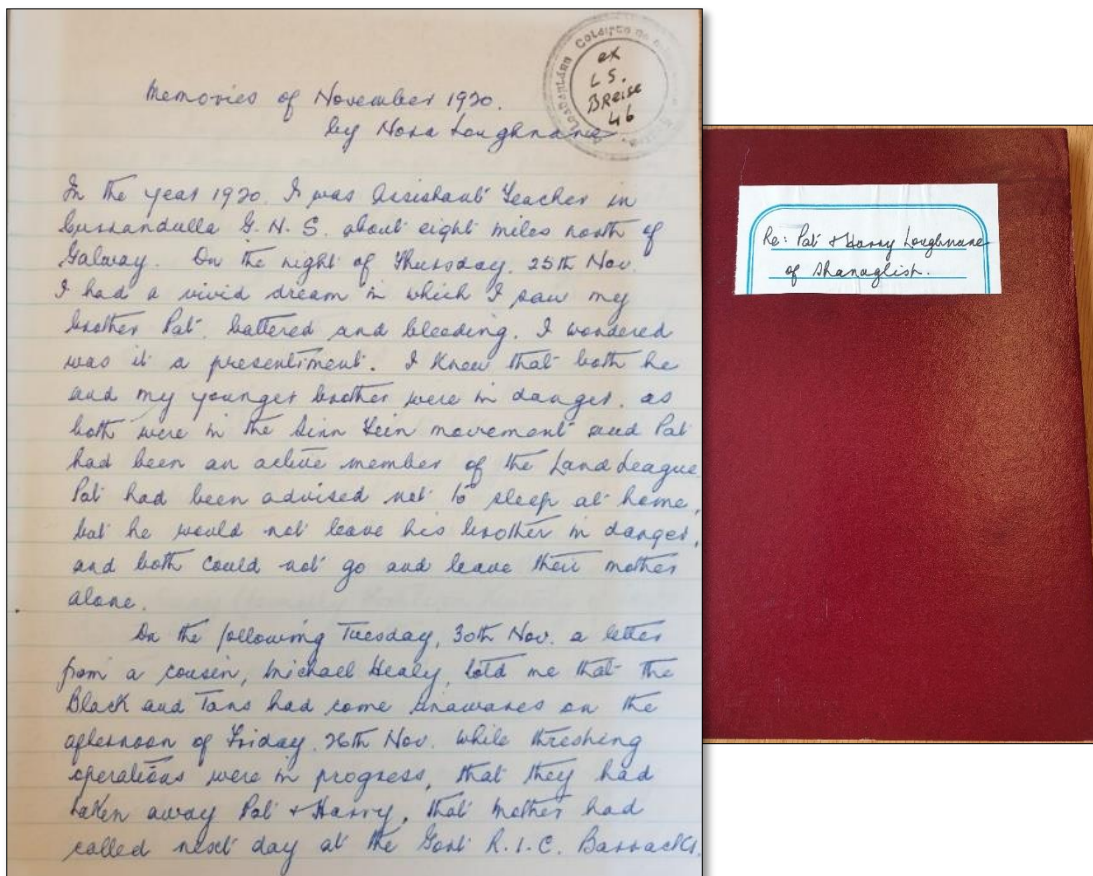
<http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS1652.pdf>

B14

Name: Notebook containing recollections of Nora Loughane
Classification: Documents/Articles

Short Description:

This A5 38-page hardback maroon-coloured copybook, with nine pages of handwritten text, outlines Nora Loughane's account of her brother's disappearance, subsequent murder and how the family were adjusting to the tragedy. When Pat and Harry Loughane were arrested, Nora's mother contacted her to enquire in Eglinton Street RIC Barracks as to their whereabouts when she discovered they had been removed from the RIC barracks in Gort. As mentioned earlier, Nora also described what she found when she returned to the site where her brothers bodies (brain matter and clothers). Despite this distressing discovery, she gathered the items and placed them into their grave.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: A5 Notebook with recollections from Nora Loughane regarding the death and burial of her brothers Pat and Harry
Source: Courtesy NUI Galway Digital Archive

Source:

Courtesy of James Hardiman Library, NUI Galway POL04

B 15

Name: A cutting from the *Galway Observer* enumerating the 1920 Returning Local Election Results
Classification: Documents/Articles

Short Description: The cutting dated 17 January 1920, is attached to the bound volume record of minutes for meetings of the Galway Urban District Council. Sinn Féin, had established the First Dáil in January 1919 after the General Elections, and these council elections were seen as an important to win in order to continue to provide an alternative to British control.

ELECTORAL AREA (1)	NAMES OF CANDIDATES			NAMES OF CANDIDATES ELECTED (5)	ORDER IN WHICH ELECTED
	SURNAMES (2)	OTHER NAMES (3)	PLACES OF ABODE (4)		
North Ward.	Colohan	Patrick	New's Island	PATRICK COLOHAN	3
	Hardiman	Norah	St. Francis Street	MRS. NORAH HARDIMAN	4
	Byrne	Thomas	O'Donoghue Terrace		
	Lee	John	Daly's Place		
	McDonnell	John Joseph	Daly's Place	MARTIN MOLONEY	6
	Mossey	Martin	Louisa Street		
	Naughton	Timothy	Shop Street	MARTIN REDINGTON	2
	O'Leary	Myra	St. Broderick Terrace	DR. THOMAS WALSH	5
	Redington	Martin	Prospect Hill	JOSEPH SAMUEL YOUNG	1
	Uppington	William	Abbeygate Street Upper		
Walsh	Thomas	Meriville, Taylor's Hill			
Young	Joseph Samuel	St. Francis Street			
East Ward	Browne	Thomas	Mazilian Terrace		
	Costello	Thomas Abraham	Taylor's Hill	MICHAEL T. DONNELLAN	2
	Dunnehillan	Michael T.	Shop Street	MARTIN FLAHERTY	3
	Fisher	Martin	New Dock Street	JOHN GRIFFIN	4
	Griffin	John	Upper Cross Street	MARTIN McDONOGH	1
	McDonogh	Colman	Quay Street	THOMAS CHRISTOPHER McDONOGH	6
	McDonogh	Martin	Flood Street		
	McDonogh	Thos. Christopher	Flood Street		
	McLoughlin	Patrick	Lower Abbeygate Street		
	Myring	Patrick	The Rocks, Rockbarrow	LOUIS O'DBA	5
	O'Dea	Louis	Ferris Square		
	Rabbit	Peter	Foster Street		
	Sheld	Patrick	Bahernara	MICHAEL WALSH	7
Walsh	Michael	Hill Street			
South Ward.	Connolly	John	South Park Terrace	JOHN CONNOLLY	1
	Coyne	Michael	Raven Terrace		
	Crowley	Michael Joseph	18, Wilson Street	WILLIAM FLAHERTY	3
	Finn	Martin	Subhill	JOSEPH GREHAN	5
	Fisher	William	Faithill Road		
	Grehan	Joseph	Subhill Upper	JAMES LEE	4
	Kearse	Patrick	Roach Avenue	THOMAS C. McDONOGH	2
	Lee	James	Dunmuck Street		
	McDonogh	Thomas C.	Belmara		
	Walsh	John Joseph	Dominick Street		
West Ward.	Bailey	Francis John	St. Helen's Street	FRANCIS JOHN BAILEY	5
	Coogan	John	New Road West	JOHN COOGAN	2
	Cooke	Martin Joseph	Leslie Street	MARTIN JOSEPH COOKE	1
	Costello	Charles	Taylor's Hill Road		
	Curran	Patrick	William Street West	PATRICK CURRAN	3
	Fahy	Mary	1, Minspelle Terrace		
	Fahy	Patrick	Denmark Street		
	Naughton	Patrick	Newcastle	PATRICK NAUGHTON	6
	Nicholls	Margaret	2, University Road	MARGARET NICHOLLS	4
	Rea	Thomas	Newcastle Road		
	Sammen	William John	William Street West		
	Simmons	Robert W.	2, Devon Place		
	Young	Joseph Samuel	St. Francis Street		

this 17th day of January, 1920.

T. N. REDINGTON.

RETURNING

Printed at the GALWAY OBSERVER Office.

Artefacts and Manuscripts: A cutting from the *Galway Observer* enumerating the 1920 Returning Local Election Results

Source: Courtesy NUI Galway

Source:

Galway Urban District Council, Minute Books of: 1899-1922: LA4/3, James Hardiman Archives, NUI, Galway

B16

Name: Copy of a letter from Patrick Joyce
Classification: Documents/Articles

Short Synopsis:

Patrick (Padraig) Joyce was a school teacher in Barna. He was executed by Micheál O'Droighneain for supplying names and addresses of Volunteers to Dublin Castle on 15 October 1920. O'Droighneain stated later that 'when half a dozen letters had been sent on to me, I arranged to enter his school by night and secure samples of his writing, which job was carried out without mishap. I did not want to have the responsibility of taking appropriate action in such a case, so I sent a messenger to Dublin Castle Headquarters in Dublin with the captured documents and the samples taken from the school, and asked for instructions.' Despite his 'worry' over the situation, O'Droighneain ultimately took the decision to sanction the killing. This letter was retained by Richard Mulcahy.

The village of Cappagh one side of the Golf Links is full of Sinnfeiners and all the young men there are so called republican Police. Martin O'Donnell being the Captain. with him are the Connely's Tom (Junior) - the Lydons. Gannons Mc Donaghs. They have sworn vengeance against the Police. Now they are getting up there into a vacant house the teacher of Barna girls school and her husband that has boasted that he has resigned from the Police for the love of Ireland. This girls school was the headquarters of the Sinnfeiners for past two years. The house in Cappagh is a fine one able to provide space of from 16 to 20 men and would give troops an opportunity of killing the volunteers ~~and their~~ movement there. It is not wanted by anyone. Captain Wainman has left it. The warriors in this village want a bit of fighting. The teacher (Hornton) of Furbogh is still preaching petition and pushing on the young men to shoot.

Artefacts and Manuscripts: Letter from Patrick Joyce to Dublin Castle Headquarters in Dublin

Source: Courtesy James Joyce Library, University College Dublin

Sources:

Richard Mulcahy papers UCD P7/a/43

Cormac Ó Comhraí *Revolution in Connacht A photographic History 1913-23* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2013) 73

Micheál O'Droighneain 16 December 1957 BMH, WS No. 1718

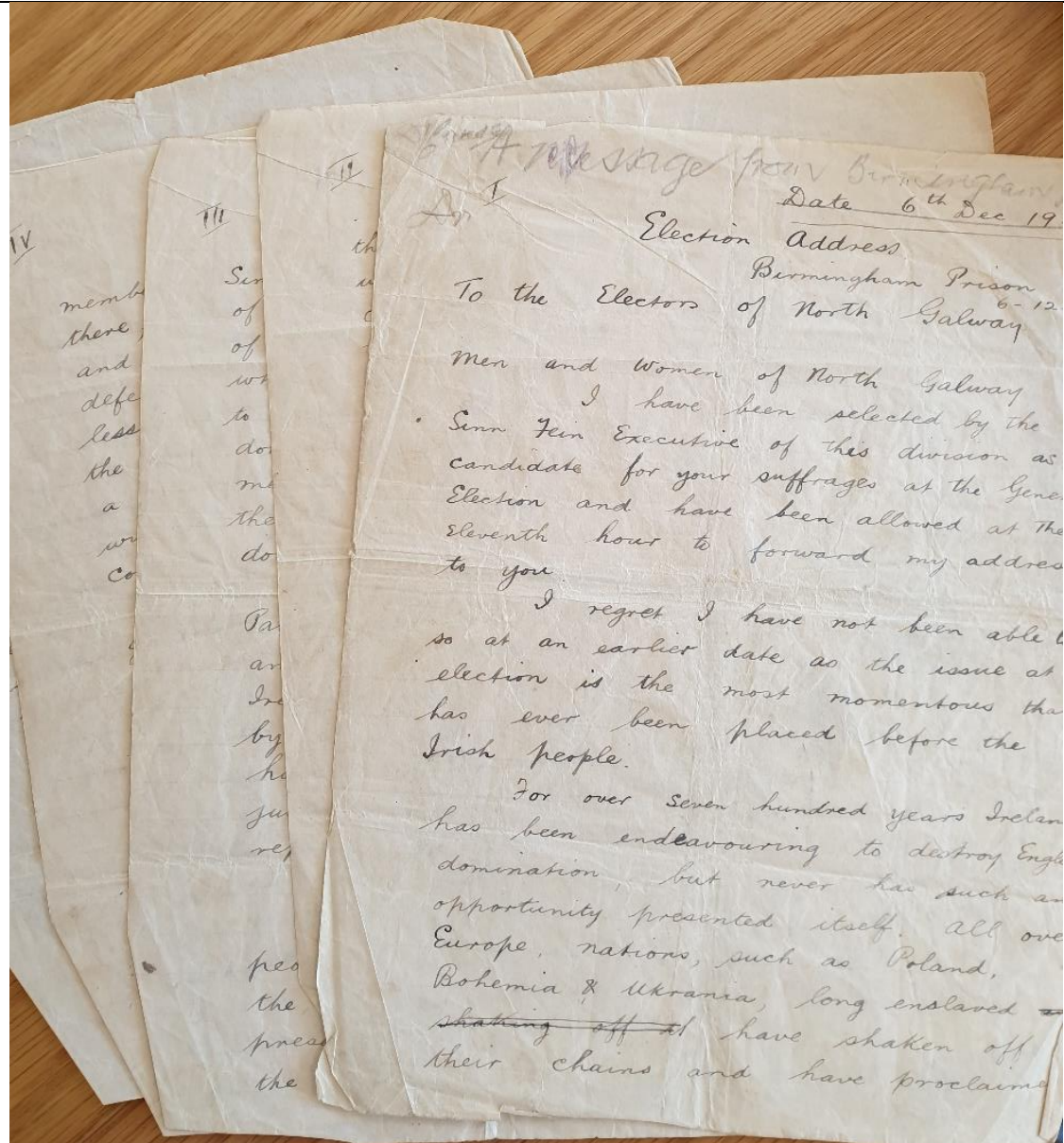
B17

Name: Copy of the election speech from Bermingham Prison of Dr Brian Cusack during imprisonment December 1918

Classification: Documents/Articles

Date and Short Description:

Dr Brian Cusack was a medical doctor and a founder member of the Volunteers in Galway. He was arrested in 1918 during the German Plot, and in his absence was elected as a Sinn Féin MP for Galway North at the 1918 General Election. He was released in March 1919 and went on the run. However, he was re-arrested and spent much of his time in the Curragh Prison Camp until the Truce. This address dated 6 December 1918, was delivered to the people of County Galway on behalf of the imprisoned Brian Cusack prior to the General Election.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Election address written by Dr Brian Cusack

Source: Courtesy NUI Galway James Hardiman Library

Sources:

Brian Cusack Papers, James Hardiman Library, NUI Galway

Dr Brian Cusack, 9 October 1952 BMH, WS No. 736

B18

Name: Photograph of Patrick and Harry Loughnane's funeral
Classification: Photographs

Short Synopsis: This photograph was taken by Tomás Ó hEighin at the funeral of Pat and Harry Loughnane. In addition to the large crowds behind the speaker, the photograph shows the plot prior to the erection of memorial cross. According to the *Connacht Tribune* 'in the vast multitude that followed the coffins scarcely an eye was dry. The funeral, about 200 yards long, consisting of vehicles of all descriptions wended its way along the narrow road. When the prayers were finished 3 volleys were fired over the grave.'



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Photograph taken at Loughane brothers funeral

Source: Courtesy NUI Galway Digital Archive

Sources:

Connacht Tribune, 11 December 1920

Loughnane Papers POL04 James Hardiman Library, NUI Galway

B 19

Name: Death Registry entry of Rev. Michael Griffin
Classification: Documents/Articles

Short Synopsis:

Fr Michael Griffin's death is recorded, 6 December 1920 in the Civil Registry. The cause is given as 'Gunshot wounds by P.U.' (persons unknown).

File Number	Date	Name of deceased	Place	Date of Death	Cause	Date & U.S.	Book Letter
33022/25	6.12.20	Sergeant Emma Unknown	Ballyjane Co. Galway	17.11.20	Mauldoughs Effect of Explosion		9
33022/26	6.12.20	Male Child of Miss Connor	Jammas Est. Co. Wick	22.11.20	Compulsion of brain caused by fall	9.12.20 See 33025/27	6
33022/27	6.12.20	Suffragan Rev. Michael	Galway	15.11.20	Gunshot wounds inflicted by P.U.	10.12.20	9
33022/28	6.12.20	Mercurius Michael	Wickford	20.11.20	Headache from falling asleep on bus then	9.12.20 742076	6
33022/29		Lawson James Edwards John	Ballyrobin Wicklow		Empoisoned 256 2/4 Tea		✓
33022/30	12.12.20	Alancy Patrick	Drangara Co. Tipp	19.11.20	Gunshot inflicted by Military on L of D.	10.12.20	7
33022/31	7.12.20	Conroy Hugh	Dublin Co. Wick	2.12.20			✓
33022/32	7.12.20	Callanora Wm Linton Joe	Dublin	13.11.21 29.11.21	Gunshot wounds inflicted by Irish forces on L of D.		6 6
33022/33	7.12.20	Quinlan Rev. R. C. Maurice	Loughrea Wickford	27.11.20	Gunshot wounds inflicted by P.U.	9.12.20	8
33022/34	7.12.20	Henry Thomas	Dublin	29.11.20	Apoplexy Natural Cause		✓
33022/35	7.12.20	McCarty Hugh R. C. Wm M	Dunamashin Co. Wick	20.11.20	Gunshot wound inflicted by assassinated burglars of his wife		8
33022/36	8.12.20	James Thomas	Ballyvaughan Ballyrobin Co. Wick	5.11.20	Gunshot wounds inflicted by P.U.	10.12.20 Maurice Peter in person of Michael Connor	2 ✓
33022/37	8.12.20	Morgan Frank	Wexford Dublin 11 th Div	16.11.20	Injured by result of a fall on 11th Div of 1918 at result of shooting on St. Vincent Street on 11th Div	11.12.20	10

33022/27	6.12.20	Suffragan Rev. Michael	Galway	15.11.20	Gunshot wounds inflicted by P.U.	10.12.20	9
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Artefacts and Manuscripts: Full page entry with highlighted section below

Source: www.findmypast.ie

Source:

https://www.findmypast.ie/search/results?sourcecategory=armed%20forces%20%26%20conflict&firstname=michael&firstname_variants=true&lastname=griffin&sourcecountry=ireland&yearofdeath=1920&yearofdeath_offset=2&sid=999

B20

Name: Set of medals belonging to Michael (Mikie) Hynes, Kinvara Company
Classification: Medals

Short Synopsis: Full set of medals in a display box awarded to Michael 'Mikie' Hynes a Kinvara Volunteer. The Service Medal (1917–1921) with bar seen on the left was awarded to 'persons who rendered active service in either of the periods (a) the period commencing on the 1st April, 1920, and ending on the 31st March, 1921, or (b) the period commencing on the 1st April, 1921, and ending on the 11th July, 1921.' The medal seen in the centre was awarded to those still alive at the 1971 Jubilee Anniversary of the Truce (11 July 1921).



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Mikie Hynes medals mounted in a small case

Source: Eilish Kavanagh

Sources:

The Military Service (1916 -1923) Pensions Collection militaryarchives@defenceforces.ie
Killian and Kathleen Kenny, Kinvara

B21	Name: Medals and Gun, Annie and Joe Kilkelly, Kinvara. Classification: Composites
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Short Synopsis:
In 2010, Lot number 535, contained a set of medals and a gun belonging to Annie and Joe Kilkelly. Brother and sister were active during the War of Independence in the Kinvara area. The 'Hammer Price' realised was €3,400.00 at the auction.

ADAM'S AUCTIONS

BUYING SELLING AUCTION & RESULTS DEPARTMENTS ABOUT US CONTACT

LOT :535

Estimate EUR : €1,000.00 - €1,500.00

Auction Date : 20-04-2010

DESCRIPTION

Brother & Sister Medals 1916 & War of Independence in Kinvara, Co. Galway Medal set awarded to Joe and Annie Kilkelly - War of Independence Medal with original ribbon - War of Independence Medal with Comrach Bar, ribbon, slip and box. - 1916 - 1966 Jubilee silver gilt medal with original ribbon together with his revolver, mounted on board Provenance: By direct decent to the present owner.

Hammer Price : €3,400.00

Artefacts and Manuscripts: Screen grab of Adam's Auction site depicting lot 535

Source: www.adams.ie

Source:
Adam's Auctioneers https://www.adams.ie/Independence/20-04-2010?c_currency=&excl_keyword=&gridtype=listview&high_estimate=&ipp=All&keyword=Joe%20and%20Annie%20Kilkelly&lot_no=&low_estimate=&name=&page_no=1&sort_by=lot_n

B22

Name: Photograph of Michael Walsh
Classification: Photographs

Short Synopsis:

This photograph depicts a relaxed Michael Walsh, Republican and a member of the Galway Urban Council. He was the owner of the Old Malt pub and grocery in High Street. On 19 October 1920, Walsh was forced by Crown forces to accompany them from his public house to the area known as the Long Walk. Shots were heard and his body was found sometime later by local fishermen.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Photograph of Michael Walsh

Source: Courtesy Tom Kenny

Source:

Tom Kenny <https://www.kennys.ie/old-galway?start=264>

B23

Name: Photograph of Eglinton Street RIC Barracks
Classification: Photographs

Short Synopsis:

Photograph of Eglinton Street RIC Barracks, Galway Town. The barracks was in the administrative division of West Riding. The 1911 Census lists 22 people in the barrack. However this may have increased during the War of Independence, when many of the minor barracks closed due to attacks and moved into large more fortified police stations.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Photograph of Eglinton Street RIC barracks
Source: Courtesy Tom Kenny

Sources:

www.census.ie

Tom Kenny <https://www.kennys.ie/old-galway?start=264>

B24

Name: Photograph of Seán Broderick
Classification: Photographs

Short Synopsis:

Seán Broderick was Officer Commanding, Castlegar Company, 4th Battalion Galway Brigade. He was born on the 8 February 1900, at Prospect Hill, Galway. He later joined the Volunteers and took an active role in the War of Independence. It was Broderick who took charge of the burning and destroying of all Custom House books and documents. He also commanded the attacks on the RIC barracks in Barna, Killeen and Lough George. However, after the incident involving the shooting of Constable Krumm, Broderick was arrested, marched towards the railway station and shot against the railings. One bullet grazed the top of his head and he feigned death until the Crown forces moved away. His sister Peg, was dragged out into the street and her hair was shorn sometime later during the violent reprisals of Galway Town.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Photograph of Seán Broderick

Source: Tom Kenny

Sources:

Galway Advertiser, 16 April 2009

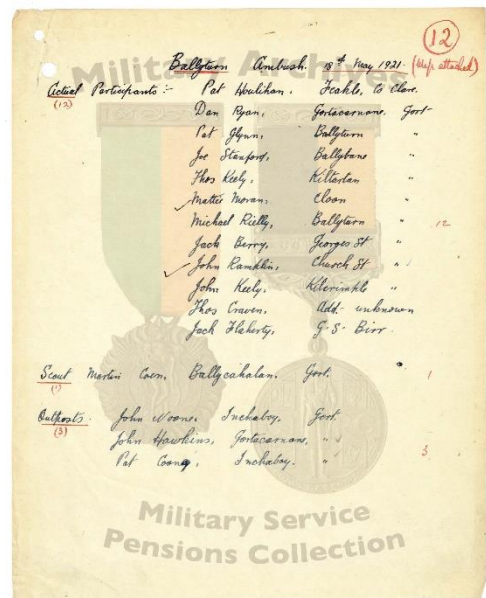
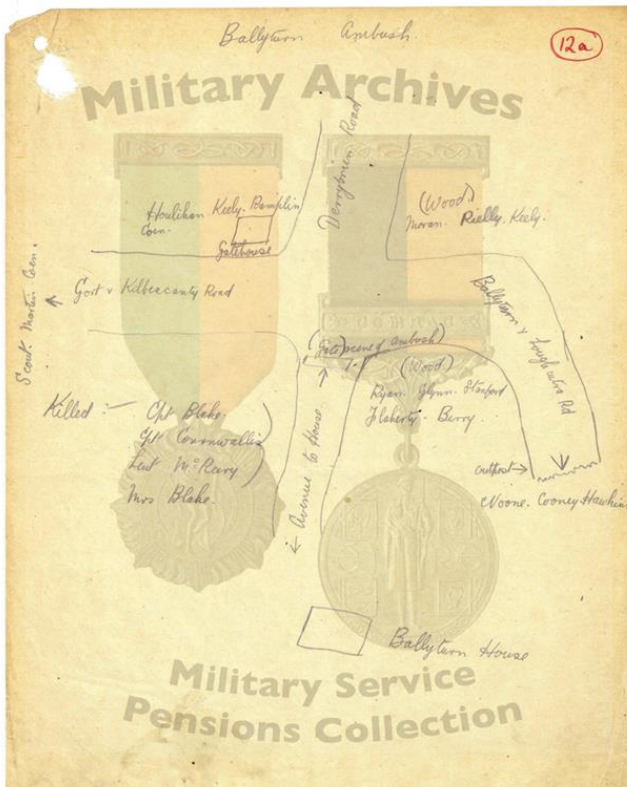
Seán Broderick, 15 September 1957 BMH, WS No. 1677

Tom Kenny

B25

Name: Brigade Map of the Ballyturin House Ambush and list of men involved
Classification: Documents/Articles

Short Synopsis: On the afternoon of Saturday May 15th, 1921 John and Anna Bagot invited a number of friends to visit them at Ballyturin, County Galway and play tennis outside the house. As the party of five (District Inspector Blake, his common-in-law wife Eliza Williams, Lady Gregory's widowed daughter in-law, Margaret Gregory, and two army officers, Captain Fiennes Wykeham Cornwallis and Lieutenant Robert Bruce McCreery) were leaving, an ambush of IRA men waited at the gate lodge. The attack was well planned as seen by the hand drawn map below which depicts the crossroads at the entrance to Ballyturin House. There are several maps and sketches created to illustrate and plan military actions or ambushes. Others depict the boundaries between companies and battalions or to show areas of responsibility of local IRA units.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Brigade Map of the Ballyturin House Ambush and list of men involved
Source: Courtesy Military Archives

Sources:

<https://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/brigade-activities/operation/ballyturin-house-ambush/>

B26

Name: Geraldine Plunkett Dillion Service Medal and War of Independence Medal
Classification: Medals

Short Synopsis: Lot number: 476, at Adams Auction house was a set of medals awarded to Geraldine Plunkett Dillion for her participation in the War of Independence mostly in County Galway. The inscription on the card box that accompanied the medals incorrectly described one of them as an 1916 medal. However, it was a 1917–21 Service Medal (without bar), awarded to those who had a participative role during the Irish War of Independence, not deemed active service. The other is the survivors commemorative medal issued in 1971 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Truce that ended the War of Independence. The list price was estimated at €800.00–€1,000.00, the ‘Hammer Price’ was €6,500.00 revealing of the level of interest.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Medals for auction at Adams Auction house

Source: www.adams.ie

Sources:

<https://www.adams.ie/9919/THE-WAR-OF-INDEPENDENCE-MEDALS-AWARDED-TO-GERALDINE-PLUNKETT-DILLON-DAUGHTER-OF-COUNT-PLUNKETT-AND-SISTER-OF-JOSEPH-MARY-PLUNKETT-THE-EXECUTED-1916-LEADER-AND-OF-GEORGE-AND-JOHN-JACK-PLUNKETT-WHO>

Ó Brolcháin, Honor, ed., *All in the Blood: A memoir of the Plunkett family, the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence* by Geraldine Plunkett Dillon (Dublin: A. & A. Farmar, 2006)

B27

Name: Brass cap with photograph in side
Classification: Other

Short Synopsis: Part of an exhibit in Galway City Museum entitled 'Galway Women & 'Bobbing'', the brass cap is the lid off a petrol can used to set alight the Broderick family home. The photograph kept inside the cap is of Margaret 'Peg' Broderick-Nicholson after her hair was shorn by Crown forces in 1920.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Petrol Cap with Photograph of Margaret 'Peg' Broderick-Nicholson Inside

Source: Galway City Museum



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Petrol Cap with Photograph of Margaret 'Peg' Broderick Inside
Source: Galway City Museum

Sources:

With kind permission of Margaret Boner

Images Courtesy of Galway City Museum exhibit 'Galway Women & 'Bobbing' September 2020

<https://www.facebook.com/galwaymuseum/posts/10158527997856544>

B28	<p>Name:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fr Griffin's stole, front side; • Part of Fr Griffin's stole, rear side, showing his name; • The envelope in which the stole was kept, with typed transcription of the text thereon; • Fr Griffin's hair <p>Classification: Other</p>
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Short Synopsis: Fr Griffin's death was widely attributed to local Black and Tans possibly out for revenge. Once his body was found in Cloughscoiltia, it was brought back to his parish church, St Joseph's. Canon Davis immediately sent a message to the local convent requesting the Sisters of Mercy to send someone to lay out the body. Two arrived and carefully washed and laid out Fr Griffin's body in his Mass Vestments before finally helping the undertaker place the remains in a coffin supplied by the Conneely family from Market Street. It was sometime during this process that the stole and lock of hair was removed for safe keeping. In 1933, at the official dedication of Gurteen parish church in honour of Fr Griffin, Dr O'Doherty mentioned to his mother 'that he possessed a precious relic of the dead priest – the bog-stained stole which he wore when he went on his last mission'. This may well have been the first time Fr Griffin's mother was aware of the artefact. After some further investigation by this researcher the relic was eventually found hidden in a desk drawer in the Galway Diocesan Archive.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Fr Griffin's stole, front side

Source: Courtesy Galway Diocesan Archive

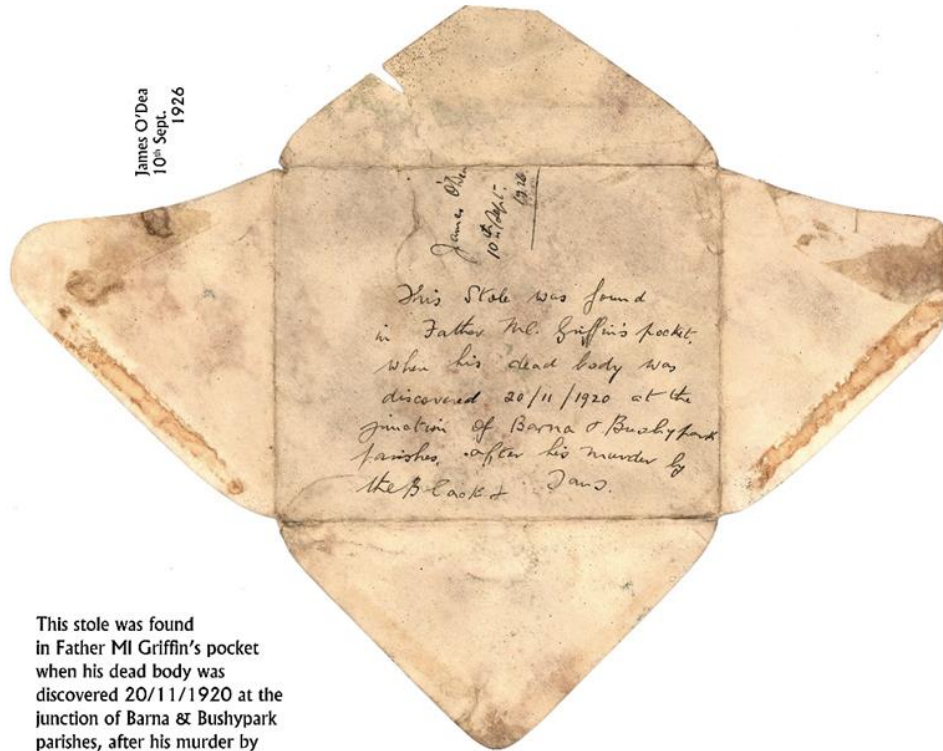


Artefacts and Manuscripts: Part of Fr Griffin's stole, rear side, showing his name

Source: Courtesy Galway Diocesan Archive

Copy of envelope in which Fr Michael Griffin's stole was kept by Bishop Thomas O'Doherty

A lock of hair, presumably that of Fr Griffin, was also in the envelope.



This stole was found in Father MI Griffin's pocket when his dead body was discovered 20/11/1920 at the junction of Barna & Bushypark parishes, after his murder by the Black & Tans.

© Galway Diocesan Archive

Artefacts and Manuscripts: The envelope in which the stole was kept, with typed transcription of the text thereon
Source: Courtesy Galway Diocesan Archive



© Galway Diocesan Archive

Artefacts and Manuscripts: Lock of hair from Fr Griffin

Source: Courtesy Galway Diocesan Archive

Sources:

Dr Darina McCarthy, Diocesan Office, Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora, The Cathedral, Gaol Road, Galway.

Irish Press, 17 July 1933

B29

Name: Newspaper clipping reproducing a letter from Thomas Whelan to his mother on the eve of his execution.
Classification: Documents/Articles

Short Synopsis: In the article below, Thomas Whelan praised his mother for her bravery, after he had heard she had spent time singing and reciting the Rosary for the nuns who came to visit on the night before his execution 14 March 1921. The article concluded with the sadness and deep mourning the people of Clifden endured having heard of his execution.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Newspaper clippings regarding Thomas Whelan's execution
Source: Courtesy National Library of Ireland

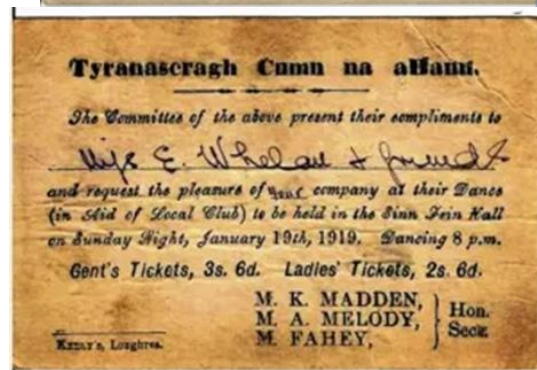
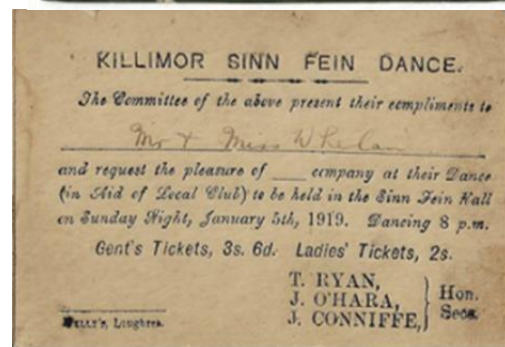
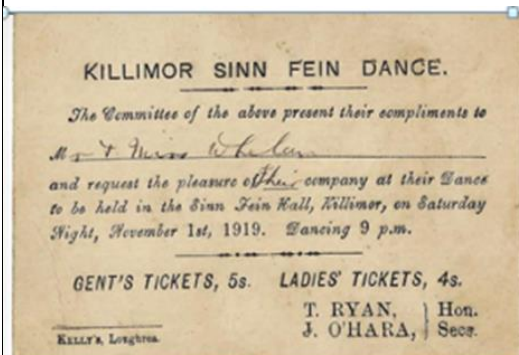
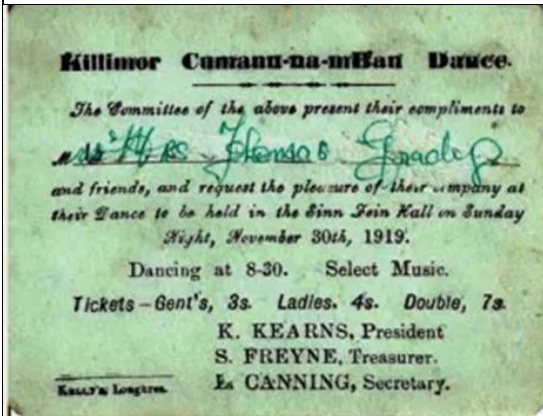
Sources:

Ceannt and O'Brennan Papers, 1851-1953.NLI MS 41,479/9/10
<http://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000585948/Holdings#tabnav>

B30

Name: The Hanney Collection – Invitation Dance Cards
Classification: Other

Short Synopsis: Fundraising was one of the vital roles played by woman, many who were members of Cumann na mBan. The Hanney Collection as seen here, consists of a series of invitations to attend dances held locally in Killimor. The dances were held for various causes such as prisoners, Sinn Féin activities, or men on-the-run. Apart from being social events, Volunteers sometimes used the opportunity to converse with those from neighbouring IRA companies.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Several examples of dance invitations

Source: Courtesy Marie Mannion

Sources:

<https://heritage.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/places/killimor-heritage-group/topics-killimor-heritage-group/the-hanney-collection-2>
<https://www.rte.ie/history/the-ban/2020/01/09/1105376-cumann-na-mban/>

B 31

Name: Photograph taken outside St Coleman's Church depicting the charred bodies of Pat and Harry Loughnane
Classification: Photographs

Short Description: The brothers, who lived in Shanaglish village in south County Galway, were prominent members of the local Sinn Féin organisation. Pat served with the Irish Republican Army (IRA) during Ireland's War of Independence. He was a suspect in an engagement with the Royal Irish Constabulary at Blackwater, Gort, on 12 September 1920, in the Castledaly Ambush on 30 October 1920, and in a raid on the residence of a retired policeman on an unknown date. After their capture by British crown forces at their family farm in Shanaglish on Friday, 26 November 1920, the Loughnane brothers suffered a horrific ordeal of violent torture. Afterwards, they were shot dead at Moy O'Hynes' Wood by the Auxiliaries, a paramilitary unit of the police. The bodies were then burnt, before being deposited in a turlough at Umbriste. Once found, their bodies were waked in Kinvara and brought to the local church.

When the two bodies of Pat and Harry Loughnane reached St Coleman's Church, the Volunteers began the vigil. The photographs taken by Tomás Ó hEighin, an Irish teacher, at the church depicts the true horror of what Pat and Harry endured prior to their demise. Taken outside in the church doorway, these photographs have become the embodiment of terror the Black and Tans inflicted on the people of County Galway. Of note, is that Nora Loughnane, seen on the right hand side of both photographs, has not been cropped out of the photograph.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Photograph taken outside St Coleman's Church, Kinvara

Source: Courtesy NUI Galway Digital Collections

Sources:

NUI Galway <https://digital.library.nuigalway.ie/islandora/object/islandora%3A7393>

B 32

Name: This photograph depicts several prominent actors on the steps outside 2 Montpellier Terrace, former home of senior curate, Fr John O'Meehan and Fr Michael Griffin

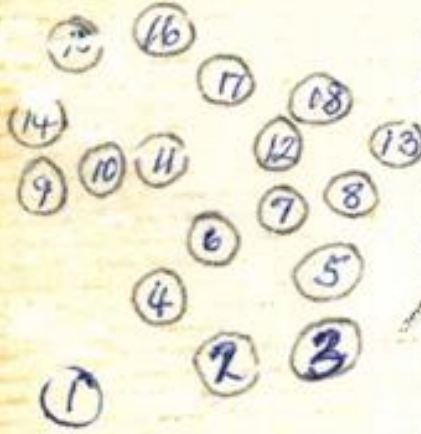
Classification: Photographs

Short Description: This photograph, dated 23 April, 1922, was taken outside 2 Montpellier Terrace, the former home of senior curate, Fr John O'Meehan and Fr Michael Griffin who was killed in November 1920. Visiting Galway as part of his election trail, in front is Eamon de Valera surrounded by several leaders of the War of Independence (some in uniform). The reverse of the photograph identified those present including, Cathal Brugha, Séan Turke, Harry Boland, Dr Ada English, Pádraig Ó Fathaigh, Padraig Kilkelly, and Alice Cashel. Fr Griffin's death was marked-out as one of the most harrowing murders of the War of Independence and de Valera, together with his supporters, may well have used this opportunity to claim the memory of Fr Michael Griffin for the ant-Treaty side.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Photograph taken outside Fr Griffin's former home
Source: Courtesy Tom Kenny

House from which Mr. Griffin was taken
and murdered by Black & Tans Oct. 1920.
Bought April 23rd 1922.



140%

A

1. Sean Turk
2. Mr. De Valera
3. Mr. John O'Heilly
4. Fr. Tom Bushe
5. Cathal Brugha
6. Harry Boland
7. Paddy Lardner
8. Fr. Jimmie O'Beir
9. Dr. Ada E. Glisk
10. Miss Cashel
11. Paddy Kilhealy
12. Paddy F. ...
13. Mrs. R. ...
14. Eamonn Corbett
15. Tommie ...
16. Paddy ...
17. P. ...
18. R. J. C. Scott Howard
(South Africa)

1628

6

Artefacts and Manuscripts: Photograph taken outside Fr Griffin's former home
Source: Courtesy Tom Kenny

Sources:

Tom Kenny, Kenny's Bookshop
Connacht Tribune, 22 April 1922

B 33

Name: Members of Cumann na mBan attending a pre-Truce commemorative dinner in the Banba Hotel, Salthill, Galway, 1954.

Classification: Photographs

Short Description: This is a unique photograph as it depicts several members of Galway's Cumann na mBan attending a pre-Truce commemorative dinner in February, 1954. Standing, left to right: Mrs Matilda (Tilly) McDonnell (nee Kilroy), Mrs Mary McNamara (nee Rooney), Mrs Delia Cuffe (nee McDonnell), Miss Minnie Lenihan, Mrs Margaret (Maggie) Feehan (nee McDonnell). Seated in front left to right, Mrs Mary O'Connor (nee Harpur), Brigadier Michael Newell and Mrs Margaret (Peg) Nicholson (Broderick). Delia and Maggie are sisters, and Tilly was married to their brother Peter McDonnell, also a veteran of the conflict. Mollie, another sister, is not in this photograph.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Photograph of several members of Cumann na mBan

Source: Courtesy Tom Kenny

Sources:

Tom Kenny, Kenny's Bookshop
Connacht Sentinel, 16 February 1954

B 34

Name: Service Medal issued to Mary Ellen McDonnell
Classification: Medals

Short Description: Mary Ellen (Mollie) McDonnell was a member of the respected McDonnell family, many of whom played an active role in the War of Independence (see B33). This service medal, without bar, was issued to persons whose service is not deemed to be active military service. However, women found it difficult to present a qualifying case in order to receive an adequate award in relation to their participation.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Service Medal issued to Mary Ellen McDonnell

Source: Courtesy Tom Kenny

Sources:

Tom Kenny, Kenny's Bookshop

Military Service Pensions Collection Ref: 19796

B 35

Name: Chaise Longue from the former home of Eileen Quinn
Classification: Other

Short Description: After the heavily pregnant Eileen Quinn was shot by Crown forces out in the garden, she was taken inside her home and placed on this chaise longue. It was here some hours later she finally died from her wounds. The house was eventually passed down through the family and another Eileen Quinn (by marriage), seen on the right, found the sofa in one of the outside sheds. The sofa was restored and is now back in the home. Alongside Eileen is Bernadette Burns, a grand-niece of the former Eileen Quinn.



Artefacts and Manuscripts: Chaise Longue in the former home of Eileen Quinn

Source: Courtesy Paul Murphy

Sources:

Paul Murphy
Bernadette Burns
Eileen Quinn

B 36

Name: Pen and Ink Drawing of Loughnane Memorial
Classification: Other

Short Description: This pen and ink drawing depicts the design of a memorial to honour the memory of Patrick and Harry Loughnane. It is not known if this design was ever replicated into a built memorial. The inscription on this drawing reads, 'In Loving Memory of our martyred heroes Patrick and Harry Loughnane, Shanaglish, Co. Galway who gave their lives for Faith and Fatherland November 26 1920'. RIP 'No King or sage hath tomb so proud, As he whose flag becomes his shroud'. The picture is surrounded by dried flowers.



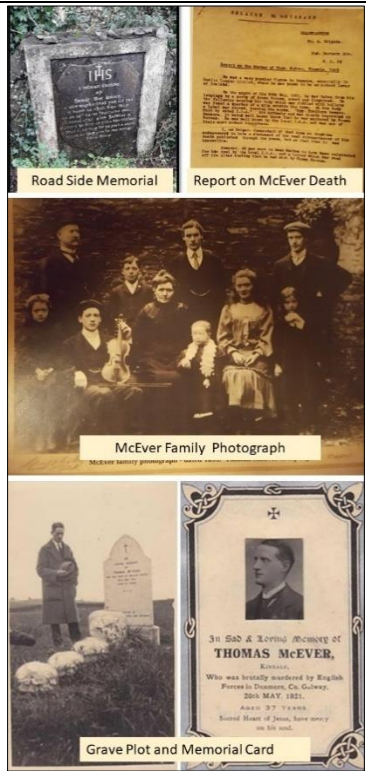
Artefacts and Manuscripts: Pen and Ink Drawing

Source: Courtesy Dinah and Colm O'Connor

Sources:

Dinah and Colm O'Connor

C: Memorials

CI	Name: Thomas McEver memorial and items bought at an auction by Geoff Power (producer of RTÉ podcast Thomas and Tess)
GPS:	Classification: Roadside Memorials
<p>Short Description: Thomas McEver (sometimes mis-spelled McKeeever) was killed on the 20 May 1921, by person or persons unknown. A thirty-seven-year-old chemist and a native of Kinsale, County Cork, McEver had moved to Dunmore, County Galway the previous October. His roommate reported that he was taken from his lodgings by men disguised in motor goggles, hats and overcoats. Some fifteen minutes later the roommate heard shots and next saw McEver on the side of the road at 8.30am on his way to work. He was found with a sign around his neck, which read: 'Convicted spy. Traitors beware. Executed by order of the IRA'. This was disputed by many at the time that claimed McEver was not politically motivated and was known to be quite religious. This was confirmed when Dean Macken, parish priest from Dunmore, made a public announcement condemning the killing and contradicted the County Inspector's accusation that McEver was a Sinn Féiner and an informer. He then accused the Crown forces of murder.</p>	
 <p style="text-align: center;">Memorials: A collection of items related to Thomas McEver Source: Courtesy Geoff Power and Marie Mannion</p>	
<p>Sources: http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/pages/1911/Cork/Kinsale_Urban/Fisher_Street/422904/ Geoff Power Marie Mannion <i>Connacht Tribune</i>, 28 May 1921</p>	

C2	Name: Cargin Cemetery, Headford. Burial place of Louis D'Arcy
GPS: 53.439438, -9.153335	Classification: Graves

Short Description: Cargin Cemetery is the location of the burial plot of Louis D'Arcy (Lugháidhe Ó Dorchaidhe). Louis D'Arcy, Headford, was a prominent IRA Volunteer Captain of the 3rd Battalion. He and Michael Newell in Castlegar liaised and collaborated frequently on raids and ambushes. After his arrest the day before, on the 24 March 1921, D'Arcy was being transported from Oranmore to Galway and reportedly escaped. Whilst evading recapture he was shot by Auxiliaries in the line of duty. This verdict of being shot while evading capture had become a common conclusion to Courts of Inquiries held by Crown forces. No medical report was submitted to the inquiry.



Memorials: District Burial plot of Louis D'Arcy
Source: Eilish Kavanagh

H.Q. GALWAY BRIGADE
GALWAY
REC'D-2511
No. 120/120/H

COUNTY OF GALWAY, W. R.,
District Inspector's Office,
Galway, 24th March, 1921.

Shooting of Louis D'Arcy, Clydagh, Co Galway.

-----0000000000'-----

I beg to report that Louis D'Arcy, Clydagh, Co Galway, was arrested this morning by the Police at Oransmore.

When being escorted to Galway by a party of Auxiliary Police on this date D'Arcy attempted to escape at Roscan, and was fired upon and shot dead.

The dead body was removed to the Morgue at Rosmore Barracks where it presently lies.

I beg to be informed when and where the Military Inquiry will be held touching his death.

Harry Mc
for District Inspector.

The C.M.A.,
Head Quarters,
Galway Brigade.

Memorials: District Inspector's report on the death of Louis D'Arcy

Source: www.findmypast.ie

Sources:

Easter Rising & Ireland Under Martial Law 1916-1921 Louis D'Arcy www.findmypast.ie

GPS Coordinates from Google Maps

Thomas Conneally

C3	Name: Quinn-Loughnane Memorial Hall Classification: Buildings
GPS: 53.14124838125961, - 8.806078603190059	

Short Description: The original hall, St Teresa's was burnt by the Black and Tans during a series of reprisal attacks in 1920. The compensation the parish received for this attack was reported to have gone into building the local school.

The Very Reverend J. Canon Considine, when appointed Parish Priest, set about memorialising Eileen Quinn and brothers Patrick and Harry Loughnane by building a new parochial hall in their name.

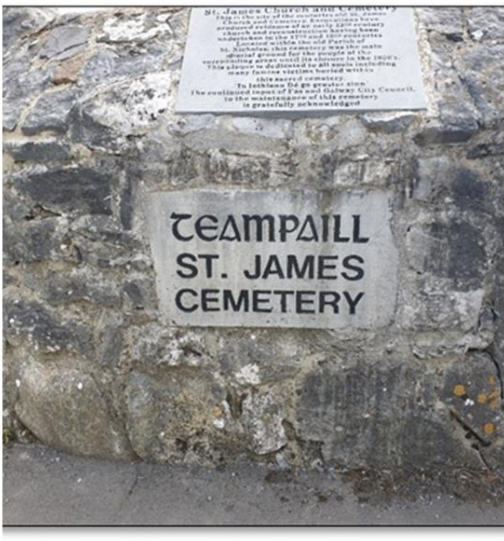
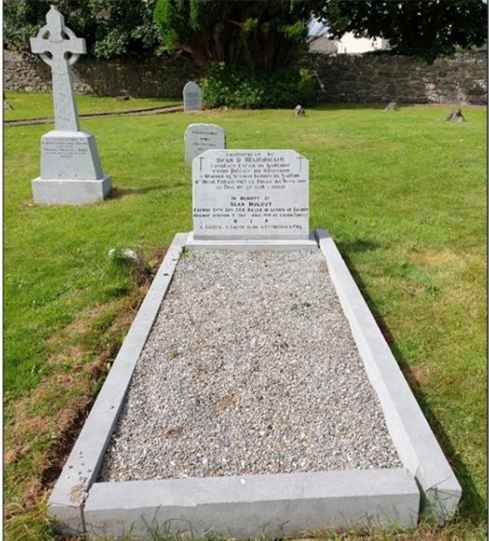
According to the Buildings of Ireland website, the hall is 'designed by William Scott and prominently located alongside a main entrance to Laban, this community building is a relatively rare example of an early modern building in rural Ireland. The combination of ornate, well-articulated doorways that are tentatively indicative of the Art Deco style, and the simple plan of the building, is notable. The columns to the doorways and the elaborate caps to the piers were salvaged following the demolition of Cregaclare House in 1939.'



Memorials: Quinn Labane Memorial Hall

Source: Eilish Kavanagh

Sources:
 Diocesan office Galway
 GPS Coordinates from Google Maps
<https://clarechampion.ie/labane-hall-returned-to-former-glory/>
<https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/30411406/loughnane-quinn-memorial-hall-ballylara-laban-county-galway>
 Superintendent Henry O' Mara BMH, WS No. 1652

<p>C4</p>	<p>Name: The grave of Seán Mulvoy at St James's Church and Cemetery, Galway</p>
<p>GPS: 53.29406863488945, - 9.090322838013478</p>	<p>Classification: Graves</p>
<p>Short Description: Late in the evening of 8 September 1920, while waiting on the midnight mail train from Dublin a scuffle between a Black and Tan named Krumm and several Volunteers resulted in the death of both Krumm and Mulvoy. His funeral took place on 10 September surrounded by a large crowd of mourners.</p>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;">   </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Memorials: Burial plot of Seán Mulvoy St James's Church and Cemetery, Galway</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Source: Eilish Kavanagh</p>	
<p>Sources: GPS Coordinates from Google Maps</p>	

C5	Name: Alice Cashel's Grave and Memorial Card Classification: Graves
GPS: 53.28057892681159, - 9.039426676517476	

Short Description:
 Alice Cashel moved to Cashel House in Connemara, the home of her sister Agnes and brother-in-law John O'Mara, during the War of Independence. Here she continued her work with Sinn Féin and Cumann na mBan. She was co-opted onto the Galway County Council in June 1920. After a particularly difficult period in Galway, the council unexpectedly put forward a resolution, which included an offer to host peace negotiations with the British government. Alice, who was away at the time, returned and immediately voiced her objection only to discover that there was no quorum for such a vote and the council had acted illegally. Her success in revoking the resolution caused her home to be raided and her immediate arrest for possessing seditious material. Alice was subsequently imprisoned until 25 July 1921, after the Truce. Although Alice spent a short time in Dublin she mostly remained in Connemara and died on 22 February 1958. Her funeral took place in St Joseph's Church and she was buried in the New Cemetery, Bohermore.



Memorials: Alice Cashel's grave, memorial card and family photograph

Source: Courtesy Mark Humphrys

Source:
 Dr Mark Humphrys, humphrysfamilytree.com <https://humphrysfamilytree.com/Cashel/al.html>
 GPS Coordinates from Google Maps

<p>C6</p>	<p>Name: Commemorations to Fr Michael Griffin</p>
<p>GPS: <u>2 Montpellier Tce.</u> 53.2683876196091, - 9.062623480536654 <u>Clochscoilte, Barna</u> 53.26858060044168, - 9.157306349046797 <u>Loughrea Cathedral</u> 53.19709549871854, - 8.566558129165239 <u>St Michaels Church</u> <u>53.3670062,-8.5799637</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limestone column, Clochscoilte, Barna 2. Limestone column, Loughrea Cathedral 3. New road named Fr Griffin's Road, Galway 4. St Michael's Church, Gurteen 5. Fr Griffin's Gaelic Athletic Association(GAA) football club 6. A brass plaque outside 2 Montpellier Terrace <p>Classification: Commemoration by Multiple Memorials</p>
<p>Short Description:</p> <p>The kidnapping and subsequent murder of Fr Michael Griffin occurred at a time when aggressions and fear were particularly high around County Galway. He was considered to be a kind and gentle man who was much loved by his family, colleagues, friends, parishioners and everyone who knew him. His tragic death has since prompted several commemorations in his name.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It was soon after the funeral of Fr Griffin that his colleagues decided to erect a memorial to his memory at the location where his body was found in the townland of Clochscoilte (Cloch Scoilte), close to the village of Bearna. The limestone column was unveiled in November 1922 and refurbished in 1992 and again for the centenary in 2020 2. Another limestone monument was erected, this time in the grounds of St. Brendan's Church, Loughrea, the Cathedral Parish of the Diocese of Clonfert. The monument was unveiled 16 May 1927 (the feast of St Brendan). 3. A short time (date unknown) after his death, a new road close to the centre of Galway was named after Fr Michael Griffin. A stone plaque stands at the Salthill end of the road with Gaelic lettering carved by Martin Fahy. 4. Completed in July 1933, a new church built in the memory of Fr Griffin was erected on a hill just outside of the village of Gurteen, near to where Fr Griffin was born. The church was designed in the Hiberno-Romanesque style in cut limestone, backed with concrete. 5. In 1948, a group of men held a meeting to discuss forming a new GAA football club situated in South Park, The Claddagh. They decided unanimously agreed to name the club after Fr Griffin. 6. On the 50th anniversary of his death in 1970, many of the GAA members from Fr Griffin football club fundraised in order to place a brass plaque in memory of Fr Griffin outside the house he shared with Fr O'Meehan, at 2 Montpellier Terrace, Galway. <p>Inscriptions on Monuments:</p> <p>Clochscoilte, Barna: This limestone pillar was erected by his Maynooth classmates in honour of their friend and colleague. At the base of the monument is a low wall projecting a right angle enclosure. The monument inscription was composed by Fr Seisnian,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Tá an leac seo mar chomhartha ar an áit in-ar fritheadh corp an Ahar Mícheál Ó Griobhtha, Séiplíneach an pharóiste seo, sé lá taréis a mharbhtha.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Meall na Gaill ó n-a leabhadh É, oíche Shamhna a 14, 1920. Chuireadar piléar thré n-a inchinn agus sháitheadar an corp fá'n bhfód sa mbogach seo.</p> <p>Mar síor chuimhne ar a gcompánach grádmhar Gaodhlach agus mar chomhartha a measa ar an Athair Mícheál a dúnmarbhuigheadh, mar gheall ar an grádh a bhí aige ar a thír dúithchais,</p>	

chuir na sagairt a bhí sa mbuidhean chéadhna leis I gColáiste Muighe Nuadhad an leac se oar
bun ar an áit seo beannuight.

Ar dheis Dé go rabh a anam fíor ghlán.

Pretiosa in conspectus Domini mors sanctorum Eius

Inscription in English reads: This monument reminds us of the spot where the body of Fr Michael Griffin, a curate in this parish, was found, six days after this death.

The Crown forces lured him from his bed on the night of the 14 November 1920. They shot him through his head and they buried his body in this boggy ground.

To show their love of their ever-remembered companion and as an expression of their esteem for Fr Michael Griffin, who was murdered because of his love for his country, the priests of his class in Maynooth have erected this monument on this hallowed ground.

'May his pure soul find rest at the right hand of God. Precious in the sight of God is the death of his saints'

Loughrea: The rectangular limestone monument with four side panels, tapers gradually to the top. Thought to represent Fr Griffin's love of the Irish language, at the top stands a female figure, fáinne an lae, translated as Daybreak, after the bilingual newspaper established by Conradh na Gaeilge (The Gaelic League). Also sculpted in the stone within the panels is the images of: St Brigid, one of Ireland's patron saints; St Coireall (St Kerrill), a patron saint of Gurteen, representing Fr Griffin's birthplace; St Nicholas, patron of Galway, a crucifixion, a chalice and a Brettá (a priest's hat). The sculptor was Michael J. Shortall, 1926. The front ensign is a circular bronze plaque depicting the face of Fr Griffin above the inscription:

Gadh an leacht seo I gcúimhne

ar an

tAthair Mícheál Ó Ghríobhtha (Ghríofa) sagart de fharta Cluanfarta

agus Séiplíneach I bparáiste an Rathúin I nGaillimh

Na Gaill a rinne a Dhúnmarbhadh (Dhúnmarú)

An 15ú Lá de Shamháin 1920

Tré n-a Dhílseacht d'éirinn

Go ndéana Dia trócaire ar a anam

Translated as: This plaque was erected in memory of Fr Michael Griffin

Priest of Clonfert Diocese

And Clergyman in the Parish of Ragoon in Galway

He was murdered by the foreigner on the 15th November 1920

For his loyalty to Ireland

May God have mercy on his soul



Memorials: Memorial erected in Clochscoilte, Barna by Fr Griffin's clerical colleagues

Source: Eilish Kavanagh



Memorials: Loughrea Cathedral, Loughrea

Source: Eilish Kavanagh



Memorials: St Michael's Church, Gurteen

Source: Google Maps



Memorials: Fr Griffin/Éire Óg football club emblem

Source: <https://frgriffinseireog.ie/>



Memorials: Outside on the pathway of 2 Montpellier Terrace

Source: Eilish Kavanagh



Memorials: A stone plaque denoting Fr Griffin Road

Source: Eilish Kavanagh

Sources:

Anglo-Celt, 22 July 1933

Connacht Sentinel, 18 July 1933

Connacht Tribune, 14 June 1927

Freeman's Journal, 27 November 1924

Pádraic Ó Laoi *Fr. Griffin 1892-1920* (Ireland: Connacht Tribune Ltd, 1994)

GPS Coordinates from Google Maps

Tom Kenny, Kenny's Bookshop

Galway Advertiser, 11 November 2021

C7	Name: Online temporary memorial during the centenary of Fr Michael Griffin on Barna Furbo Parish Facebook page
GPS:	Classification: Temporary Exhibits

Short Description:

In the parish of Barna Furbo a program of events was scheduled for the centenary of Fr Michael Griffin's death. However, with strict restrictions being imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic these events were held on the parish Facebook page instead. The series of events commenced with a special mass on 14 November 2020. The temporary memorial was erected by parish volunteers and seen by online viewers throughout the events.

According to Joan Concannon, Parish Secretary, the symbolic display in the image below was constructed to represent Fr Griffin's life. Her description was as follows:

'Bog Oak Cross

Represents the reality of suffering and pain people have to endure.

Purple Cloth

Represents the suffering that Fr. Michael had to endure that fateful night.

The Lamb of God

"Who takes away the sins of the world and grants us peace". Fr. Michael brought that peace to many, young and old, during his priesthood. He would have recited these words during his two Masses here in the parish the day before he died.

White Lilies

Symbolise a rejuvenation of the soul. A simple flower that represents purity, commitment, and rebirth.

Bible and Missal [written in the Irish language]

Representing Fr. Griffin's love of the Irish language and heritage.

Rosary Beads

Fr. Michael recited the rosary often during his priestly life.'



Memorials: Temporary online display in honour of Fr Michael Griffin

Source: Courtesy of Barna Furbo Parish

Sources:

<http://www.barnafurboparish.ie/blog/a-day-in-the-life-of-fr-michael-joseph-griffin>

<https://www.facebook.com/BarnaFurboParishGalway>

Joan Concannon, Parish Secretary, Barna Furbo Parish Office

C8	Name: Grave plot of Joseph Stanford Classification: Graves
GPS: 53.04788156520538, - 8.88767714139859	


Short Description: Joseph Stanford was a prominent member of South Galway Volunteers. His grave plot as seen below is located in Kilmacdugh Cemetery. Behind is the round tower that projects into the air and can be seen for miles in the landscape. The inscription is indiscernible.



Memorials: Grave headstone of Joe Stanford

Source: Eilish Kavanagh

Sources:
GPS Coordinates from Google Maps
Joseph Stanford, Date Unknown BMH, WS No. 1334

C9	
GPS: 53.200030227196706, - 8.569895651111732	Name: Martin Newell's Grave Plot Classification: Graves
Short Description: Martin Newell was born into a family involved in agrarian agitation; his father John, was a leader in the IRB. In his Witness Statement he referred to his father's intimidation of Frank Shaw-Taylor only months prior to his murder. Martin himself was seen as a distinguished and popular Volunteer. He died on the 18 February 1967. He is buried in the Carmelite Abbey Cemetery.	
<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Memorials: Grave plot of Martin Newell</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Source: Eilish Kavanagh</i></p>	
Sources: GPS Coordinated Google Maps Martin Newell, 21 January 1957 BMH, WS No. 1562	

C10	Name: Loughnane Forge, Memorial Garden and Burial Plot (as seen earlier), Shanaglish, County Galway
GPS: 53.010469, -8.838674 53. 014714, -8. 844173	Classification: Commemoration by Multiple Memorials

Short Description:

The Loughnane burial plot is where both Pat and Harry Loughnane are buried. This is located in what is locally referred to as the new cemetery. The Republican Plot is enclosed within metal railings and one other grave dedicated to the memory of Michael Kelly.

The Beagh (Integrated) Rural Development Committee, with assistance from FÁS, Galway County Council and County Development restored the Loughnane Forge in Shanaglish during 1996. The building became a centre for historic talks and events. In 2016 the committee developed a site adjacent to the forge into a memorial garden commemorating brothers Pat and Harry Loughnane, Shanaglish, Michael Kelly, from Killeen and Crusheen man Sean O'Halloran.



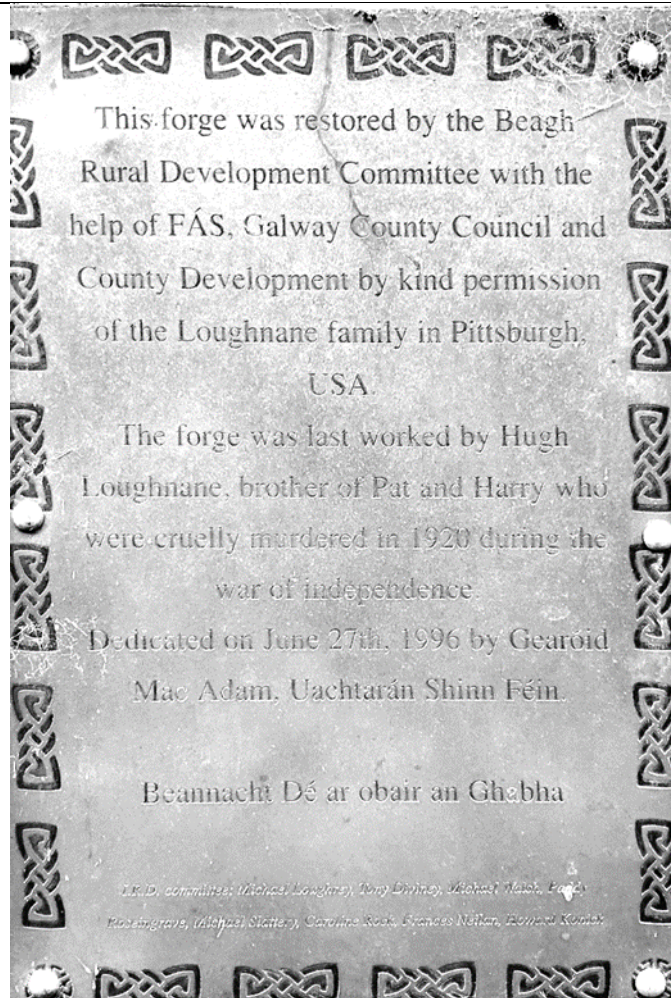
Memorials: Loughnane Republican Plot, Shanaglish

Source: Eilish Kavanagh



Memorials: Loughnane Forge and Memorial Garden

Source: Eilish Kavanagh

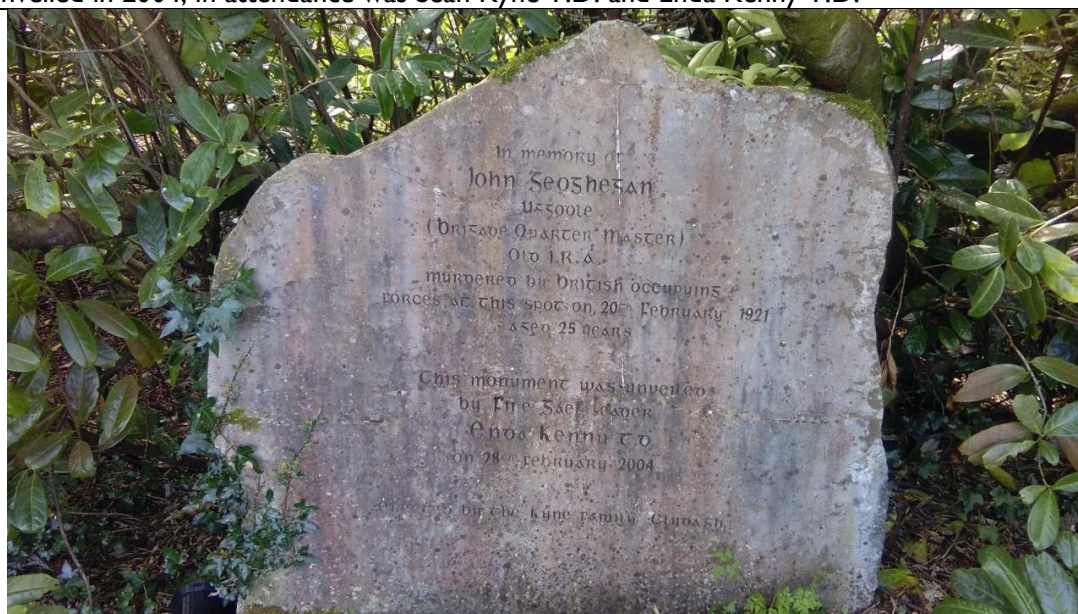


Memorials: Plaque on outside of Loughnane Forge, Shanaglish
Source: Eilish Kavanagh

Source:
The Clare Champion, 28 March 2016

CII	Name: Memorial Stone dedicated to John Geoghegan
GPS:	Classification: Roadside Memorials

Short Description: John Geoghegan was a member of the IRB and an active Volunteer in the local East Connemara Brigade under the command of Michael Ó Droighneán from Spiddle. He was also a Sinn Féin member of Galway Rural District Council. Because of this his movements and activities were watched closely by Crown forces in Galway. According to Brendan McGowen, 'on Thursday, 19 February 1921, John Geoghegan went into Galway to pick up an important dispatch sent from IRA headquarters in Dublin. He returned to Uggool and hid the dispatch in a haycock in the haggard ... In the early hours, they were awoken by the sound of loud knocking and breaking glass, and a voice shouting 'Open the door, we want John Geoghegan'. He was shot a short time later. This memorial to John Geoghegan, Moycullen was unveiled in 2004, in attendance was Sean Kyne T.D. and Enda Kenny T.D.



Memorials: Memorial Stone dedicated to John Geoghegan

Source: Courtesy Moycullen Heritage Group

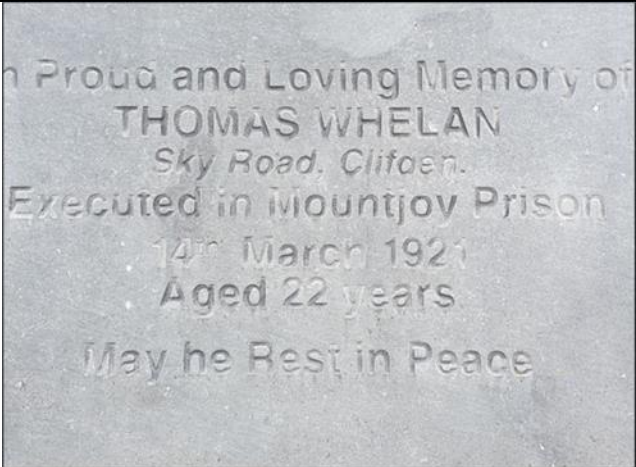
Sources:

Connacht Tribune 19 march 2004

<https://dpgay9x1sxad.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2021/02/John-Geoghegan-of-Moycullen-by-Brendan-McGowan-Galway-City-Museum.pdf>

<https://moycullen.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/category/people/our-local-men/john-geoghegan>

https://www.ouririshheritage.org/content/archive/people/people-general/john_geoghegan

C12	Name: Memorial to Thomas Whelan, Clifden Classification: Roadside Memorials
GPS: 53.48808138973632, - 10.025384518052663	
<p>Short Description: The roadside memorial is in honour of Thomas Whelan aged 22 years, who was executed in Mountjoy Prison, 14 March 1921. The sentence was imposed following a trial where he was found guilty of the murder of Captain G.T. Baggally, on Bloody Sunday 21 November 1920. Although five men were originally charged with the crime, Whelan alone was held responsible despite several witness statements placing him at 9 o'clock Mass in Ringsend Church. Whelan's mother spent much of the trial in Dublin and visited her son regularly. His final words were sent by letter to the Lord Mayor of Dublin to thank the people for the kindness shown towards his mother, he also adds: 'Ve were always ready as Irishmen to die for our old cause. I am in the best of spirits now as ever. An Irishman's honour is a great pledge, so like men, we shall meet our doom this morning'.</p> <p>The memorial is a cut limestone cross, Celtic in design on a plinth bearing the inscriptions:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">In proud and loving memory of Thomas Whelan Sky Road Clifden Executed in Mountjoy Prison 14th March 1921 Aged 22 years May he rest in peace</p>	
<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Memorials: Close up of inscription on the Thomas Whelan Memorial, Clifden Source: Eilish Kavanagh</p>	



Memorials: Thomas Whelan Memorial, Clifden
Source: Eilish Kavanagh

Sources:

<https://www.connemaragaa.com/> See Politics – 1013 Thomas Whelan which features an interview with Tommie Whelan, nephew of Thomas.

GPS Coordinates from Google Maps

C13	Name: Memorial Plaque Jeremiah Mee, Glenamaddy
GPS:	Classification: Plaque

Short Description: Jeremiah Mee was born in Glenamaddy, Co Galway. He left County Galway in 1910 to join the Royal Irish Constabulary and was stationed in Listowel Barracks when the War of Independence began. He resigned his post when senior personal, Divisional Police Commissioner for Munster, Lt. Col. Gerald Bryce Ferguson Smyth, gave orders to suppress the insurgents by any means necessary. Mee later went to work with Countess Markievicz and Michael Collins to help other former RIC officers find employment. His parents' home in Glenamaddy was attacked and burnt by Black and Tans as a reprisal for his actions.



Memorials: Memorial to Jeremiah Mee in Glenamaddy
 Source: Courtesy Glenamaddy Heritage Group

Source:
<https://www.glenamaddyheritage.com/heritage/history/jeremiah-mee/>

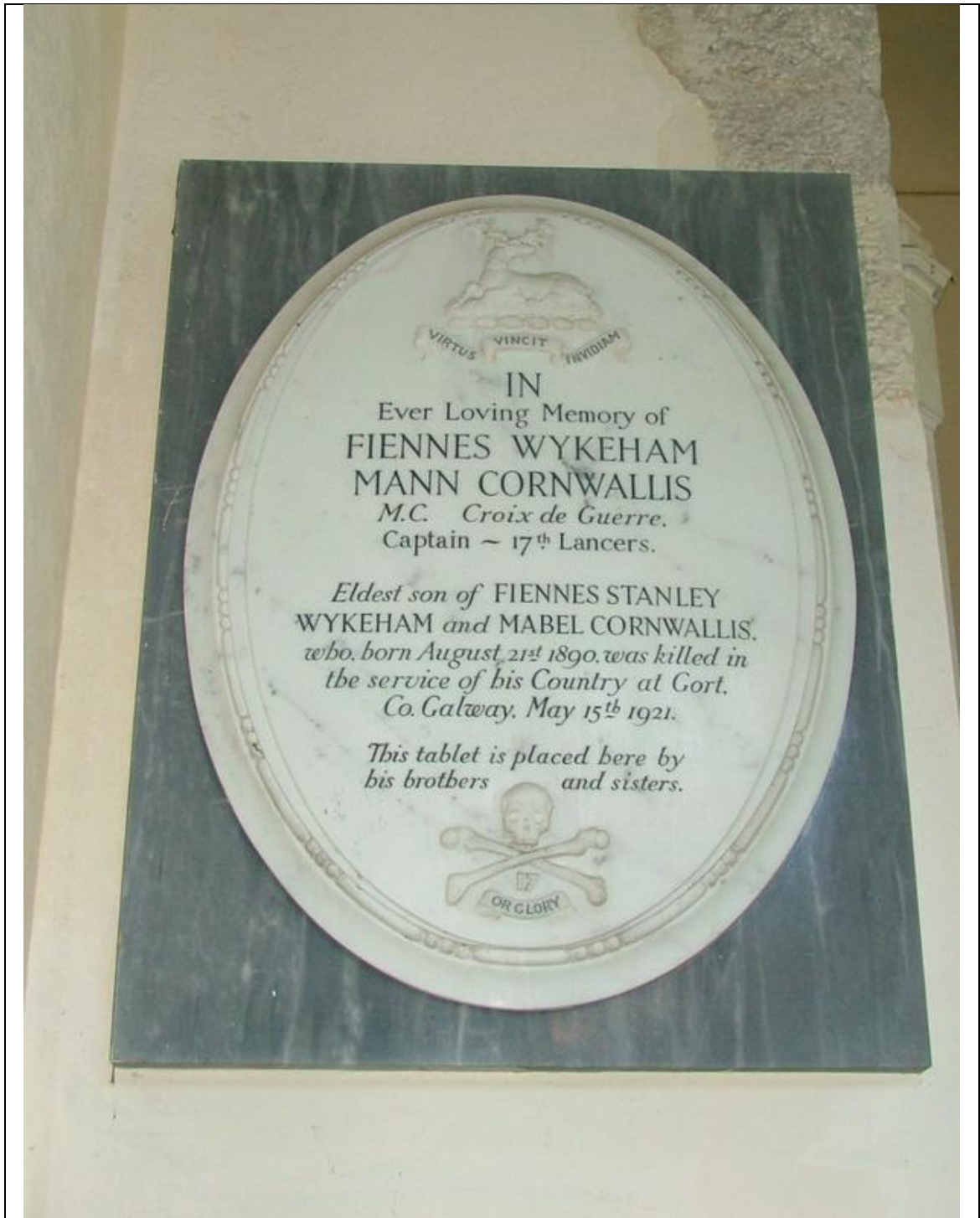
C14	Name: Board / Plaque / Tablet to Captain Cornwallis, Fiennes Wykeham Mann at St Nicholas Church Kent
GPS: 51.22360422840838, 0.5113919934999385	Classification: Commemoration by Multiple Memorials

Short Description: Captain Fiennes Wykeham Mann Cornwallis was one of the party of five killed at the gate lodge of Ballyturin House on 15 May 1921. There are two memorials in his honour at St Nicholas' Church, Kent England. His death is recorded in the War Memorial Records as seen below:

1. 'Oval tablet with family insignia of a deer in relief top centre and relief badge of the 17th Lancers below inscription. Incised lettering. Mounted on rectangular backboard. Inscription: Virtus Vincit Invidiam/ In/ Ever Loving Memory Of / Fiennes Wykeham/ Mann Cornwallis/ M.C. Croix De Guerre./ Captain - 17th Lancers ./ Eldest Son Of Fiennes Stanley/ Wykeham And Mabel Cornwallis,/ Who, Born August 21st 1890, Was Killed In / The Service Of His Country At Gort. / Co. Galway, May 15th 1921./ This Tablet Is Placed Here By / His Brotehrrs And Sisters'
2. 'Memorial with inscription Fiennes Wykeham Mann Cornwallis, beloved eldest son of Fiennes Stanley Wykeham and Mabel Cornwallis of Linton Park , Killed in the service of his country at Gort, C. Galway Ireland on 15 May 1921.'



Memorials: Memorial to Fiennes Wykeham Mann Cornwallis
Source: Courtesy War Memorial Record © WMR-65799



Memorials: Plaque at St Nicholas Church Kent
Source: Courtesy War Memorial Record © WMR-65799

Source:

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/65799>

C15	Name: Memorial Plinth Dedicated to James Daly, Ballymoe, County Galway
GPS: 53.69458, -8.46098	Classification: Plaque

Short Description: On the morning of 2 November 1920, Private James Joseph Daly, a Connaught Ranger, born in Ballymoe, County Galway, was executed as the leader of a failed protest against the Black and Tan atrocities in Ireland, while stationed at Solon, India. In the previous July 1920, Daly had been incorrectly informed that all the men at the original protest twenty miles away in Jullander, had been massacred, and to protect his comrades he led an attempt to attack the Magazine for armaments. He, alongside 13 others were arrested and sentenced to death. However, their case had reached a wide international audience and had garnered considerable attention. It was decided that he alone would be executed while the others received a commuted sentence. After a lengthy campaign, his body was eventually repatriated back to his family, then living in Tyrrellspass, County Westmeath, in November 1970, fifty years after his execution. However, in Ballymoe, County Galway, a small memorial (date unknown) was erected at the rear of St Croan's Church, in the centre of the village.



Memorials: Memorial to James Daly, Connaught Rangers
Source: Marie Burke

Source:
<https://www.glenamaddyheritage.com/heritage/history/jeremiah-mee/>

C16	Name: Brass Plaque Noting the Erection of Stations in Memory of Pat and Harry Loughnane inside St Anne's Church, Shanaglish
GPS:	Classification: Plaque

Short Description: This brass plaque can be found inside St Anne's Church, Shanaglish and notes the Stations of the Cross that were erected in memory of Patrick and Henry Loughnane.



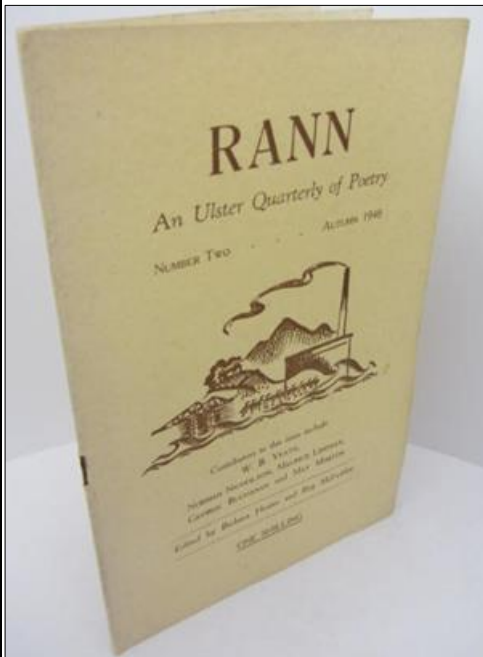
Memorials: Brass Plaque Memorial to Patrick and Henry Loughnane
 Source: Eilish Kavanagh

Source:
 Eilish Kavanagh

D: Memorabilia

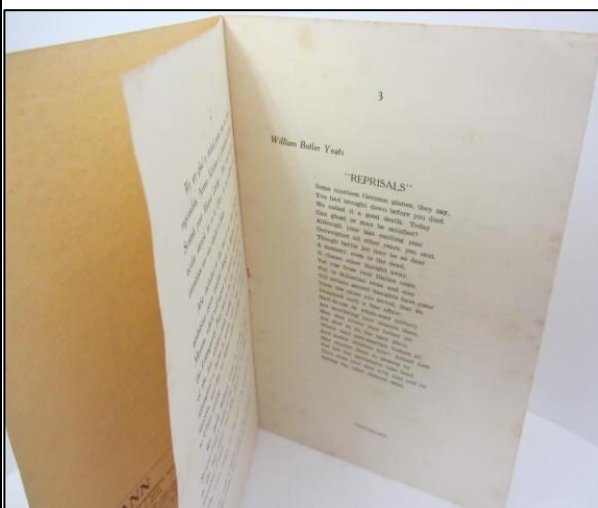
DI	<p>Name: <i>Rann: An Ulster Quarterly of Poetry</i> No. 2 Autumn 1948. First and only publication of the last of W.B. Yeats' poems in 'Reprisals' in memory of Major Robert Gregory.</p> <p>Classification: Poetry and Ballads</p>
<p>Short Synopsis:</p> <p>'Reprisals' is one of four poems commissioned by Yeats' close friend and patron Lady Augusta Gregory for her son, William Robert Gregory after his death, January 23, 1918. The other three in order of completion are 'Shepherd and Goatherd', March 1918, 'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory', May, and 'An Irish Airman Foresees his Death', written in June and July. However, 'Reprisals' was originally rejected by Lady Gregory and not published until 1948, almost a decade after the death of Yeats. The following analysis posited by James Pethica explained Lady Gregory's reluctance towards the poem:</p> <p>"Reprisals' is not a secure presence in Yeats's canon, since Lady Gregory's objections to the poem meant that it was not published during his lifetime. Even now it appears only sporadically, and then as an appendix, in collected editions of his work. Nor can it be readily termed an elegy for Robert: its central occasion is a complaint against the immorality of the British government for allowing the 'Half-drunk or whole-mad' Black and Tans to conduct their campaign of terror against the Irish civilian population. The poem was inspired specifically by the murder of Eileen Quinn, a Coole tenant shot by Black and Tans from a passing lorry as she sat outside her house suckling her child. Following closely on a series of burnings and shootings near Coole, the rape of two local sisters as their father and brother were forced to watch, and the death of Mayor Terence MacSwiney of Cork from his long hunger strike protesting British policy, the killing left Lady Gregory near despair about the prospects for Ireland, and more contemptuous of unionist orthodoxies than she had ever been. In her journal she records her rising discomfort at the singing of 'God Save the King' in the Church of Ireland church in Gort, and at the disdain for MacSwiney registered by one of her unionist neighbours. On the day she heard of Eileen Quinn's murder, the journal concludes as follows: 'When I pray 'God save Ireland' the words come thrusting through 'Gott strafe England' in spite of my desire not to give in to hatred.'</p>	

Transcript:



Reprisals

Some nineteen German planes, they say,
You had brought down before you died.
We called it a good death. Today
Can ghost or man be satisfied?
Although your last exciting year
Outweighed all other years, you said,
Though battle joy may be so dear
A memory, even to the dead,
It chases other thought away,
Yet rise from your Italian tomb,
Flit to Kiltartan Cross and stay
Till certain second thoughts have come
Upon the cause you served, that we
Imagined such a fine affair:
Half-drunk or whole-mad soldiery
Are murdering your tenants there.
Men that revere your father yet
Are shot at on the open plain.



Where may new-married women sit
And suckle children now? Armed men
May murder them in passing by
Nor law nor parliament take heed.
Then close your ears with dust and lie
Among the other cheated dead.

By W.B. Yeats

Memorabilia: Rann: An Ulster Quarterly of Poetry No. 2 Autumn 1948

Source: Courtesy www.rarebooks.ie

Sources:

James Pethica, Yeats's 'perfect man' in *The Dublin Review* Issue No. 35 Summer 2009 online
<https://www.rte.ie/news/analysis-and-comment/2018/01/01/930446-robert-gregory/>
<https://war-poetry.livejournal.com/788178.html>
<https://www.historyireland.com/20th-century-contemporary-history/major-robert-gregory-and-the-irish-air-aces-of-1917-18/>
<https://thedublinreview.com/article/yeatss-perfect-man/>

D2	<p>Name: Poem written by Kathleen Ita O'Donoghue in the <i>Connacht Tribune</i> 1921 in the memory of Father Michael Griffin</p> <p>Classification: Poetry and Ballads</p>
<p>Transcript:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 48%;"> <p>A fair-haired child was sleeping In his mother's fond embrace, And with love so sweetly tender She was gazing on his face, He was gentle as an angel He was exquisitely fair And she prayed that God might bless him As she stroked his flaxen hair.</p> <p>A fair-haired youth was serving At the altar one bright day and the birds were singing cheerily on the branches o'er the way For he was always ready and attentive at his post His face shone bright in ecstasy at the raising of the host.</p> <p>A fair-haired priest was saying Mass in the chapel of his birth The heavenly choir was singing in glorious tuneful mirth a and the mother there was kneeling Prouder, happier there was none when she saw the host uplifted In the figure of her son.</p> <p>A fair-haired priest was passing Through the crowds so grave and gay And his presence was like sunshine Lighting up life's dreary way And the little children loved him</p> </div> <div style="width: 48%;"> <p>In their hearts so free from care For God's suffering poor and needy He was ever wont to share.</p> <p>A fair-haired priest was dying And to sooth him none was near To lift his head or whisper Words of comfort in his ear Yet all that life and beauty Were from out that body driven 'Twas but of the gentle passing Of the Spirit into heaven.</p> <p>A fair-haired priest was sleeping His earthly duties done And again that mother bent her o'er The form of her dear son His smiling eyes were lifeless And no loving word he said For that kindly Irish Sagart now Was numbered with the dead.</p> <p>A fair-haired saint is watching From his kingdom in the skies O'er the hills and vales of Ireland With those gentle smiling eyes 'Twas like the lamb that likewise Was by man so foully slain Who now leads to make of Erin A proud nation once again.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">by Kathleen Ita O'Donoghue</p> </div> </div>	
<p>Sources: <i>Connacht Tribune</i>, 19 November 1921 Pádraic Ó Laoi, <i>Fr. Griffin 1892–1920</i> (Galway: the author, 1994) 81</p>	

D 3	Name: Ballad for the Loughnane Brothers Classification: Poetry and Ballads
Short Synopsis: This ballad was written by Tommie Quinn of Crushua, after he escorted Nora Loughnane into see her brothers' bodies laid out in the barn which waked the two Loughnane brothers. Not willing to admit his presence at the wake, he dropped the poem outside the local school where it was recovered by the principal and later locally published. This is a short excerpt reproduced in <i>Trácht Magazine</i> in 1987.	
Transcript: <p style="text-align: center;"> The martyred Loughnane brothers By God's aid they were released Oh God it was a dreadful sight To see their dull remains Lie side by side that Winter night Their bodies blacked by flames To an old house near Kinvara The funeral marched that day When a bodyguard of IRA Took the remains away Our hearts were almost bursting Dead silence reigned all o'er As their bodies were slowly taken And laid out upon the floor </p>	
Sources: Thomas Quinn Jeff O'Connell, 'The Murders of the Loughnane Brothers' in <i>Trácht Magazine</i> (Local Print, 1987) 19–20 http://kinvara.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Tr%C3%A1cht-Magazine-1987.pdf	

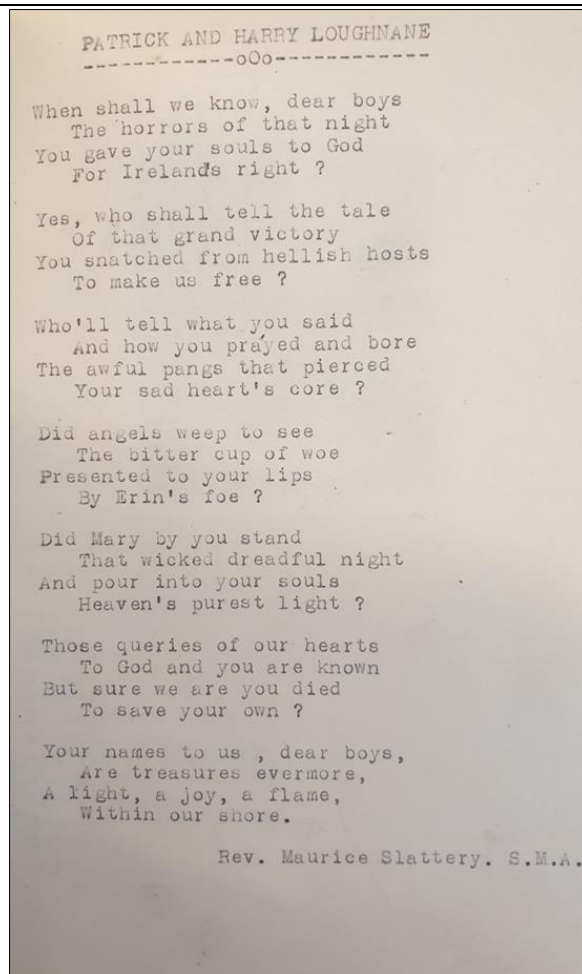
D4	Name: Ballad for the Loughnane Brothers Classification: Poetry and Ballads
Short Synopsis: The ballad was recorded in 2000 by CBS Ennis 6 th Class while interviewing traditional singer Mary Walsh for the <i>Meet the Musician</i> project. The same ballad with slight variations was donated by Mrs Mattie Kelly to the publication, <i>Beagh A History and Heritage</i> . This is a short excerpt.	
Transcript: <p style="text-align: center;">The Brothers Loughnane</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The winter winds blew wildly, 'twas a dark December night, When the sad news reached Kinvara of a mournful tragic sight. Of the finding of two brothers, their cold corpses side by side,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Far from their loving mother those two hero brothers died. They were captured by our enemies as they threshed their mother's corn. And brought back in cold corpses to the place where they were born. They were taken away in a lorry under auxiliary escort. From their native Shanaglish, three miles south west of Gort They were dragged behind the lorries for three long miles or more, Till the blood gushed from their faces, their bodies crushed and sore. They were taken then past the castle on that cold December day, Their agonies to endure as their lifeblood ebbed away. They were kept in close confinement till the dead of night arrived, And like all our Irish martyrs of their lives they were deprived. As they stood before the blows, their moans were heard for miles around, Their bodies were brutally beaten and burned as they lay upon the ground. And they were thrown into a well, to prevent them from being found.</p>	
Sources: Marie McNamara and Maura Madden eds., <i>Beagh: A History and Heritage</i> (FÁS: Athlone, 1995) 128 http://homepage.eircom.net/~cbps/meetthemusicianbrothersloughnane.htm	

D5

Name: Poem by Rev Maurice Slattery for Patrick and Harry Loughnane
Classification: Poetry and Ballads

Short Synopsis:

This poem accredited to Rev. Maurice Slattery appeared in three copies of small handmade booklets made by or given to Nora Loughnane. During the period between 1918 and 1925, Fr Slattery was appointed to the post of Provincial at a new novitiate and house of philosophy at Kilcolgan, Co Galway. Here he met Nora Loughnane sister of Patrick and Harry Loughnane and would later receive a letter from her which he subsequently published in *The African Missionary* Vol. VII., No. 1. January 1929. The letter describes her peaceful reflection of her life back in Ireland and the graves of her brother.



Memorabilia: Poem for Loughnan brothers
Source: Courtesy NUI Galway

Source:

James Hardiman Library, NUI Galway NUIG POL 4/2 (1)(2)(3)

D6

Name: A letter sent from Sister Patricia (Nora Loughnane) and published in *The African Missionary* Vol. VII., No. 1 January 1929
Classification: Articles

Short Synopsis:

Nora Loughnane entered the missionary convent in Ardfoy, County Cork, wherein she took the name Sister Patricia in fond remembrance of her brother Patrick, to whom she was devoted up to his death in November 1920. Although Sister Patricia became part of the missions in West Africa, she frequently recalled the memory of her brothers, when she was either 'sitting under the big cedar in Ardfoy, or wandering through the woods in Cloughballymore, or kneeling beside the grave of two brave boys.' This article in *The African Missionary* written by Nora was kept as memorabilia and is amongst her papers held in NUI Galway Archives.



Memorabilia: A letter sent from Sister Patricia (Nora Loughnane) and published in *The African Missionary*
Source: Courtesy NUI Galway

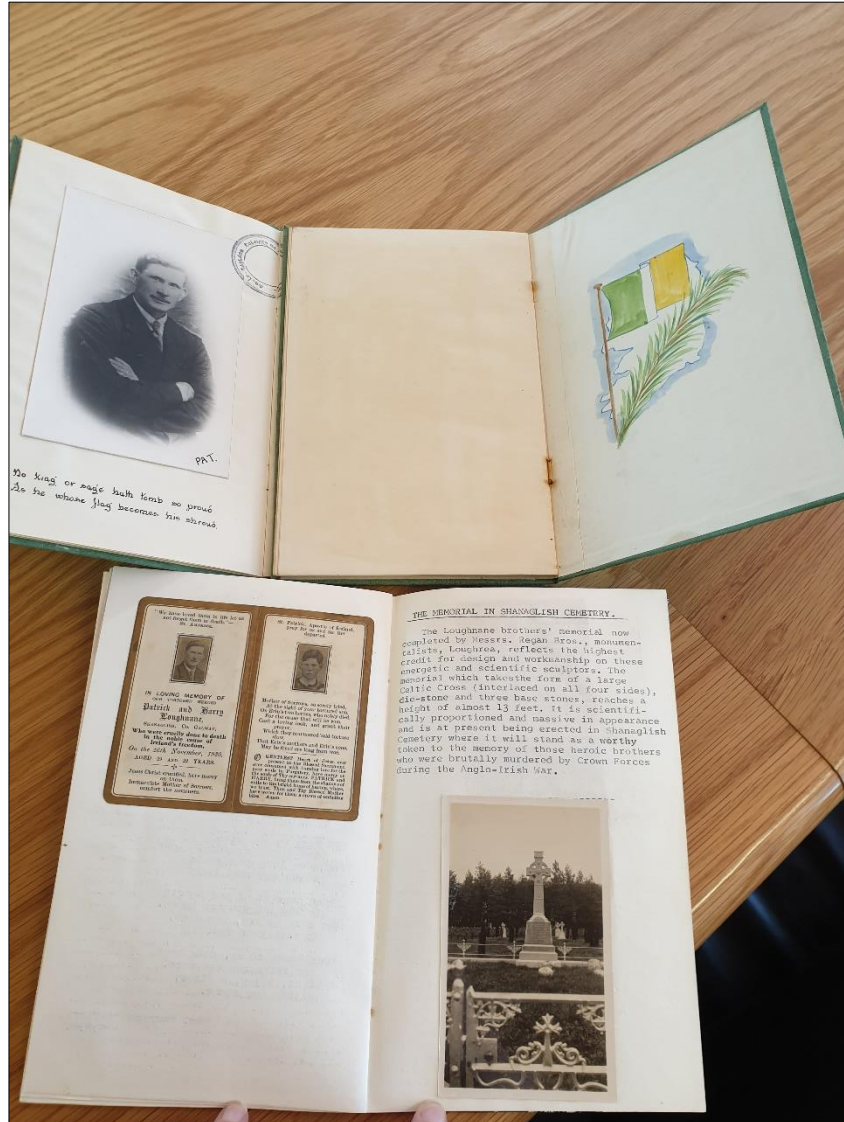
Source:

James Hardiman Library, NUI Galway NUIG POL 4/2 (1)(2)(3)

D7

Name: Memorial Booklets for the Loughnane Brothers
Classification: Booklets

Short Synopsis: There are three similar booklets that memorialise the two Loughnane brothers Pat and Harry. Inside, as seen below is a short typed description of events that led to their demise: a facsimile of their memorial card, a photograph of the grave plot, a photograph of the men and a hand-drawn emblem.



Memorabilia: Handmade booklets in honour of Pat and Harry Loughnane

Source: Eilish Kavanagh

Source:

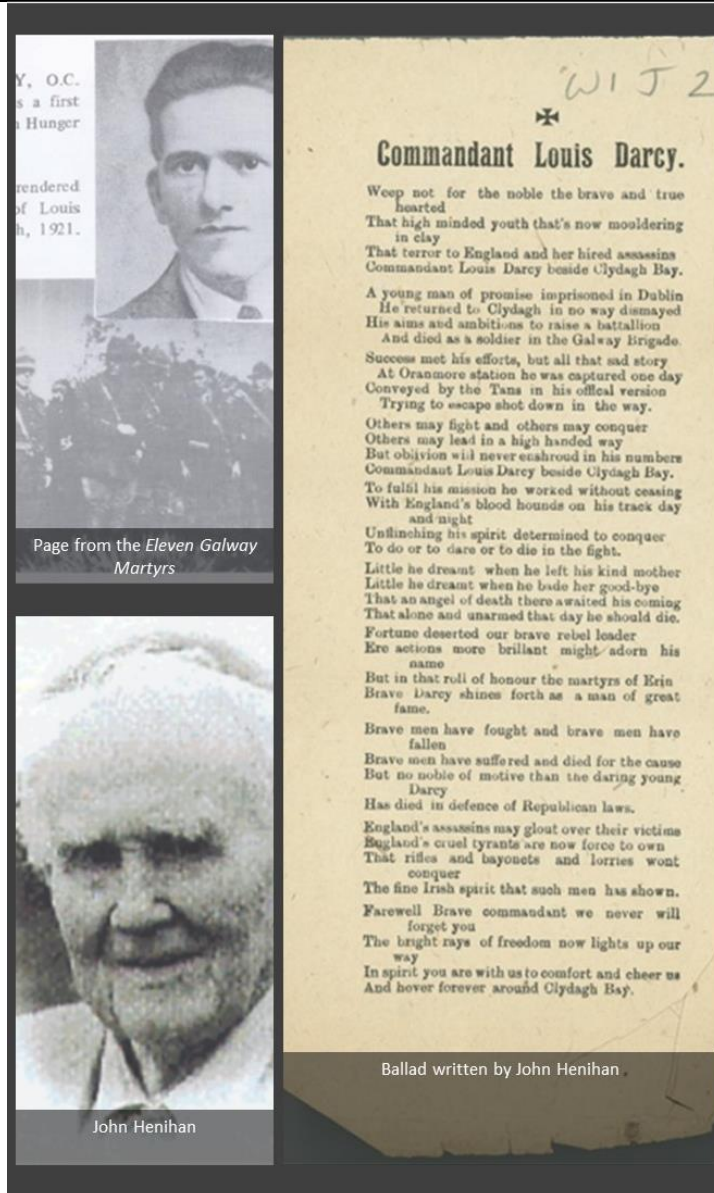
James Hardiman Library, NUI Galway NUIG POL 4/2 (1)(2)(3)

D8

Name: Ballad for Louis D'Arcy
Classification: Poetry and Ballads

Short Synopsis:

Listed in Colm Ó Lochlainn Collection, the words of this lament is attributed to John Henihan, Tuam. Louis D'Arcy was a member of the North Galway Brigade. On 23 March 1921, Louis D'Arcy was arrested at Oranmore railway station, while on his way to see Michael Collins in Dublin. He was shot and killed in what the Crown forces testified as trying to escape. Written in 1922, the song has been sung by Philip Doddy and other artists.



Memorabilia: Ballad written by John Henihan

Source: Image of ballad reproduced from a copy held at UCD Special Collections

Sources:

Eleven Galway Martyrs Tuam, 1985

Mayo News, 30 September 2008

Philip Doddy gives his rendition here, uploaded onto You Tube 2014

<https://www.philipdoddy.net/song-videos---lament-for-louis-darcy.html>

UCD Library. UCD Library Special Collections. Colm Ó Lochlainn Collection: Ballads. WI J 2/57 //digital.ucd.ie/view/ivrla:6204

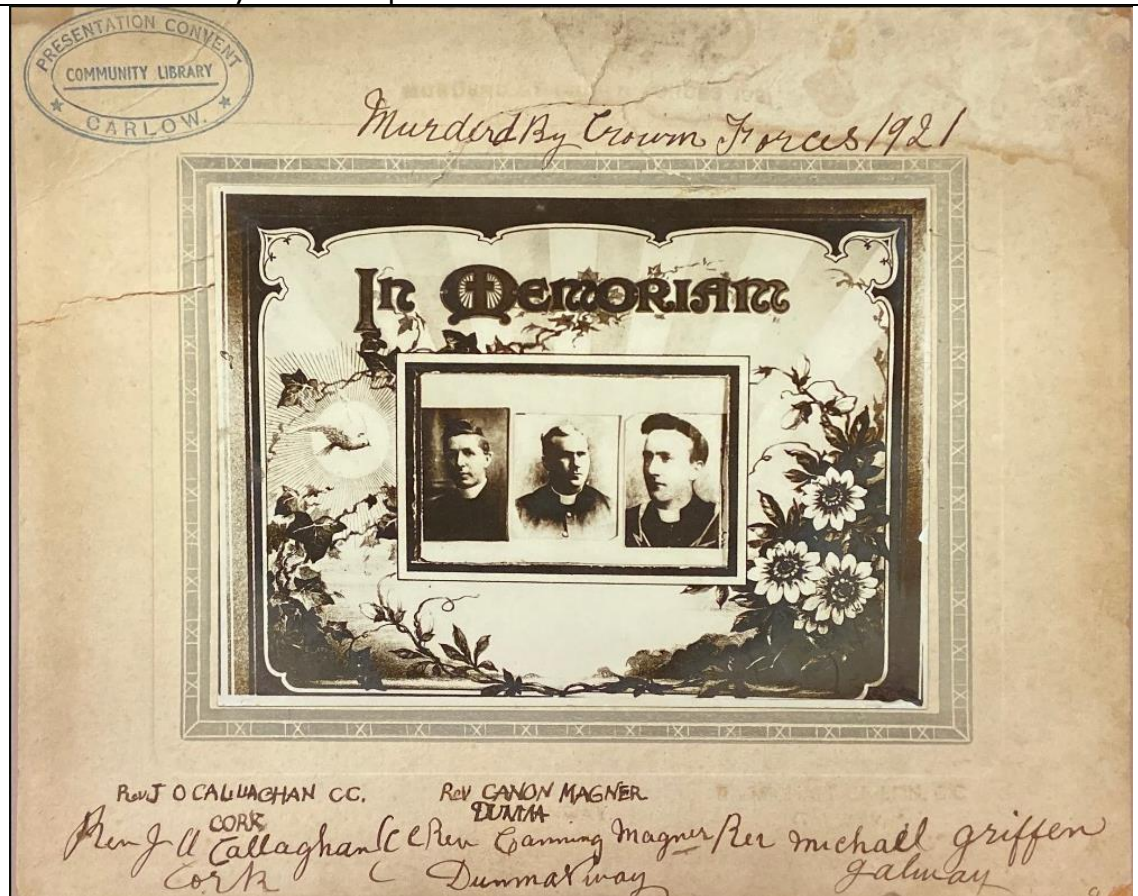
D9

Name: A memorial card depicting the three priests killed during the War of Independence

Classification: Memorial Card

Short Synopsis:

The original memorial card was created sometime after May 1921 (date unknown) and reproduced several times as seen here. It depicts three priests killed during the War of Independence. The first of those was Rev. Michael Griffith, C.C. Gurteen, Co. Galway, who was abducted from his home and shot on 15 November 1920. Many clerics regarded this as the crossing of a line which the Crown forces had hitherto respected. Clerical attention turned decisively to criticism of the Crown forces. Next was the Rev. Canon Thomas Magner, P.P. Dunmanway, Co. Cork who was shot by Auxiliary Police, 15th December 1920. The third priest was Rev. James O'Callaghan, C.C. Clogheen, Co. Cork, reportedly shot dead by drunken Black and Tans on 15 May 1921. This particular card was auctioned at an estimate of €150–200.



Memorabilia: A memorial card depicting the three priests killed during the War of Independence

Source: www.fonsiemealy.ie

Sources:

Brian Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014)

Eunan O'Halpin and Daithí Ó Corráin, eds, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* (London: Yale University Press, 2020)

<https://fonsiemealy.ie/auctions/lot-5650315/>

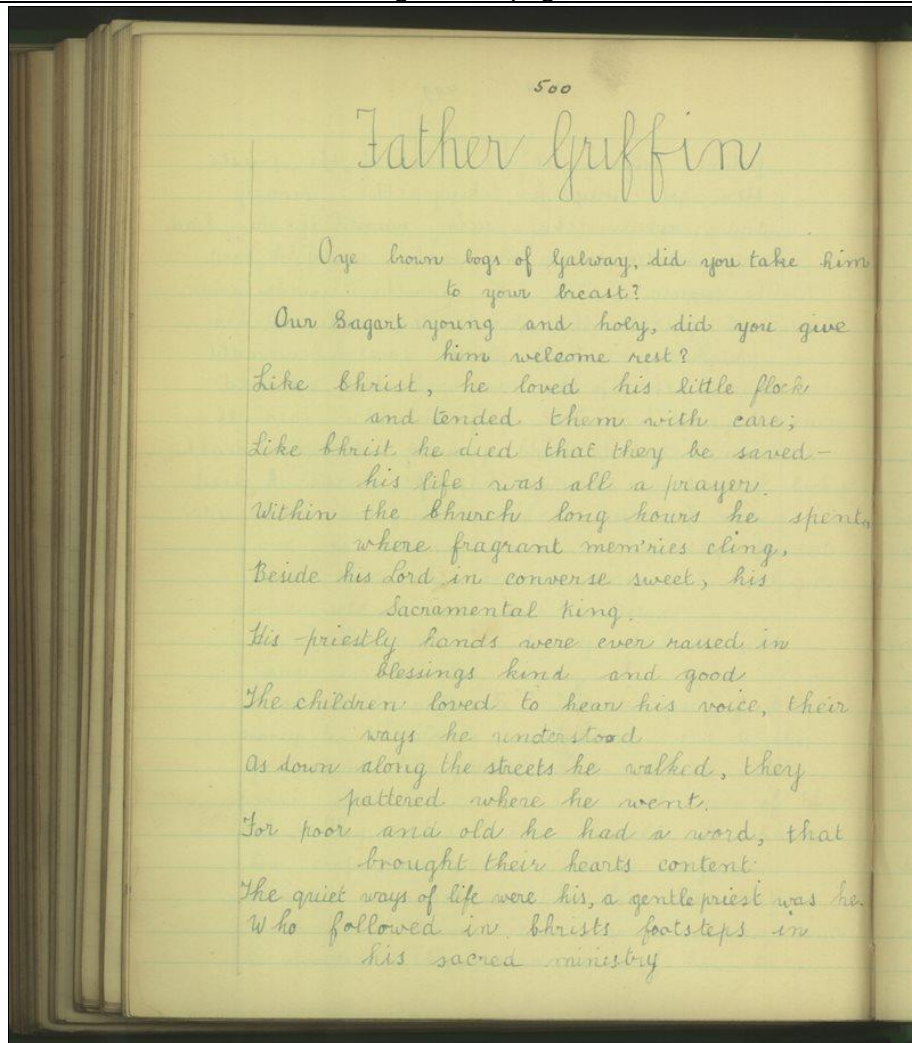
D10

Name: Entry on 'Father Griffin' in the Schools' Collection
Classification: Poetry and Ballads

Short Synopsis:

This poem, 'Father Griffin' was recorded in the Schools' Collection from Clifden, County Galway between 1937–1939. It was one of eighty-six titles. The poem refers to how much he was loved by his parishioners and, as the following lines demonstrate, the manner of his demise.

On that night in dark November when England's minions rude
Had lured him from his humble home unto your solitude
A lying tale they told him of a soul in need of him,
And when he hastened to the 'call', from out the shadows dim
Crept Black-and-Tans who bore him off and slew him ere 'twas dawn,
While the winds wailed in sorrow through the swaying ceannabhán



Memorabilia: Entry on 'Father Griffin' in the Schools' Collection

Source: Courtesy National Folklore Collection, UCD

Sources:

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4602680/4594960> School: Clochar na Trócaire, An Clochán
Page 500 The Schools' Collection, Volume 0004, Page 379

D II	<p>Name: Song 'The Boys of Castlegar'</p> <p>Classification: Poetry and Ballads</p>
<p>Short Synopsis: Utilising the air to 'The Felons of Our Land' the song composed by Pádraig Ó Fathaigh narrated the exploits of Brian Molloy and his comrades in Castlegar during Easter 1916. The last verse moves to the War of Independence when he mentioned how the Rising had stirred the spirits and now 'murder gangs and Black and Tans were powerless to withstand' the might of Brian Molloy and the Boys from Castlegar. Extract of last two verses:</p>	
<p>Transcription:</p> <p>The sentence death, although revoked, 'tis long he must endure The hunger's pain, the fog, the rain, and the rigours of Dartmoor There came a change: they loosed his chains and in a jaunting car Mid shouts of joy brave Brian Molloy comes home to Castlegar</p> <p>The spirit wave the Rising raised, a deluge swept the land Which murder gangs and Black and Tans were powerless to withstand Should bigots strike this land to rive or freedom's pathway bar We've many a boy like Brian Molly and The Boys from Castlegar</p>	
<p>Source: Padraic Ó Laoi <i>History of Castlegar Parish, (The Connacht Tribune: Galway, 1996) 204</i></p>	

D12	Name: Song from Evelyn McCooke Classification: Poetry and Ballads			
<p>Short Synopsis: In a collection of songs from Evelyn McCooke is 'Slashing Jack Keogh', a love song of sorts telling the story of how Jack Keogh from Ballinasloe, will free Ireland alongside de Valera during the War of Independence. Also, the girl dismissed the idea of Home Rule suggesting it is now on the shelf and her happiness lies under the blanket with Slashing Jack Keogh. The book compiled and translated by Caoilte Breatnach adds another piece on Jack, although the song he is referring to is from 1922:</p> <p>'Pat Keane had a song he'd learnt from his wife's uncle, Tommy Sullivan of Nogra. The song, Clery's Van, is about a prison breakout during the War of Independence (1919-1921). The 'sprung' prisoner was Jack Keogh, a Galway rebel.'</p>				
<p>Transcription: Slashing Jack Keogh</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>O, Mary a leanna, O where do you go O mother a chuisle if you're anxious to know I've been over the mountain, I met with Jack Keogh He gave me some plums from the trees in Mayo.</p> <p>Now Mary, a leanna you're only 18 You're roving about with this idle dalteen When your father will hear it he'll make you a show He'll root all the plum trees that grows in Mayo.</p> <p>Now mother, a chuisle, I'm only 18 You married my father and you only 16 He was neither able to sow, to reap or to mow Or to drill the Sinn Féiners like Slashing Jack Keogh.</p> <p>Now Mary a leanna, there's a peeler in town Drawing a large sum of money each month from the crow He" hunt all the rebels from Ballinasloe</p> <p>He's a man for a woman not like Slashing Jack Keogh.</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Now mother, mo chuisle, speak of peelers no more When Ireland is free they'll get the back door With lock stock and bullet for the reason you know And it's up de Valera and Slashing Jack Keogh.</p> <p>Now Mary, a leanna, don't be such a fool John Dillon is coming next week with Home Rule John Dillon and Devlin will get the whole show And a sum of taxation in need of Jack Keogh.</p> <p>Now mother a chuisles don't speak of Home Rule It's ow on a shelf we've a three legged stool John Dillon and Devlin may go for you know But it's up to de Valera and Slashing Jack Keogh.</p> <p>So now as you vex me draw out you big purse Give me a large sum for better or worse And if the priest is at home before the cocks crow I'll be under the blanket with Slashing Jack Keogh</p> <p>Reproduced by kind permission of Caoilte Breatnach</p> </td> </tr> </table>			<p>O, Mary a leanna, O where do you go O mother a chuisle if you're anxious to know I've been over the mountain, I met with Jack Keogh He gave me some plums from the trees in Mayo.</p> <p>Now Mary, a leanna you're only 18 You're roving about with this idle dalteen When your father will hear it he'll make you a show He'll root all the plum trees that grows in Mayo.</p> <p>Now mother, a chuisle, I'm only 18 You married my father and you only 16 He was neither able to sow, to reap or to mow Or to drill the Sinn Féiners like Slashing Jack Keogh.</p> <p>Now Mary a leanna, there's a peeler in town Drawing a large sum of money each month from the crow He" hunt all the rebels from Ballinasloe</p> <p>He's a man for a woman not like Slashing Jack Keogh.</p>	<p>Now mother, mo chuisle, speak of peelers no more When Ireland is free they'll get the back door With lock stock and bullet for the reason you know And it's up de Valera and Slashing Jack Keogh.</p> <p>Now Mary, a leanna, don't be such a fool John Dillon is coming next week with Home Rule John Dillon and Devlin will get the whole show And a sum of taxation in need of Jack Keogh.</p> <p>Now mother a chuisles don't speak of Home Rule It's ow on a shelf we've a three legged stool John Dillon and Devlin may go for you know But it's up to de Valera and Slashing Jack Keogh.</p> <p>So now as you vex me draw out you big purse Give me a large sum for better or worse And if the priest is at home before the cocks crow I'll be under the blanket with Slashing Jack Keogh</p> <p>Reproduced by kind permission of Caoilte Breatnach</p>
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<p>Source: Caoilte Breatnach, ed., <i>Evelyn Cooke, Songs and Stories</i> (Galway: Unpublished, 1973)</p>				

D13	Name: Larry Lardner medals and memorial card Classification: Memorial Card
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Date and Short Synopsis:
 Larry Lardner was an Irish Volunteer and served in Athenry. His 1916 Easter Rising medal and his War of Independence medal was auctioned in 2012, together with his 'Swagger Stick'. Also seen here is his memorial card dated 21 April 1936



Memorabilia: Lot 584 items associated with Larry Lardner

Source: www.adams.ie

Source:
<https://www.adams.ie/12105/Commandant-Larry-Lardner-Commanding-Officer-of-The-Galway-Brigade-Irish-Volunteers-Easter-1916-afterwards-I-R-A-His-1916-Easter-Rising-Medal-and-War-of-Independence-Medal-both-inscribed-Laurence>

D14	Name: Dáil 100 Memorabilia Classification: Collectables
Short Synopsis: As part of the Dáil Éireann centenary exhibition a limited set of memorabilia was issued by the Communications Unit of the Houses of the Oireachtas: a pen, badge and gold-coloured lapel pin. The exhibition commemorates the 100th anniversary of political discourse, debate and law-making in Dáil Éireann.	
	
<p style="text-align: center;">Memorabilia: Items issued by Communications Unit of the Houses of the Oireachtas Source: Eilish Kavanagh</p>	
Source: dail100@oireachtas.ie	

D15

Name: 100 Years of Dáil Éireann €100 Gold Proof Coin
Classification: Collectables

Short Synopsis:

This commemorative coin which is limited to 1,000 pieces, has been struck in Au 999.9 gold proof quality. The diameter of the coin is 28mm and it weighs 1/2 ounce. Emmet Mullins designed the coin to depict the meeting place that was the Round Room of the Mansion House. Its large rotunda arcs above the vast congregation assembled at that inaugural meeting and the words 'An Chéad Dáil, 1919' are inscribed in a traditional uncial font.



Memorabilia: Example of gold coin celebrating Dáil 100

Source: www.collectorcoins.ie

Source:

<https://www.collectorcoins.ie/en/100-years-of-dail-eireann-100-gold-proof-coin.html>

D16

Name: Set of Commemorative Coins for The War of Independence
Classification: Collectables

Short Synopsis: In 2019, the Dublin Mint Office produced an Irish War of Independence Centenary Set: Remember Our Men (image of West Mayo Flying Brigade), Remember Our Women (image of Bridie O'Mullane), Remember Our Children (image of Children walking through the ruins of a smouldering street) and Remember Our Civilians (image from 1920 Dublin).



Memorabilia: Set of commemorative coins for the War of Independence

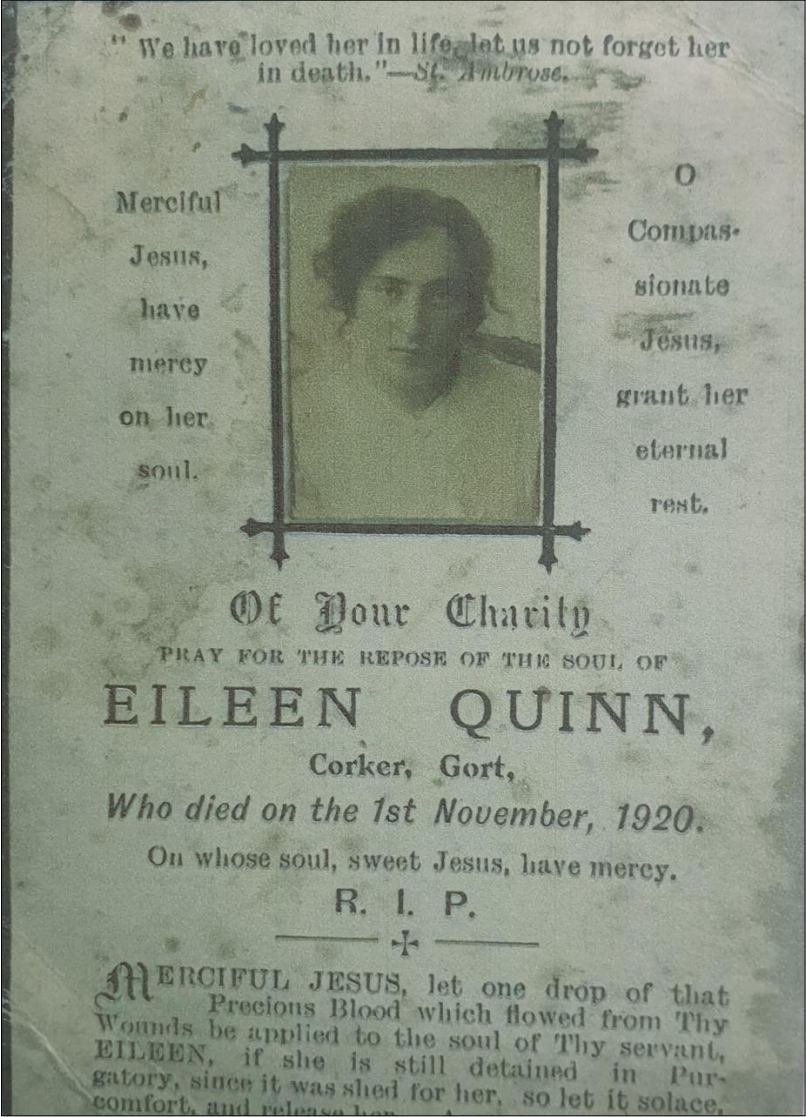
Source: Eilish Kavanagh

Source:

<https://www.dublinmintoffice.ie/iwi-set>

<p>D17</p>	<p>Name: An Post Commemorative Stamp Classification: Collectables</p>
<p>Short Synopsis: On February 20, 2020, An Post issued a stamp to commemorate the War of Independence marking the halfway point in the War, 100 years ago. The stamp was designed by Ger Garland, and 'features a detail from the painting "Men of the South" by Seán Keating, representing the military aspects of the struggle for sovereignty. The painting portrays a "Flying Column" of the IRA lying in wait to ambush the British Crown forces.'</p>	
<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Memorabilia: An Post Commemorative Stamp for the War of Independence Source: Eilish Kavanagh</p> </div>	
<p>Sources: https://www.anpost.com/Shop/Products/War-of-Independence-N-Rate-Se-tenant-Pair Irish Examiner, 24 February 2020</p>	

D18	<p>Name: The Ballad of Michael Hoade by Tommy Farrell, Carraun, Belclare, Co. Galway</p> <p>Classification: Poetry and Ballads</p>
<p>Short Synopsis: Michael Hoade was killed by Crown Forces at his home in Ballintleva supposedly whilst fleeing arrest on 22 January 1921. He was a local shopkeeper. In an effort to record his violent death, another local man, Tommy Farrell, composed this ballad detailing his last few hours. The ballad has remain in the memory of the Lardner family, and was revived and recorded for a Galway City Museum project under the Decade of Centenaries Programme.</p>	
<p>Transcription: Ballad of Michael Hoade</p> <p>On the 22nd of January in nineteen twenty-one A band of Tans assembled in dear old Caherlistrane They marched four deep along the road intending to make a stop When Halt! the cry re-echoed outside of Hoade's new shop.</p> <p>The officer commanding asked, 'Is Michael Hoade within?' 'He is,' replied his sister, 'what do you want with him?' 'Suspicion rests upon him as a rebel of renown And now we've come to take him as a traitor to the Crown.</p> <p>Said she, 'He is no traitor, no crime has he e'er done Save fighting for his country as many before have done Save fighting for his country and he means to set her free In spite of all ye Black and Tans and English tyranny.'</p> <p>They marched him out into a field and ordered him to run While those English devils then prepared their rifles and their guns, Each Tan discharged his weapon as poor young Michael ran And there he fell a martyr in dear old Caherlistrane.</p> <p>The people gathered round him then to see if he was dead The only stretcher they could find was an old sheep dipping lid. They placed his body onto it e'er his last breath he had drawn This first young noble martyr of dear old Caherlistrane.</p> <p>The Reverend Father Healy, he motored from Kilmaine To bless the corpse of his nephew whom those devils they had slain Then his loving sister said, 'His body should be in church.' But the officer commanding said, 'There must be an inquest.'</p> <p>Then said his grieving uncle without a moment's pause To the chapel we will take him now despite Greenwood and his laws. They brought him to the chapel with many a fervent prayer And laid his mortal body before the altar there.</p> <p>And on the following morning High Mass was chanted there By the holy priests of Caherlistrane, Tuam, Cummer and Belclare They then asked all his comrades to offer up a prayer For this young noble martyr who died a volunteer.</p>	
<p>Source: Galway City Museum. Sung by Rosaline Lardner https://www.galwaycitymuseum.ie/blog/the-ballad-of-michael-hoade/</p>	

<p>D19</p>	<p>Name: Eileen Quinn's Memorial Card and other items on display at Bernadette Burns Visual Art Exhibition 'The Uncertainty of History - Remembering Eileen Quinn'</p> <p>Classification: Memorial Cards and Other Documents</p>
<p>Short Synopsis: Eileen Quinn was shot by Crown forces on 1 November 1920. Over one hundred years later her grandniece held an exhibition in Kinvara Courthouse (now an exhibition space run by Kinvara Area Visual Artists or KAVA), which ran from 1–6 November 2021. This exhibition included paintings and multimedia displays that focused on memory and change. Amongst the items was a memorial card and diary belonging to Bernadette's grandmother Tessie Burns, Eileen's older sister. The exhibition concluded with a panel discussion on the events surrounding Eileen Quinn's death. Accompanying Bernadette on this panel was Orla Higgins (grandniece), Gerard Quinn (grandson), the event was moderated by Judy Murphy.</p>	
<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Memorabilia: Memorial Card</p> <p>Source: Bernadette Burns</p> </div>	

Two.
"the shot come?" From the first.

for her Children

ker, Father Considine explained, and on
Father John, will you do something for me?" I
he explained, and administered the Last

whispered to me, bring me Malachy, bring
n crying. I have something to tell him. I
Then she became weak and fainted off.
e worse.

tely to the Head Constable at Gort. He
nd military. All seemed shocked at the
to go in and see the woman. He and his men
h, as he answered, "I cannot." No trace of the
d.

Considine said Mrs Quinn was sitting on the
when the lorry passed from which the fatal
bullet pierced the stomach, and the child
from her arms. She crawled over the wall
hen crawled to the porch to tell her servant
Take in the little children!" she exclaimed.

!"
30 she lingered on in pain. Occasionally she
nd pull me towards her, and say: "I'm done I'm
ondition became worse, and we knelt by her



OCTOBER 1967

29 Sunday *British Summer Time ends*
Linda + all family + Paddy came to blonnyl. First visit for little Lorraine.

30 Monday

31 Tuesday 1959.
Joe retired on pension on Oct. 31st 1959. (came to blonnyl !!!!!!)

1 Wednesday *Monday 1920*
All Saints NOVEMBER
10th Nov. 1920 Monday
(my sister) shot by Black + Jans
at 3 p.m. 1920

NOVEMBER 1967

Thursday 2

Friday 3

Saturday 4

NOTES

Memorabilia: Photograph and Diary

Source: Bernadette Burns



Memorabilia: Remembrance 'Objects in Bell Jar'

Source: Bernadette Burns



Memorabilia: Orla Higgins (grandniece), Gerard Quinn (grandson), and Bernadette Burns

Source: Eilish Kavanagh

Source:
Bernadette Burns

Conclusion

At the outset of this process of collecting and recording the various fragments or remnants of this conflict, it was somewhat unclear how the inventory would take shape until the process was in motion. However, other studies that have undertaken a similar task, such as Lisa Godson and Joanna Brück's *Making 1916: material and visual culture of the Easter Rising* or Damien Shiels' *Landscapes of Revolution* provided examples of the paths to follow.⁵² Classifications such as these are an essential component in academia and cultural institutions such as galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (GLAM). Cultural heritage professionals are increasingly engaging with projects that have broader social and economic objectives. The importance of recognising this 'material culture', recording its heritage value, and securing the future of such a collection, in essence, addresses the reality that these items and sites are themselves central to identity and the creation of social memory. Accordingly, the resulting tangible heritages that comprise the Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory, have been secured for present and future researchers. Although more items or sites are yet to be discovered, those available have constituted a significant base for further expansion. Conducting such research has highlighted the often emotive attachment that items or sites can bring about. Visiting historic sites or holding items from a particular person or from an event inevitably stirs this response from a painful past though these can hold different meanings for different people. It may well be the very reason for their preservation. Yet collectively, the entries as seen here also create a narrative, a connection with this past, one that provides a myriad of insights into the lifeworlds of those involved in the War of Independence in County Galway. As discussed earlier, personal archives if recorded in this manner, move beyond the boundaries of an individual life and transform from "evidence of me" into "evidence of us", thereby preserving a society's memory for future generations.

Photographs, especially in areas that have experienced heavy conflict, can capture not just significant events but also those more ordinary moments that later become so meaningful.⁵³ Furthermore, letters or statements, once kept in personal

⁵² Lisa Godson and Joanna Brück, *Making 1916: material and visual culture of the Easter Rising* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015). Also, see a further discussion on 'Material Legacies: The Archaeology of the Irish Revolutionary Period' a one-day online public conference hosted by UCD School of Archaeology in association with Abarta Heritage 26 March 2022. <https://landscapesofrevolution.com/author/damianshiels/>.

⁵³ Sebastian Junger, Foreword in Lauren Walsh *Conversations on Conflict Photography* (London: Routledge, 2019) x

archives, provide a window into the thoughts or intentions of the writer that would otherwise be unknown. Verses from poems or ballads offer an observation borne from grief, sympathy or indeed resilience, uniquely inviting conversation. Memorials and plaques are the focal sites of remembrance, and if erected by the communities in which the commemoration is important, can create and foster an inherent sense of place.

Notably, whilst some of the items were placed in archives or museums to secure their preservation, others were auctioned and bought by interested parties, also suggesting a desire to safeguard the items' future. As seen above, one such auction provided an opportunity to recover a piece of family heritage (that of Thomas McEver) that succeeded in becoming a part of their legacy and that of the wider national narrative when a popular broadcaster commissioned a podcast. This could also be true of many other items or sites listed herein. It is often said that those involved in the War of Independence did not speak of their experiences, except with other veterans, a phenomenon that is widely acknowledged. However, when items or sites as presented here are correlated, the remnants provide a true to life sense of the grief, distress, resilience, strength and perseverance endured by those involved in the War of Independence in County Galway. The role of this inventory is not just to collect or presenting a display, but to facilitate discovery and promote the contribution of additional material. Lastly, as mentioned earlier, most societies have at some point experienced conflict prior to State formation and construction of a national identity. It may be possible, therefore, that inventories such as the one included in this chapter could "bear witness" on a wider international platform, and enter into mutual cultural exchange projects that benefit wider academic partners at a transnational level.

Chapter 10. Conclusion

Introduction

Whilst the Irish War of Independence took place over a century ago, the debates that surround the local histories, memories and heritages of the conflict, have been the subject of much public interest of late. By utilising newly-released sources with existing evidence, this study has endeavoured to generate fresh perspectives on the cultures and traditions that shape the present. Whilst focusing on the local dimensions of this conflict in County Galway, an effort has also been made to contextualise events within a wider geographical and conceptual framework.

As seen at the outset, this study had three main aims. The first was to furnish new local histories of the War of Independence in County Galway, from 1919–1921. This involved collating the various histories, such as those of individuals involved in the conflict, incidents that occurred, and in many cases the counter insurgency tactics employed by Crown forces which ultimately impacted upon the local population.

The second aim was to analyse how, why, and in what ways memories of this conflict transmitted, from 1919–2021. This involved chronicling the commemorations and reminiscences that ensued over the course of a century and investigating who was remembered and significantly who was forgotten.

The third aim was to use practice-based approaches to generate an original set of heritage initiatives for the general public, thus leaving behind a research legacy for current and future generations. By documenting the heritages of the War of Independence, it was possible to compile a comprehensive catalogue (of historic sites; artefacts and manuscripts; memorials; and memorabilia), along with guide book and ArcGIS ESRI StoryMap versions of *The Loughnane Brothers Heritage Trail*. These projects deliver a legacy that can be drawn upon in the present and future. The catalogue creates an opportunity to further the research on an ongoing basis by providing a framework to create content via forms of crowdsourcing.¹ The two versions of *The Loughnane Brothers Heritage Trail* will endeavour to provide locals and visitors with the information needed to go explore key historic sites and memorials of the War of

¹ Crowdsourcing is a method utilised by several cultural institutes such as galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (GLAM) to enlist the help of the public through an open call on a particular topic or project. The collaboration between professionals and the public provides a more open, accessible and 'smart' cultural heritage option that remains under a strict level of quality.

Independence.

Local Histories

In his seminal work on the War of Independence, Michael Hopkinson argued almost two decades ago that County Galway was adjudged to have taken ‘little significant part’.² Still, it is worth acknowledging that people and local communities of County Galway could never have anticipated the enormity of the events that enveloped them as they became immersed in the War of Independence. The number of incidents and deaths, the scale of destruction or burnings, is often disparaged as not of significance in comparison to areas such as Cork, Dublin, or Balbriggan, for instance. However, for those living in County Galway, their experiences should be considered comparable in the terror that they endured. The loss of life, physical and mental trauma, even damage to livelihoods cannot be underestimated in a comparison of scale. Notably, Tomás Kenny has identified that there is a difficulty in determining the county as a ‘unit of study in a local versus national context’.³ There are significant different factors to consider that made comparison difficult. For instance, the size of the county and the geographical split into east and west ridings forced both the IRA units and the RIC to develop separate and varying tactics during the conflict. Only half the county was active. With widespread poverty, especially in the west, the Volunteers were disadvantaged in their actions, whilst those in more prosperous areas in the east and south moved freely and engaged with the Crown forces more frequently. Nonetheless, there was sixty-five fatalities recorded during the period 1917–1921 in County Galway.⁴ However, comparative localised perspectives have provided, as Fitzpatrick suggested, ‘no general pattern beyond the infinite variety of revolutionary activity, the importance of local peculiarities, and the inability of central institution and leaders to control provincial behaviour’.⁵ In recognition of this, the following perspectives are reflective of the experiences of those in County Galway.

² Michael Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence* (Dublin: Gill Books, 2004) 137

³ Tomás Kenny, *Galway Politics and Society, 1910–23* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2011) 38

⁴ Daithí Ó Corrain and Eunan O’Halpin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* (Cornwall: Yale University Press, 2020) 543

⁵ David Fitzpatrick, ‘The Geography of the War of Independence’ in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* edited by John Crowley, Donal Ó Dricceoil, and Michael Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017) 534

Agrarian Unrest

Although hardship and poverty followed the Easter Rising, those who took part were proud of their actions and, as William Henry has suggested, Galway Volunteers wanted to further 'effect change'.⁶ This change was to cause a mass act of civil disorder whilst providing an alternative administration. Home Rule was no longer enough, only by creating an independent Irish State could Irish identity re-emerge from under British control. Initially, passive resistance deployed in tandem with shrewd political awareness were key factors in the civil disorder prior to the events of January 1919. This national strategy was successfully implemented throughout the county. However, there were other issues that surfaced whereby several historical resentments felt by the rural communities in Galway created animosity and bitter feuds that developed amongst neighbours. Cattle rustling, destruction of fences, intimidation of landowners were examples of some of the agitation that took place and which brought attention to those Volunteers that took part, thus giving rise to a difficult situation that had to be addressed by senior Volunteers.

Yet, at this point it is useful to view County Galway not only in comparison to other Irish counties but within the context of studying local history, before and during this conflict. Gillespie's definition of 'local history' being 'primarily about people in places over time' suggests practical concepts of 'communities' and 'sociability'.⁷ For instance, apart from the geographical sense, communities could also be defined by common interests and the notion of sociability of specific organisations, 'where people of similar outlooks might meet and exchange ideas'.⁸ Suitable examples would include influential members of secret nationalist organisations such as Tom Kenny or Thomas McInerney. The latter would lead Volunteers in south-east Galway. Familial memberships of organisations such as the Land League or the Irish Republican Brotherhood are frequently mentioned in the Witness Statements of members of the Galway IRA during this period.⁹ However, as outlined in this study, holding membership of such organisations brought a certain focus on many agrarian agitators

⁶ William Henry *Blood for Blood: the Black and Tan War in Galway* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2012) 13

⁷ Raymond Gillespie, 'An Historian and the locality' in *Doing Local History: Pursuit and Practice*, eds R. Gillespie and M. Hill (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1999) 7–23

⁸ Gillespie, 'An Historian and the locality' 15

⁹ For examples see, Michael Hynes, 26 May 1955, Bureau Military History (hereafter BMH) Witness Statement (hereafter WS) No. 1173, Patrick Dunlevy, 5 September 1956, BMH, WS No. 1489, Stephen Jordan, 24 January 1950 BMH, WS No. 346

in the county of Galway.¹⁰ Two of the most popular organisations that effected change for small landowners during the period between 1898 and 1919 were the United Irish League and Sinn Féin.¹¹ Whilst the issue of land agitation has not been a significant feature in this study, these organisations and the sense of common purpose and national kinship they offered to members, contributed to the strength of conviction and motivation for change. The size of the county of Galway, second only to Cork, fostered the membership and efficacy of such organisations. In addition, interactions that took place during ‘céilidhe’ (Gaelic social dances) not only raised money for various funds, such as prisoners or armaments, but offered opportunities to discuss and conspire over upcoming plans. In his book *War and Revolution in the West of Ireland: Galway 1913–1922*, McNamara has ranked Galway high amongst the most violent centres of agrarian agitation, leading to notoriety amongst its members.¹² It is little wonder then, that authorities knew the families within communities to investigate or put under surveillance whilst drilling, especially when rebellious activity escalated.

The Revolutionary Tradition and the Electoral Mandate of Sinn Féin

Those Galwegians who partook in Easter Week events in 1916 under Liam Mellows felt proud of their contribution to the nationalist cause. Few areas outside of Dublin had contributed to the insurrection. The exceptions were Ashbourne, County Meath; Enniscorthy, County Wexford and Athenry, County Galway. It is well recognised that many Volunteers in other areas were disappointed not to have had their chance to come out during the Rising. So, despite the failure of the events of that Easter Week and the subsequent arrests, Galwaymen who were sent to Frongoch considered themselves worthy of their place in what was later called the ‘University of Revolution’.¹³ Michael Collins, whose part in Easter 1916 was considered minimal, emerged ‘from the cauldron of incarceration ... as a leader, a strategist, a guerrilla fighter, a financier and a manipulator’.¹⁴ Under him and the other leaders, such as Eamon de Valera and Arthur Griffith, returning Volunteers from Galway and

¹⁰ Also see Martin Newell, 21 January 1957 MACBB BMH, WS No. 1562

¹¹ Fergus Campbell *Land and Revolution: Nationalist Politics in the West of Ireland 1891–1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) 2

¹² Conor McNamara, *War and Revolution in the West of Ireland: Galway 1913–1922* (Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2018) 16–37

¹³ Sean O’Mahony, *Frongoch: University of Revolution* (Dublin : FDR, 1987)

¹⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-35876886> Accessed 23 December 2020

elsewhere began to initiate change. Where once John Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party had dominated nationalist voters, post 1916 the party was superseded by the increasingly popular Sinn Féin and its up-and-coming favoured leader, de Valera.

This momentum increased once the social and political mood had changed post Easter 1916. Townshend has indicated that prior to their election in 1918, 'the Sinn Féin banner became the rallying-point for nearly every nationalist group, whether moderate or extremist, peaceful or violent.'¹⁵ The success of de Valera winning the East Clare by-election in 1917, had brought about the realisation that political change was possible. By sheer hard work, Sinn Féin members in County Galway, bolstered by many returning 1916 veterans, galvanised this change. The ability to canvass while socialising was crafted within every parish, rural and urban, crossing parish boundaries to support other cumainn (political associations) where possible. This gradual underpinning of community structures was further aided by the British government's ill-fated Conscription Bill. The decision to push for conscription brought together various groups (the Catholic hierarchy, women's groups, the Labour movement) to unite behind a single objective: to oppose the bill in Ireland. Although a reputation of agrarian agitation had cast a shadow over their movement, many Sinn Féin members worked hard to recover the confidences of the voters. Unlike other counties, such as Dublin and Cork, land issues in the west of Ireland dominated political campaigning. Hopkinson qualifies this by stating that all three issues, post-Rising Sinn Féin, Volunteer revival and agitation on the land question, worked in parallel with one another until it was recognised that land issues would become excessively divisive.¹⁶ Michael Brennan, from East Clare, who later became a prominent leader in Galway, had the backing of GHQ in Dublin when he demanded some form of conciliation for these disputes. Before long, Sinn Féin representatives began to prove that they possessed both acumen and fortitude, as they expeditiously ran arbitration courts throughout many parishes to substantiate their commitment. It did not, however, succeed in eradicating disputes over land or the widespread cattle drives. Yet, it did provide a mechanism whereby disputing parties could, in many cases, air their grievances.

¹⁵ Charles Townshend, *The British Campaign in Ireland 1919–1921: The Development of Political and Military Policies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975) 1

¹⁶ Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence*, 20

Despite the arrests of several candidates during the so called German plot, Sinn Féin overwhelmingly won the 1918 election and the results indicated a large electoral mandate. Galway's Sinn Féin candidates romped home, two of whom, Bryan Cusack, Galway North and Frank Fahy, Galway South, were imprisoned. Liam Mellows, unopposed, had already been imprisoned in New York. Pádraic Ó Máille, an IRA Volunteer and Sinn Féin member, had a resounding victory over his IPP rival, William O'Malley by 8,272 votes.¹⁷ Utilising Travers's map for comparison of those elected whilst imprisoned, it is clear that in areas along the west coast almost two candidates from each county were arrested in the German Plot. Like Mellows, de Valera represented two counties, Clare East and Mayo East.¹⁸ Neither were native to their electoral county. The Sinn Féin party had, as Fitzpatrick states, 'exacted a blind and stultifying obedience to its directives on policy and tactics' in ensuring its own men won the election.¹⁹ In addition, the arrests demonstrate that these areas, especially County Galway, were kept under surveillance prior to the War of Independence. This is another reason why Galway was one of the first areas to receive the newly-recruited Black and Tans once the conflict developed. Even so, the election results, 73 of the 105 seats (three-quarters of the Irish seats with 48 per cent of the vote), gave Sinn Féin a mandate nationally to pursue the new policies it had avowed prior to election.

Equally, the result empowered communities around Galway to believe that change was coming. All but the elected unionist Irish candidates refused to attend Westminster. By exploiting the British democratic process Sinn Féin were set to assemble a new Irish democracy, the First Dáil. The time for Home Rule had gone. Younger, more charismatic leaders were now nurturing a vision based on Woodrow Wilson's notions of self-government, self-determination and the elimination of the 'evils of imperialism'.²⁰ Amongst these leaders were Eamonn de Valera, Michael Collins, William Cosgrave, and in Galway, Bryan Cusack, and Padraig Ó Máille. They even included clerical activists such as Fr J. W. O'Meehan alongside several others in communities around the county. However, regardless of what was felt at home, this

¹⁷ Brian M. Walker, ed., *Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, 1918–92: Irish Election Results to Parliaments and Parliamentary assemblies at Westminster, Belfast, Dublin, Strasbourg* (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 1992) 7

¹⁸ Pauric Travers, 'The Conscription Crisis and the General Election of 1918' in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* edited by Crowley, Ó Dricceoil, and Murphy, 328

¹⁹ David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life 1913–1921: Provincial Experience of War and Revolution* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017) 133

²⁰ Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence*, 20

new fledgling parliament needed to persuade the international community as to their right to represent an independent nation. An imaginative propaganda campaign was required, one that determined precisely what constituted a modern Irish independent nation. A carefully crafted public event witnessed by a room full of influential journalists and persuasive members of society was planned to maximise the launch of Ireland's new Dáil. However, despite those who endorsed this political approach to independence, not everyone was convinced of its durability. Thus, the training and recruitment of Volunteers continued as did the intimidation of RIC members and their families and, in addition, disruptive ambushes when the situation arose. This escalated expeditiously now that the political revolt had achieved success.

Deployment of Black and Tans into Galway

After the outcome of the first Dáil and the killings at Soloheadbeg, County Tipperary, January 1919, the atmosphere of turbulence accelerated. Civil resistance and anti-establishment policy combined with 'the old ideal of physical rebellion' began to deliver desired results.²¹ Members of the RIC were leaving, resigning or complaining about the working and social conditions in which they now found themselves. Collectively, the IRA began attacking police stations from early in 1920. This forced the police to abandon smaller police stations around the country as the RIC quickly moved to larger barracks that could be adequately manned by six or more men, a number that increased as more stations closed. However, Leeson has shown the inconsistencies in this approach in various areas, such as Londonderry, which remained at 16 RIC stations throughout 1920–1921. In contrast, the RIC in Mayo closed almost half of their stations during the same period, which had the effect of reducing the number from 47 to 23.²² Equally, only 8 of 34 police stations were left open in County Sligo by September 1920.²³ In parallel, Volunteers in County Galway began significant attacks in 1920 and out of 99 RIC stations throughout the county only 37 remained open up to 1921.²⁴ However, once the anti-establishment tactics progressed to target the

²¹ Townshend, *The British Campaign in Ireland 1919–1921*, 18

²² David M Leeson, *The Black and Tans: British Police and Auxiliaries in the Irish War of Independence, 1920–1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 22

²³ Michael Farry, 'Sligo' in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* edited by Ó Dricceoil, Crowley, and Murphy, 609

²⁴ See the map of RIC stations in Conor McNamara, 'Galway' in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* edited by Crowley, Ó Dricceoil, and Murphy, 615

British-controlled local and regional courts, one significant factor changed in County Galway, the introduction of newly-recruited Black and Tans.

As reinforcements were not easily sourced from within Ireland, the British government mostly secured the required expertise from returning British soldiers to uphold law and order throughout Ireland. Despite their proficiency in war, not many would have known or understood the nuances of Irish culture, nor be interested in it. The first sightings of these new recruits was when they were seen escorting prisoners in Galway in late February 1920. The agrarian land disputes that had placed a spotlight on some local Volunteers had now forced the British establishment to send reinforcements to curb this discontent. Nonetheless, the parallel courts established by the IRA were not just an ornamental gesture, they were the 'promise and the proof that the time for self-government had come'.²⁵ Sinn Féin even managed to coerce several local land agents to attend the courts in order to address their outstanding disputes. Such was their success, occasionally, even the local RIC advocated this form of resolution, mainly after prolonged, unresolved, or difficult disputes continued to cause unrest. Having forced the Crown forces to pay attention, however, it was not so easy now to remain anonymous. This was to disadvantage the Volunteers in County Galway, unlike other areas that could benefit from the lack of police and general disarray to push ahead and gain a foothold. Although more violent areas such as Cork and Tipperary would eventually receive a large quantity of Crown forces, that early lead brought about more than just self-belief and confidence, it also would have helped to consolidate a position of strength in preparation for what was to come.

The newly arrived Black and Tans quickly learned to travel in groups around the large areas of County Galway. This could be achieved at unpredictable pace and frustrated the awaiting ambush party more times than not. However, the malevolence shown to communities during this period was a sign of their ruthlessness, especially when in the second wave of support, the Auxiliaries, began to arrive and reprisals were sanctioned late in 1920. Obstructing the efforts of Volunteers was not the only effect, the terror now felt by ordinary citizens would continue to escalate despite the spotlight firmly focused on their behaviour. The apathy on the part of the Auxiliaries towards those communities in which they served, quickly surfaced when they were

²⁵ Mary Kotsonouris, *Retreat From Revolution: The Dáil Courts, 1920–24* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994) 5

faced with the guerrilla warfare tactics utilised by the rebels. Unaccustomed to the guerrilla tactics of hit-and-run, they were stymied on occasions which led them to unleash their frustrations on neighbouring communities which they suspected of harbouring these rebels. Reputationally, they were regarded, even amongst the domestic RIC, as ill-disciplined, degenerate and carousing. Evidence of their behaviour began to manifest around the country and was publicised in several newspapers which resulted in questions being raised in the House of Commons. Nonetheless, their actions did have some success and may have managed to constrain the IRA in Galway from reaching their full potential. Unlike their Cork or Tipperary counterparts, the Volunteers of County Galway had one other disadvantage, a perceived lack of leadership that failed to recover any lost ground after the Black and Tans' arrival.

Lost Possibilities in a Leadership Vacuum

Skilled leadership is essential on either side of a conflict. Without formal training in a military environment, the senior Volunteers had to rely, in some cases, on previous experiences, such as those involved in Easter 1916. Séamus Murphy had been sent from Dublin to lead the IRA in County Galway before the War of Independence. His reputation had been secured when he fought under Eamonn Ceannt during Easter 1916. He was in command at Jameson Distillery in Marrowbone Lane. However, when the order to surrender was given, Con Colbert, his Captain was arrested as commander instead of Séamus Murphy.²⁶ Con Colbert was later executed the same day as Eamonn Ceannt, Michael Mallin and Seán Heuston. Rumours began to spread which lauded Colbert for taking Murphy's place while at the same time weakening the latter's reputation as the actual leader. Although the truth may never be established, Murphy's leadership fell short of what the men had encountered under Liam Mellows during their Easter Rising. Considering their commitment and zeal during that period, the Galway Volunteers' contribution to the War of Independence was a significant disappointment to them. Their frustration centred on Murphy's hesitancy and reluctance to proceed with attacks. In Jack Feehan's statement to Ernie O'Malley, he was very strong in his criticism of Murphy: 'He destroyed all activity in Galway and he ruined the county for fighting. Why he behaved so cowardly I do not know, but he put

²⁶ See John O'Callaghan, *Con Colbert: 16 Lives* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2016)

his heel on any activity and he destroyed initiative.²⁷ The reasons for his refusals or stringent requirements is unknown.²⁸ However, he had become quite ill and suffered setbacks that included pneumonia. This would certainly have impacted on his ability to command effectively. Nonetheless, constant local complaints eventually brought about the re-organisation of the ranks in mid-1920, with several commissions awarded to prominent Volunteers based on their established leadership. Eventually, and before these changes began to take effect, Murphy returned to Dublin.

Locally there were obvious discrepancies in how some areas functioned and this was directly related not only to the leadership but the vital issue of availability of armaments, in addition to the coercion of Crown forces. For example, the south and east of the county had more success in raids, ambushes and generally were better able to organise themselves, as a result of strong leadership. Consequently, they had a good success rate in procuring as many weapons as possible. The west of the county had the additional disadvantage in that poverty prevented many from fully committing to the cause and little or no weaponry was available. In addition, access in and out of areas such as Connemara could be easily prevented by police roadblocks. However, the people in the towns of Galway and Tuam and the village of Oranmore suffered significant reprisals by Crown forces which led to arrests, killings and destruction which strangled movement by Volunteers and forced many to go on the run. In this respect, Volunteers in County Galway were unlike, for example, those in Cork, which Borgonovo has described as having 'strength and depth' in their leadership. This, he attributed to the early start in engaging with Crown forces, he continued that this 'also demanded steady and reliable administration; ineffectiveness, carelessness and lack of imagination could not be tolerated.'²⁹ Coleman, in her study of revolutionary activities in Longford, has identified their success in having one of the 'highest incidences of IRA violence per head of population' as not being linked to prior outstanding agrarian or revolutionary violence in the nineteenth century.³⁰ She notes that from 1917, one

²⁷ Cormac O'Malley, Cormac O'Comhraí eds, *The Men Will Talk To Me: Galway Interviews By Ernie O'Malley* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2013) 107

²⁸ Seamus Murphy reluctantly dictated a short Witness Statement of his activities up until 1916. Seamus Murphy, Date unknown, BMH, WS No. 1756. However, the investigating officer's report that accompanied the statement comments that Colonel J.V. Joyce, Chief Investigator of the Bureau, over many years could not persuade Murphy to sign his statement or finish the narrative to cover his period in Galway. No archive or private papers have been found.

²⁹ John Borgonovo, 'Cork' in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* edited by Crowley, Ó Dricceoil, and Murphy, 563

³⁰ Marie Coleman, 'Longford' in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* edited by Crowley, Ó Dricceoil, and Murphy, 597

reason strength increased in the Volunteers was a traditional membership of the IRB prior to 1916, and that their success owed 'much to good organisation, strong leadership and close co-operation with IRA GHQ.'³¹ Nonetheless, the lack of armaments in County Galway was a consistent impediment to efficacy of attacks or ambushes. It would eventually influence the Volunteers to combine forces on specific ambushes in order to maximise support and weaponry.

As the War of Independence and its unique guerrilla tactics did not observe strict military rules; adaptability and possessing a cunning strategy was paramount. Recklessly, the Crown forces followed suit with their own strategy. What happened in areas such as Tuam was only the beginning. Tactics employed by the Volunteers had stoked their appetite for vengeance and terror which was felt throughout many communities and left families in a constant state of anguish. Arrests were made and, once identified, it became difficult for any prominent IRA Volunteer to remain in their home or with close family. Quite soon those on the run required additional support. In the absence of effective leadership, the participation and initiative of women and families invigorated the campaign. Fundraising was the main source for providing basic comforts, such as a change of clothes, cigarettes, food, and additional first aid supplies. This undervalued role of fundraising was mostly reserved for local women and the auxiliary organ of the Volunteers, Cumann na mBan. Sometimes it put them at risk of capture and interrogation by the Black and Tans. Nonetheless, life for these men on the run was not easy and many became sick or received injuries that required confinement. The danger this situation placed on everyone was enormous, yet families and neighbours, even if not directly involved, colluded to keep these men safe. Barns, outhouses and sheds housed small groups for one or two nights before they moved on to the next safehouse. This situation was replicated over the entire country. It put these republican sympathisers at personal risk. Crown forces were aware of this collaboration and used it to justify their actions of violence against the community. Unable to fully engage and respond to these attacks, IRA in Galway became more and more disenchanted.

Prior to the Truce, Michael Brennan from County Clare was appointed as CO to Galway under the new command of 1st Western Division. Immediately, he carried out

³¹ Coleman, 'Longford' 597

some training and assessments of those under his command. His reports to Adjutant General Collins in September 1921 were pretty damning. Most notably, he referred to the sparse amount of armaments and the low level of competence of the leaders.³²

The most critical point was reserved for those in South Galway:

I feel absolutely certain that S. Galway will give a very good account of itself in the next phase of the war, an account which beyond all doubt it would have given during the past year if its 'Leaders' had all been court-martialled and shot. The men were there all the time if they had got a lead.³³

He referred to Thomas McInerney and Peter Howley, Ardrahan, as both 'useless and dangerous', yet he felt dispensing with them was not appropriate, given the local circumstances. The circumstances he referred to is as yet unknown, but most likely it refers to the respect McInerney's leadership earned him from the men he commanded. Gilbert Morrissey, a veteran of 1916, whom Brennan is also critical of, mentioned in his Witness Statement in 1955 that the lack of leadership under Séamus Murphy contributed to the many arrests of men. It was left to him, alongside others such as Joe Stanford, to steady the men before Michael Brennan became OC and the men in Gort, Ardrahan and Athenry were better organised and in good working order.³⁴ His statement abruptly stops and does not mention the command under Brennan. Whatever the issue was under Séamus Murphy, the men of Galway, despite their labours, only had sporadic success in their engagements with Crown forces. Furthermore, most of the successful activities were under the same leaders that Brennan's report openly criticises. One such ambush at Ballyturin in 1921 by Volunteers from South Galway certainly had a damaging effect on the security of Crown forces and was considered a factor in the search for a peaceful conclusion.

The Dead of Galway County's War of Independence

November in the Christian liturgical calendar is ritually devoted to the dead; All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day are celebrated early in the month. Equally, a liminal period in the pagan calendar, Samhain, that marked the end of one season and the beginning of another, is also associated with boundaries between this world and the next. Ironically,

³² Bureau of Military History, Michael Collins Papers, IE-MA-CP-04-15 29 September 1921

³³ Bureau of Military History, Michael Collins Papers, IE-MA-CP-04-15 29 September 1921

³⁴ Gilbert Morrissey, Supplementary Statement, 26 March 1955, BMH, WS No. 1138

it is within this context that November 1920 became the month of the dead in County Galway – a phase that was forever seared into the memory of those who witnessed these events. Michael Moran, Constable Timothy Horan, Eileen Quinn, Fr. Michael Griffin and the two Loughnane brothers, Pat and Harry all died in an extreme and violent manner. To add further terror, reports of Bloody Sunday in Croke Park in the same month, highlighted the extent of the state of lawlessness that existed and was clearly demonstrated through these atrocities. Once again, questions surrounding these events were raised in the British parliament and went unsatisfactorily answered. Investigations fell short of any appropriate verdicts, and issued bland determinations such as, ‘killed whilst escaping’, or ‘killed by person or persons unknown’. Accusations of corruption and debauchery amongst the British establishment had now become centre stage in both Ireland and the wider communities. All sorts of witnesses to these transgressions were smuggled out of Ireland to attend the American Commission on Conditions in Ireland, on which sat one hundred and fifty members. Their reasons for creating such a commission was clear:

The fact that the relatives and loved ones of our fellow citizens are being terrorized, imprisoned without trial, even murdered, and their property violently destroyed, brings this conflict home to our very door. Even though we would ignore the Irish question, the Irish question will not ignore us.³⁵

Mounting pressure from the British and European press was brought to bear. Overall, the coverage succeeded in prompting questions of how long this environment was sustainable under such a chronic state of terror for the ordinary people of Ireland.

Of the sixty-five fatalities recorded during the period 1917–1921 in County Galway, four reached the level of infamy for different reasons.³⁶ Firstly, Eileen Quinn from Gort, who was shot by Crown forces on their way back to Galway Town after their appearance at the local mart, where they intimidated the local farmers. This killing outraged many not simply because she was a heavily pregnant mother playing outside with her children, but because of the sheer randomness of it and the corruption demonstrated in the aftermath. The verdict of the court was death by misadventure and those involved were seemingly unconcerned at their actions. Mrs Quinn was the wife of a modestly wealthy farmer who kept a housekeeper and young servant girl.

³⁵ *Report of The American Commission on Conditions in Ireland*, (Washington, D.C.: Bliss Building, 1921) 1

³⁶ Daithí O Corrain and Eunan O’Halpin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* (Cornwall: Yale University Press, 2020) 543

Her husband, Malachy, was a good friend of Lady Gregory's and had on many occasions discussed current events amongst themselves but neither were involved in events. The fact that the local head Constable refused to take her dying statement seemed to extinguish any remaining faith in law and order.³⁷ O'Halpin notes that out of the ninety-eight females killed during the War of Independence (4 per cent of the total), almost none of whom were deliberately targeted, Eileen Quinn was the 'most notorious killing'.³⁸ The shock of her death and the details of her last hours reverberated not only in Ireland but was a question put to Sir Hamar Greenwood in the House of Commons. He felt that the Crown forces were justified in pre-emptive shooting along roadsides despite the fact that the road in question was long and straight without vegetation or forestation.³⁹

In a coincidence, not far away some months later, another heavily pregnant woman, Eliza Williams (Lilly), was killed. Williams was companion to Captain Cecil Blake and alongside Captain Fiennes Cornwallis, and Lieutenant Robert McCreery, All five were killed by local IRA men in May 1921. Despite the surprise and upset amongst local people at their deaths, not too much fuss was made of it at the time. Williams' devotion to Blake was obvious and she had been reputed to display a hand gun and was not adverse to using it threateningly in local shops around Gort. In addition, given the option to escape she declined and wanted to stay by her 'husband's' side.⁴⁰ Her use of the descriptor, "husband", is worth noting. Because many years later in 2012, Paul Blake, the grandson of the murdered inspector visited the area in Gort to gain an insight into the incident. He informed the head guide in Coole Park, Hilda O'Loughlin, that his grandfather and Mrs Williams were in fact married to other people at the time of their death because a divorce could not be secured.⁴¹ However, such was their devotion to one another that Williams could not bear to be separated even in death. When the RIC arrived, she was reportedly found slumped over his body, apparently with twelve gunshot wounds: 'it appears that this unfortunate lady was deliberately

³⁷ Lady Gregory anonymously wrote in the British newsletter *The Nation* during this period. See for example her article entitled 'Third Week in Ireland', which was published in *The Nation* 4 December 1920, 333

³⁸ O Corrain and Halpin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution*, 12

³⁹ House of Commons Debate Hansard, Volume 134: debated on Wednesday 17 November 1920
<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1920-11-17/debates/eba4f138-38d4-4fb3-a5df-6fedf5007b8f/DeathByMisadventureGalway?highlight=eileen%20quinn%20corker#contribution-39469b8a-a33c-404d-a584-42cd2ab057b6> 5 January 2021

⁴⁰ O Corrain and O'Halpin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution*, 426

⁴¹ *Galway Advertiser*, 11 October 2012

riddled with bullets while she lay on the ground'.⁴² The two women were equally loved and heavily pregnant in the same community. However, what is significant here is that, their deaths illuminate the complexities of the era, and place women such as Eliza Williams amongst those recently described by President Michael D Higgins, as 'the Others', or on the wrong side in the history of this conflict.⁴³

Another prominent killing was that of Fr Michael Griffin, a young curate in the parish of Ragoon. Notably, he was one of three priests killed during the War of Independence, Canon Magner and Fr O'Callaghan, Cork had also been deliberately targeted. The killing of religious men on any side was unusual especially as many of them called for a peaceful reconciliation and an end to violence. Clergy in Tuam, Loughrea, Gort, Ardahan, Athenry, Clifden and Galway Town, all condemned the violent activities of the IRA and urged their communities to remain calm throughout the earlier period of the conflict.⁴⁴ Despite this, raids, intimidation and violence against priests were prevalent in Cork and even more so in County Galway. Heffernan, has suggested that in Munster the fighting was heavier and may explain such high levels of violence toward clerics. However, this does not explain such intense levels of animosity directed at the clergy in County Galway.⁴⁵ What is certain is that the support from clerics such as Fr O'Meehan and Fr Griffin demonstrated support at Sinn Féin public rallies. What is also not in question is the death threats that were sent to Fr O'Meehan, Canon Considine in Gort, and Bishop O'Dea, amongst others in the county. Reports such as those falsely given regarding the execution of Joyce and the attendance of Fr Griffin certainly contributed to this hatred by Crown forces and incited vengeance of an unprecedented level. Significantly, it was the kidnapping and killing of this highly regarded young priest that was to 'send shock waves through the Irish Church' and 'quite [overshadow] the events of Bloody Sunday and Kilmichael' in some respects, or at least it did in the commentary amongst clerics.⁴⁶ This was displayed in the enormity of his funeral and in martyred status bestowed on him almost immediately. It was from this point onwards that the Church 'began to burn its bridges

⁴² O Corrain and O'Halpin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution*, 426

⁴³ President Michael D. Higgins, Machnamh-100, 4 December 2020

⁴⁴ Brian Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment: Catholic Priests and Political Violence in Ireland, 1919-21* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016)

⁴⁵ Brian Heffernan, 'The Catholic Church and the War of Independence' in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* edited by John Crowley, Donal Ó Dricceoil, and Michael Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017) 504

⁴⁶ Brian Heffernan, 'The Catholic Church and the War of Independence' 504

with the old regime', not in overt support of IRA activities, but more against what the Crown forces were doing.⁴⁷ The latter's constant reprisals sparked condemnation from many pulpits and also letters of protest regarding the constant brutality.

The murder of the two Loughnane brothers was by any standards a brutal act. By including their narrative in this study, it signifies the ensuing terror that family members dreaded for their loved ones throughout the term of this conflict. The community of County Galway had already suffered many deaths throughout the month of November but when Harry and Pat Loughnane were taken from their homes on the 26 November 1920 the shock was quickly felt throughout the county. Widespread sympathy was extended to their mother, a widow, and their siblings, not least for Nora who had to identify their bodies. The Auxiliaries based at Drumharsna were eventually known to be responsible for the killings. Yet when enquires were made at Eglington Street Barracks, it was not immediately apparent where the two men had been taken or when. The killing of prisoners while in custody was a genuine fear for the family. The now familiar excuse of 'killed while escaping' was frequently used to conceal the murder of those in custody.⁴⁸ O'Halpin puts the number of IRA fatalities that were 'allegedly shot while attempting to escape' at forty-one (8 per cent), and thirty-four (7 per cent) shot for failing to halt.⁴⁹ In the case of the Loughnane brothers, it was rumoured that they had escaped custody. However, it appears that the Auxiliaries fabricated the escape story. The attempt to conceal the bodies in the same fashion as Fr Griffin suggests that they did not have an adequate explanation for the injuries that were inflicted upon the brothers. Once discovered, their broken, burnt and dismembered remains caused much speculation as to what had happened. Once again news of the incident spread around the world quickly and caused widespread shock, with many calling on those in authority to seek peace and serve justice. The infamous photographs taken of their bodies are still used today to reassert the injustices that befell the community of South Galway.

The same band of Auxiliaries, however, continued to terrorise, and in April 1921, Michael Tolan, from Mayo, was also killed in similar circumstances. His body was

⁴⁷ Brian Heffernan, 'The Catholic Church and the War of Independence' 504

⁴⁸ House of Commons Debate Hansard, Volume 134: debated on Wednesday 17 November 1920 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1920-11-17/debates/d8cd29c6-3732-4336-a0c9-57667315e5f1/EscapingPrisonersShot> Accessed 7 January 2021

⁴⁹ O Corrain and O'Halpin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* 16

disfigured, there were patches carved on his chest, and even a suggestion of a bomb had been used on his body, his genitals had also been removed.⁵⁰ The sexual nature of this violent attack has yet to be explored in the context of other such crimes. However, what it does demonstrate, was that the Loughnane brothers were not the only two to have suffered and died in horrific circumstances, yet they were considered to be especially the most brutal.

Whilst these killings are seen to be unusual nationally, and certainly reached a wider audience, other fatalities were equally distressing for their families throughout the period of the War of Independence in County Galway. In order to reach the aims and objectives, of this study, notably to identify and detail key events which impacted upon the local population, it was equally important to highlight those less well known. There were twenty-eight fatalities in 1920 and thirty-three in 1921.⁵¹ For instance, four were killed by the IRA between 1920–21, and labelled as spies or informers, namely, Thomas Morris, Pdraig Joyce, Thomas Hannon and Patrick Molloy. Although Thomas McEver was found with a similar label attached to his body, it is recognised that Crown forces committed this killing, but had used the sign to lead suspicion away from their actions. From the other side, the search for spies during 1919–1921, changed from the previous conflict.⁵² The IRA remained alert and ‘diligent’, this included those who ‘publicly defied the IRA and republican authority generally.’⁵³ In addition, as the Truce approached, the Crown forces no longer reported deaths as ‘shot while escaping’ or ‘shot after failing to stop’. They simply shot them, as in the cases of Christopher (Christy) Folan and Hugh Tully.⁵⁴ Although the overall death toll of sixty-five in County Galway did not reach the levels felt in Cork (557), Dublin (360) or Antrim (232), the impact on the individual bereaved families was immense. In addition, County Galway’s reign of terror, particularly during the month of November 1920, should not be underestimated given its impact. The anxiety and state of helplessness felt amid the chaos was a deliberate attempt by Crown forces to intimidate and suppress much of the community of Galway.

⁵⁰ O Corrain and O’Halpin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* 383

⁵¹ Details extracted from O Corrain and O’Halpin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution*. See index of fatalities 675–695

⁵² Eunan O’Halpin, ‘Problematic Killing During the War of Independence and its Aftermath: Civilian Spies and Informer’ In *Death and Dying in Ireland, Britain and Europe: Historical Perspectives* edited by James Kelly and Mary Ann Lyons (Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2013) 321

⁵³ O’Halpin, ‘Problematic Killing During the War of Independence and its Aftermath: Civilian Spies and Informer’ 321

⁵⁴ O Corrain and O’Halpin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution*, 519

Recovering Women's History, 1919–1921

During the course of this research it became evident that records about the agency of women in Galway during 1919–1921 were fragmented or absent. Thus began an undertaking of recovery, utilising whatever strategy possible to yield information about the lives, activities, needs, or hurts of what was approximately fifty per cent of the population.⁵⁵ “Farmer’s daughters”, “doctor’s wives”, “college academics”, “sisters”, “publicans”, “mothers” and “servant girls” are some of the adjectives used to describe the women of Ireland during this period. Yet, despite the valuable activity of women before, during and after the War of Independence, until recently their efforts had been marginalised or simply forgotten. Connolly, one of several historians determined to redress the balance, has claimed that one of the outcomes from the revolution was the introduction of ‘a succession of restrictions on Irish women’s social and political rights on the part of the new State.’⁵⁶ Although women continued to strive for equality or recognition in these areas, as the Proclamation promised, the conservatism of the Catholic Church and its influence on successive governments from 1922, eroded or restricted many possibilities. One interesting analogy from Connolly has referred to Valentine M. Moghadam’s input on ‘diverse types of revolutions’ which considered the broader view of literature on women and revolutions in countries such as Mexico, Iran, Eastern Europe, Russia, China, Cuba and Vietnam.⁵⁷ More specifically, she noted the continued ‘absence of gender in theories of revolution’ and signified the ‘two models of gender relations’ that existed, before, during and after conflict.⁵⁸ Contrasting outcomes included, either resorting to a suppression of women (within the family), or women gaining some ‘formal or actual’ rights post-revolution. Therefore, and not surprising, confining the majority of women to only roles within the family, was not unique to Ireland. And although more research on the role of women and their impact on revolutions internationally is necessary, this Connolly admits, could open up yet another neglected field of research.⁵⁹

As discussed in Chapter 2, over the last forty years some ground-breaking research on women in Irish history has been carried out by scholars such as Lil Conlon and

⁵⁵ As per Census of Ireland, 1911. Also see <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-1916/1916irl/people/population/#d.en.94294>. There was no Census in Ireland in 1921.

⁵⁶ Linda Connolly, ed., *Women and the Irish Revolution* (Kildare: Irish Academic Press, 2020) 1

⁵⁷ Connolly, ed., *Women and the Irish Revolution*, 2

⁵⁸ Connolly, ed., *Women and the Irish Revolution*, 2

⁵⁹ Connolly, ed., *Women and the Irish Revolution*, 2

Margaret Ward.⁶⁰ Yet, it is difficult not to mourn the loss of many valuable female narratives that were left unrecorded and that would have added to the oral histories, written accounts, unpublished diaries, chronologies, and all the other rich sources that are otherwise available to describe the personal experiences of women. Instead, alternative ways and sources have had to be found to relate their narrative. Hence, as an effort to recover their histories, their inclusion in this study in a chapter on remembrance. Familiar figures such as Jenni Wyse Power, Dr Kathleen Lynn, Madeleine Ffrench-Mullen, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Helena Molony, Rosie Hackett, and Margaret Skinnider amongst others, are at last beginning to receive the same recognition afforded to their male counterparts. However, recognition of the women of Galway still has some way to go.

Much of the research on women in this study has been extracted from various files within the Military Archives, namely the Witness Statements and Pension Applications. They are mentioned not only in their own Pension Applications but also in some male statements, albeit retrospectively. Throughout the Decade of Centenaries, the theme of gender has arisen on occasion, and some local authorities, including Galway County Council have developed some worthwhile projects. Yet, without the female and/or feminist historians' determination to include the gender narrative in all projects (not always successfully), once again opportunities would have been lost. President Higgins, a firm advocate of gender and women's histories, hosted a significant 'reflection' on the revolutionary period in November 2020 and yet only one female academic was present, Professor Anne Dolan, an omission Dolan herself mentioned in her response to the President's address.⁶¹ Acknowledging that there is much more work to be done on recovering the histories of women, President Higgins stated that:

these women might be regarded as women that didn't matter enormously in the scheme of things, but they are the people who carried the texture and experience of both the War of Independence and the Civil War and then what came after ... and it's not a good story.⁶²

There is a real opportunity to use the work in this and other studies as a stepping-stone to further research in uncovering the stories of women's histories during the

⁶⁰ Lil Conlon, *Cumann na mBan and The Women of Ireland 1913–25* (Kilkenny: Kilkenny People, 1969) and Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism* (London: Pluto Press, 1983)

⁶¹ Machnamh-100 See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xn3ElhQYKNk> Accessed 10 November 2020

⁶² Machnamh-100 See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OyNcllhbNQ> Accessed 10 November 2020

War of Independence in County Galway.

In addition, there is one area that remains almost completely devoid of recognition of women, that of commemoration. The one exception is that of Countess Markievicz whose memory is evoked in names such as Markievicz Park, Ballyfermot; Markievicz Leisure Centre, Dublin; Countess Markievicz House (apartment complex), Dublin; Markievicz Camogie Club, Donegal; Markievicz House (HSE), Sligo and Markievicz Park (the principal GAA stadium in County Sligo). There is also a Markievicz Award which is administered by the Arts Council. Despite extensive research, it appears that there are no streets, poems, plaques or GAA clubs named after any women who gave service during the War of Independence in County Galway.⁶³ The agency of women was an issue that continued to be debated as pension applications were refused, repeatedly denigrating their efforts. It is hardly surprising then that throughout the various commemorations prior to the 'Decade of Centenaries', ostensibly, none have involved the commemoration of women that participated in the War of Independence specifically. Even so, of those who contributed during the period commemorated by the 'Decade of Centenaries', few legacies of built heritage exist even nationally. One of the exceptions is the Rosie Hackett Bridge across the River Liffey in Dublin, which was dedicated in 2014. Also, in County Galway, the Relatives and Friends of Galway 1916 placed a headstone over Julia Morrissey's grave in 2017 to recognise her activities. Similarly, in County Monaghan, there are two sites dedicated to the remembrance of Margaret Skinnider. In 2016, a roundabout was renamed in recognition of her work and five years later the Margaret Skinnider Appreciation Society (MSAS) dedicated a monument in her honour.⁶⁴ It was not the case that women did not participate, nor that women had a lesser role, simply their contribution was viewed as more auxiliary rather than active in a violent capacity. Equally, many revolutionary Galway women alongside ordinary female civilians had to contend with

⁶³ The inclusion of Eileen Quinn, discussed elsewhere, is within another poem 'Reprisals' written in commemoration of Robert Gregory and commission by Lady Gregory. Also, it could not be established that Quinn Terrace and Quinn Place in Mervue had any connection with Eileen Quinn, Kiltartan.

⁶⁴ See <http://www.olddublintown.com/rosie-hackett-bridge.html>, Dublin City Council voted to name the new bridge over the Liffey in honour of Rosie Hackett in 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/page/1462815837335683/search/?q=julia%20morrissey>, Julia Morrissey, a Cumann na Ban veteran of 1916 died in a circumstance of poverty. She was buried with her parents inside the Athenry Dominican priory. In 2017, the Relatives and Friends of Galway 1916 to 1923 fundraised locally to place a headstone at her grave. <https://www.theirishvoice.com/uncategorised/a-fitting-memorial-to-the-formidable-margaret-skinnider/> The Margaret Skinnider Appreciation Society (MSAS), is comprised of local people.

constant intimidation and were at risk of sexual violence, none of which could be easily reported or discussed outside a tight family unit due to the sense of shame or for fear of repercussions. Research revealed that women had their hair shorn, were roughly handled, beaten, made strip naked, searched immodestly, and assaulted both sexually and physically. Yet much of this was never recorded or widely recognised as having taken place. In May 2018, a new set of Military Service Pension Files were published, which revealed further information on the difficulties that these women had endured after the War of Independence. Some, such as the aforementioned Julia Morrissey, suffered mental breakdowns which required institutionalisation. This is another aspect of the conflict that requires further research. Equally, more research would provide greater recognition of their efforts and ultimately this would help significantly in reaching a better understanding of this conflict.

Memories

Oona Frawley has identified the concept of 'memory cruxes' as a way of determining specific memorable moments within the cultural memory of a group.⁶⁵ Collectively, these 'bumps' create enduring impressions that strengthen and shape the narratives of identity. In this study, it is recognised that the dynamic manifestations of these cruxes have been triggered by several means, including historic sites visited, artefacts seen or held, and even attendance at commemorations.

The interconnection between history and memory is an important consideration in debates about connections between the past and present. Cubitt's theory is that memory is about 'the validation of new modes of historical enquiry' and the 'revamping of old ones' in fields of academic study. Moreover, memory has become interlocked in an intimate gyre with history, both competing for primary position. He sees this focus on memory in 'parallel' in what is a 'peculiarly busy' interdisciplinary area of study into the past.⁶⁶ Cubitt has also explored different understandings of how memory is understood, be it individual or collective, a 'survival' of past experiences or 'a reconstruction' from a contemporary perspective.⁶⁷ Erill, in her contribution to

⁶⁵ Oona Frawley, ed., *Memory Ireland Volume 3 The Famine and the Troubles* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014) 1

⁶⁶ Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (New York, Manchester University Press, 2007)

⁶⁷ Cubitt, *History and Memory*

historical debates on the issue, puts aside the ‘parallel’ argument in relation to history and memory, in preference to the broader more useful collective term of ‘cultural memory’.⁶⁸ She has argued that historical references are only one means of cultural remembrance of the past. Others, she notes, include, religion, myth and literature. Erill also points out that ‘historiography itself is a form of cultural memory’ and that ‘all history writing is a constructive, narrative process, deeply imbued with – often unacknowledged – patterns of culture and ideology’.⁶⁹ Looking at cultural memory in this way, has enabled the present writer to delve deeper into the fluidity exhibited in the contemporary cultural consciousness.

Also of significance to the consideration of contemporary communities (including people’s sense of identity, belonging and place) is the concept of ‘heritage values’, a theory considered by Margarita Díaz-Andreu and Siân Jones.⁷⁰ They examine the meaning and values that people within a community attach to heritage, and indeed the contribution that the public make concerning heritage sites, institutions or cultural traditions, and the challenges all this involves.⁷¹ This is especially purposeful when used in the context of both the present and the future. Both studies initially identified the divide between academics, or professional curators, and the people within local communities, when considering heritage management. In order to bridge this gap, Jones notes that the public are requested to express their opinion ahead of decisions on heritage strategies, under discussions of ‘significance of place, beyond its utilitarian value’.⁷² Another useful concept is that many aspects of social value are created through unofficial and informal modes of engagement. A combination of both could support a process, of crowd sourcing, for example, when expanding the heritage inventory discussed later. However, it is worth bearing in mind that this value is often measured only by the person who observes or holds an item, document, photograph, such as a lock of hair or intercepted letter. In other words, interpretation can often open the discussion on such items to a wider audience.

⁶⁸ Astrid Erill *Memory in Culture* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) 45

⁶⁹ Erill *Memory in Culture*, 39, 45

⁷⁰ Margarita Díaz-Andreu ‘Heritage Values and the Public’ in *Journal of Community Archaeology & Heritage* 2017 Vol 4, No. 1, page., 2, and Siân Jones, ‘Wrestling with the Social Value of Heritage: Problems, Dilemmas and Opportunities’ in *Journal of Community Archaeology & Heritage* 2017 Vol 4, No. 1, page 21

⁷¹ Díaz-Andreu ‘Heritage Values and the Public’, 2–6 and Siân Jones, ‘Wrestling with the Social Value of Heritage: Problems, Dilemmas and Opportunities’ in *Journal of Community Archaeology & Heritage* 2017 Vol 4, No. 1, 21–37

⁷² Margarita Díaz-Andreu ‘Heritage Values and the Public’ in *Journal of Community Archaeology & Heritage* 2017 Vol 4, No. 1, 3

The value of life is one that the people of Galway placed higher than anything else. The burgeoning death toll by November 1920 in County Galway generated inescapable distress. Such was the grief that assailed the people of Galway that some deaths were memorialised within the collective public memory almost immediately. Constructed through funerals or photographs long before the conflict had ceased, this public memory was sustained and became intergenerational. In addition, the propaganda value that such large funerals evoked placed the suffering of ordinary people into the domain of the international press and challenged the British establishment to explain their actions. For both the leaders of the Galway IRA, and the wider community, this month was particularly harrowing. Unquestionably, the Truce came as a reprieve to some as much as an opportunity to others to recoup and reassemble, should the talks fail. However, the subsequent Treaty and Civil War left a lingering bitterness that was to impact remembrance of the War of Independence into the future. Consequently, over time, successive governments favoured the annual Eastertime commemorations of the 1916 Rising for official state engagement with commemorations of other episodes of the revolutionary period. In so doing, participating communities in Galway honoured those who had died while active in the War of Independence. This is also true during the commemorations held in various communities around the county. An understandable consequence resulted. Once the first-hand memory extinguished, an inevitable confusion took place (more often outside those communities directly involved). In some cases, memories became muddled such that deaths that occurred during the War of Independence were mistakenly regarded by some as having occurred during the 1916 Rising.⁷³ Significantly, this has been somewhat rectified as interest in the commemoration of these conflicts gained momentum from the 2000s on, when students and local history enthusiasts began conducting local history projects in their own areas. This often facilitated the spread of information amongst the families involved.

When discussing the violent interludes that took place during the War of Independence, it is not surprising that one important site has been present in almost all parishes that evoke cultural memory, that of burial grounds. As Peter Howard maintains 'not all death sites are battlefields ... graveyards are of the greatest

⁷³ Examples included in this study such as the Loughnane brothers

importance to many'.⁷⁴ In addition, death is often a powerful tool during civil unrest. Eunan O'Halpin captured this when he stated: 'Dead men leave behind them traumatized families, unpaid bills, unanswered letters, and their futures. Blood, brain matter, torn flesh, remorse or the lack of it, are everywhere.'⁷⁵ Deep regret certainly encouraged solidarity amongst mourners in Galway, particularly during this conflict. They began the intangible process of collective memory through the shock and trauma, many months before the Truce came into being. The phenomena of exceptionally large funerals around Galway town and county was prompted by the increase in violent deaths, as community members were compelled to attend in both memory of the dead and protest over the violence. When attendance was impeded and limited, a defiant congregation shared their grief as they filled the churches and lined the streets. Many of the fatalities were ordinary people loved by their communities, not high-profile politicians or celebrated rebels. Nonetheless, dramatic public responses witnessed crowd numbers reaching several hundred and in some cases thousands such as those attending the funerals of Fr Griffin, Counsellor Michael Walsh, or Pat and Harry Loughnane. Over time, as first-hand memory was prevalent, those remembrances brought families and neighbours together. Their annual anniversaries became important in the commemoration calendar, especially as no fatalities on the Volunteers' side occurred in County Galway during Easter 1916. Those who reached national infamy in some way became comparable to the blood sacrifice that the IRB and Pearse once advocated, and secured the position of martyrdom. Although not quite reaching the eminence of Terence MacSwiney at the time, Fr Griffin transcended both the Christian and secular tradition of martyr and remained within the community of Galway as a symbol of sacrifice for freedom from tyranny.

Over several decades, as the first-hand memory remained alive, veterans and families of Volunteers fundraised while others lobbied for street names, plaques or monuments all to honour those who gave their lives for Irish freedom. Also, IRA company areas took the opportunity of the Rising's Golden Jubilee to remember both nationally and locally those who were involved. However, one common thread began to emerge in communities around County Galway. Although there were exceptions,

⁷⁴ Peter Howard, *Heritage: Management, Interpretation, Identity* (London: Continuum, 2003) 80

⁷⁵ O'Halpin, 'Problematic Killing During the War of Independence and its Aftermath: Civilian Spies and Informers' 319

those involved in conflict prior to the foundation of the State were not so eager to align themselves with the Provisional IRA's activities north of the border in the 1970s, 1980s and on into the 1990s, during the time known as the Troubles. This may well have been the traumatic legacy they witnessed within their own communities and practiced caution so as not to elicit another onslaught of terror. Nevertheless, large commemorations for the Loughnane brothers continued yearly not only during Easter-time commemorations, but during November on the actual anniversary of their deaths. For the most part the commemorations were conducted by Hugh Loughnane, Pat and Harry's younger brother but he was also the local Sinn Féin representative. Over time the graveside eulogies became more politicised as the Troubles in the North escalated, yet, neighbours and friends from far and wide with no political allegiance continued to attend these commemorations. Similarly, when Hugh died, the remembrances continued. Over time numbers fluctuated somewhat, but during the centenary in 2020 and again in 2021 attendances increased once again, despite the pandemic.⁷⁶

In contrast, events held in honour of Fr Griffin generally took place on the anniversary of his death and involved large gatherings that attended mass and a social occasion afterwards. The parish his mother lived in, and where he served as a curate, generally led the events, with parishioners participating in religious ceremonies or commemorative walks to the large memorial at Cloghscoltia. Similarly, Loughrea Cathedral, where Fr Griffin is buried also held masses. Other commemorations took place as new or existing memorials were unveiled or visited. However, the killing of Fr Griffin did bring about a change in the position of the Church towards both the IRA and British government. Prior to his death several expressions of condemnations of IRA violence were instigated by clerics, some, as shown throughout this study, appeared in local newspapers.⁷⁷ However, there was a turning point in the immediate aftermath of his death that led the Church to increase their criticism and denounce the actions of the Crown forces. Whereas in contrast, criticism of the IRA was reduced substantially. Consequently, the 'continued presence of Catholics in the

⁷⁶ A commemoration that was scheduled for November 2020, took place on the 13 December 2020 during Covid-19, and also, another in November 2021. Martina Blackwell, a member of the Shanaglish Commemoration Committee affirms that there was upwards of 150 people in attendance at both events.

⁷⁷ Brian Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment: Catholic Priests and Political Violence in Ireland, 1919–21* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014) 255

Crown forces was resolved by placing the blame with the Black and Tans and Auxiliaries.⁷⁸ In addition, a relationship formed between the IRA and the Church that left the clergy in a strong position to shape the policies of the new State.

Firsthand memory of the War of Independence went into rapid decline in the late twentieth century. Meanwhile violence in Northern Ireland increased. Ironically, in the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the Truce, the first British soldier to die in Ireland while conducting his duty since 1921 was killed in February 1971. Despite the fact that the incident validated the fears of many, preparations were well underway in Dublin for commemorations in the Garden of Remembrance. The ongoing violence in the North forced a hesitancy in commemorations throughout the country which continued over the following decades. Notwithstanding the annual remembrance of the Loughnane brothers and the annual Mass for Fr Griffin, very few notices appeared acknowledging IRA veterans other than death obituaries appearing periodically in the newspapers.

However, by 1994, prolonged interest in Fr Griffin prompted a self-published biography by Pádraig Ó Laoi, a volume he hoped would satisfy the many requests for lectures surrounding the death of Fr Griffin.⁷⁹ The launch of the book offered the author an opportunity to make his sentiments known regarding the death of Fr Griffin. Ó Laoi was a well-respected priest who had published widely on local history. His work was well received and whilst this volume was a sensitive subject during this troubled period, the various communities of Galway were interested in his words. Meanwhile, ongoing efforts to secure peace was underway in the North. Finally, the Good Friday Agreement was signed on 10 April 1998. In July of the same year, the body of Padraig Joyce (branded a spy in 1920) was found on bogland in between two small lakes north of Barna. The incident once again stirred up memories of the past that questioned the merits of violence under any circumstance. However, two years later exacting details of the incident in a local publication by Padhraic Faherty, renewed speculation that the episode was somehow connected to the disappearance and killing of Fr Griffin, such was the ambiguity of the motive for either death.⁸⁰ Regardless of the ordinariness of the people commemorated, their anniversaries stood as a testament

⁷⁸ Heffernan, *Freedom and the Fifth Commandment*: 245

⁷⁹ Pádraig Ó Laoi, *Fr Griffin, 1892–1920* (Galway: The Author, 1994)

⁸⁰ Padhraic Faherty, *Barna – A History* (Self-published, 2000) 201

to the horror and terror that the people of Galway had to endure. After the success of the 90th anniversary commemorations of the 1916 Rising in 2006, plans were put in place by the government of Ireland to begin remembering and reflecting during the so-called ‘Decade of Centenaries’, marking the one hundredth anniversaries of events between 1912–1923.⁸¹ Still, above all others, the deaths of Pat and Harry Loughnane, Fr Griffin and to a lesser extent Eileen Quinn, remained in the memories of many in County Galway.

It should be noted that many of the heritage legacies that are extant today, such as plaques and monuments, were forged throughout the period when first-hand memory was at its most dynamic. Unknown to him at the time, Tomás Ó hEidín contributed to this wider collective remembrance when he captured the grief and desolation through his photographs of the two Loughnane brothers laid in their coffins. Surrounding their bodies was a demonstration of genuine anguish captured on the faces of those who posed. These two photographs were widely distributed around the globe as a symbol of the persecution of the Irish people. Although the photograph became a treasured item of personal value in many families’ coffers, over time reproduction increasingly omitted one vital component of the narrative. The figure of Nora Loughnane, sister of the brothers was often airbrushed from the picture. Although the true reason behind this is unknown, one argument offered here is that it is another example of the erasure of women from the history of this conflict. Although their erasure is explored in more detail throughout this study, these photographs act as a lasting memory and are still used by some to exemplify the brutality of the Crown forces both nationally and in County Galway. Nora Loughnane’s role throughout these historic events was not passive and needs more recognition, as does the role of their mother Kate.

Heritages

The use of digital media has expanded the ways in which people in general can interact with heritage. As shown throughout this study, podcasts have become one of the more specific areas and one that has allowed users to access content freely. After the

⁸¹ The date has been extended from 2022 to 2023

outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, the use of digital media became more prevalent. Once restrictions on physical contact were introduced, new ways of using technology became necessary as a tool to facilitate the dissemination of heritage. In particular, it has highlighted the ingenuity of communities in accessing or creating digital heritages to commemorate past events. As previously mentioned, November was one of the bloodiest months in the War of Independence and not only in Galway but other areas such as Dublin and Cork. However, unable to host any of the centenary events proposed, many communities and heritage groups took advantage of digital media as a means of safely engaging with the public. Galway City Museum, for instance, utilised its social media platforms to highlight the centenary of a variety of incidents. Equally, Barna and Furbo parish used digital media to host a week of events associated with Fr Griffin. Likewise, Galway County Council's Heritage Office hosted a series of talks associated with the centenary of the War of Independence, all of which were made available via their YouTube Channel. Consequently, what could have been a disappointing centenary, was rescued somewhat by the capabilities of digital heritage.

Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory

Considering the potential usage of digital media in heritage-making, this study has endeavoured to use a practice-based approach to compile a 'Galway County War of Independence Heritage Inventory'. In doing so, consideration has been given to the European Commission's report, *Cultural Heritage: Digitisation, Online Accessibility and Digital Preservation*, which highlights the importance of preserving digital projects.⁸² One area of note is the 'immoveable cultural heritage, such as monuments, historical buildings and archaeological sites'.⁸³ The destruction of conflict heritage sites is also highlighted as a cause for concern.⁸⁴ The example given of the fire at Notre Dame in the report is indeed a reminder of the fragility of such sites. The heritage inventory presented in the previous chapter serves as an important mechanism for cataloguing

⁸² 'European Commission report on Cultural Heritage: Digitisation, Online Accessibility and Digital Preservation' 12 June 2019. <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/european-commission-report-cultural-heritage-digitisation-online-accessibility-and-digital> Accessed 6 October 2020

⁸³ European Commission report on Cultural Heritage: Digitisation, Online Accessibility and Digital Preservation' 12 June 2019. <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/european-commission-report-cultural-heritage-digitisation-online-accessibility-and-digital> Accessed 6 October 2020

⁸⁴ 'European Commission report on Cultural Heritage: Digitisation, Online Accessibility and Digital Preservation' 12 June 2019. <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/european-commission-report-cultural-heritage-digitisation-online-accessibility-and-digital> Accessed 6 October 2020

the heritages of County Galway's War of Independence, under the following headings: Historic Sites; Artefacts and Manuscripts; Memorials; and Memorabilia. These four sections were determined as the most effective way to catalogue the heritages for consistency. Once the information was collected, the process of dissemination of research findings was considered. As Peter Howard asserts, 'heritage is for people; not just for a small minority of specialists and experts, but for everyone'.⁸⁵ Therefore, although the findings are based on what was accessible during the duration of this study, these are expected to develop further over time. Whilst the mission for most Irish cultural institutions is to manage and interpret their objects or records, ordinary households also retain items, such as letters, photographs, diaries or items of clothing. It was with this in mind that the inventory was utilised for recording both tangible and intangible items or sites. It can be developed further or contributed to, through several different resources. Crowdsourcing is one of the most productive as it utilises a collective intellectual assemblage of information, and often involves a personal history or copies of photographs, thereby providing a direct link back to the past that may otherwise have been lost. The importance of the inventory is that it records sites that are no longer extant and features artefacts and memorabilia that may have been lost, mislaid or sold at auctions. Having digital access to such examples of County Galway's cultural heritage, utilising a variety of different sources not always accessible to the public, will fulfil one of the aims of this heritage study.

The Guide Book and ArcGIS ESRI StoryMap Versions of The Loughnane Brothers Heritage Trail: Go Explore the Historic Sites & Memorials

In addition to the heritage inventory, the other major practice-based output of this study is *The Loughnane Brothers Heritage Trail: Go Explore the Historic Sites & Memorials of Ireland's War of Independence*. As seen in Chapter 6, the capture, killing and burial of brothers Pat (Patrick) and Harry (Henry) Loughnane in late 1920 proved to be one of the most tragic episodes of the War of Independence in County Galway. Their deaths serve as a vivid reminder of the brutality endured by people during the conflict. Over the passage of time, sites connected to the lives and deaths of the brothers have

⁸⁵ Peter Howard, *Heritage: Management, Interpretation, Identity* (London: Continuum, 2003) 33

become significant heritage locations in addition to being areas of historic interest.

Appendix 10.1 provides a list of the eleven points of interest included in this heritage trail, along with the SAT NAV coordinates for each historic site or memorial. Appendices 10.2 and 10.3 show the visuals of the two versions of the heritage trail that will be made available to the public in the coming months. The first of these is a 82-page bilingual guide book, which will be published in printed and e-book formats in December 2022 by Galway County Council, in partnership with the ATU Heritage Research Group. A second version of the trail will take the form of an ArcGIS ESRI StoryMap, which will be available for viewing from December 2022 onwards on the council's website, 'Galway: Decade of Commemoration'.⁸⁶ Once again, this initiative is the result of a partnership between the ATU Heritage Research Group and Galway County Council.

The eleven historic sites and memorials in the guide book and StoryMap versions of the heritage trail are geographically concentrated around six principal locations in south County Galway, namely: Shanaglish (points 1, 8, 9, and 11), Gort (point 2), Labane (point 10), Drumharsna (point 3), Raheen (points 4 and 5), and Kinvara (points 6 and 7). The eleven points are as follows: (1) Site of the former residence of the Loughnanes, Shanaglish; (2) Former Royal Irish Constabulary Barracks, Barrack Street, Gort; (3) Drumharsna Castle, Drumharsna; (4) Celtic cross memorial beside Moy O'Hynes' Wood, Carrowgarraff North, Raheen; (5) Turlough at Owenbristy, Raheen; (6) Site of the former residence of the Hynes family, Dungory West, Kinvara; (7) St Coleman's Church, Ballybranagan, Kinvara; (8) St Anne's Church, Shanaglish; (9) Grave of the Loughnane brothers, New Cemetery, Shanaglish; (10) Quinn-Loughnane Hall, Labane; (11) Loughnane forge and remembrance park, Shanaglish.

Descriptions, photographs and SAT NAV coordinates will be included for each point of interest that people will encounter in the two versions of the heritage trail, along with route maps. Geographically, the trails will start in Shanaglish and end in Kinvara, with stops along the way at Gort, Labane, Drumharsna and Raheen. The driving distance between the eleven points will be approximately fifty kilometres, while the total driving time will amount to over an hour. Allowing for sufficient time to explore each point of interest, with time for breaks factored in as well, it will be

⁸⁶ See www.galwaydecadeofcommemoration.org

recommended that people allocate a full day to exploring the historic sites and memorials along the two versions of the trail.

So why is another heritage trail needed at this moment in time? Suffice it is to note that the case for preserving War of Independence sites has been gaining momentum in the twenty-first century. Back in 2006, Damien Shiels made a persuasive argument as to the potential of what he referred to as 'conflict archaeology', adding that the 'dearth of publication on conflict archaeology in the Republic is mirrored in the lack of protection afforded such sites'.⁸⁷ Of note was his assurance that this inertia was being addressed by archaeologists and historians alike. He demonstrated his point by referring to post-medieval battle sites that were being promoted, with only one from the twentieth century, St Stephen's Green, 1916.⁸⁸ However, he later stressed that Ireland's War of Independence and Civil War

enjoy no archaeological protection, are poorly understood as heritage landscapes, and are often significantly rarer and more vulnerable than much of the medieval and prehistoric archaeology that surrounds us. Because so little is known about what elements of these landscapes survive, they are difficult to manage and increasingly vulnerable to being damaged and destroyed. Somewhat ironically, this threat has increased during the Decade of Centenaries, as well-intentioned efforts to memorialise the events of a century ago lead to the construction of new memorials and improved access to some of our more iconic Revolutionary-era landscapes.⁸⁹

In the absence of general guidelines or direction as to how to preserve such sites, it is little wonder that the public and local heritage groups can unwittingly cause harm in their efforts to conserve conflict sites. As David Lowenthal once pointed out, 'every act of recognition alters survivals from the past'.⁹⁰ One 'solution' he offers is to accept the unintentional damage inflicted during the course of commemoration which may be seen by some as 'necessary evils'.⁹¹ Thereby 'marking the invisible past', in order to highlight the site as significant.⁹² However, there are examples of more recognised conflict sites coming under demolition. For instance, the court battles over areas such as Moore Street which prompted the then Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Josepha Madigan to concede that 'the State had taken the decision to appeal

⁸⁷ Damien Shiels, 'The Potential for Conflict Archaeology in the Republic of Ireland' in *Journal of Conflict Archaeology* Volume 2, Issue 1 2007.

⁸⁸ Shiels, 'The Potential for Conflict Archaeology in the Republic of Ireland'

⁸⁹ <https://landscapesofrevolution.wordpress.com/about/> Accessed 8 October 2020.

⁹⁰ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 263

⁹¹ Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 263

⁹² Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 265, 267

the High Court judgement following concerns that it could have had implications for ‘important national infrastructure projects’.⁹³ There are many who champion the preservation of the houses on Moore Street and consider the entire site paramount in understanding the heritages of the Easter 1916 Rising.

Taken as a whole, the guide book and ArcGIS ESRI StoryMap versions of *The Loughnane Brothers Heritage Trail* are intended to complement earlier work on the heritage of the Irish revolutionary years by County Galway Council and the then GMIT Heritage Research Group – specifically the *Galway County 1916 Rising Heritage Trail: Go Explore the Historic Sites & Memorials: Go Explore the Historic Sites & Memorials*. This guide book, which was published in 2017, included four optional trails that offered locals and visitors the opportunity to discover ‘the tangible legacies of those who fought for Irish independence in 1916’.⁹⁴ There are national tourism benefits from this form of heritage, especially when interpreted for the visitor. Specific conflict tourism trails have been in use in Northern Ireland since post the Good Friday Agreement and many communities and local councils recognise the economic potential of this form of heritage.⁹⁵ Equally, efforts made during the 1960s by volunteers under Seán Fitzpatrick to preserve the Kilmainham Gaol site have since reaped very significant rewards. In figures released in November 2019, Kilmainham Gaol received 440,536 visitors, topping Dublin Castle at 439,980 when including the under-twelves complimentary entrants.⁹⁶ Whilst the renovation of this historic site was initially undertaken by volunteers and supported by several professional craftspeople, it has since become one of the Office of Public Works most prized sites. Such outcomes suggest that the conservation or protection of historic sites associated with the War of Independence in County Galway could also reap potential benefits in the future. It is important, therefore, that such sites are given appropriate recognition and care, so that they can be preserved for future generations.

⁹³ The Journal, 14 February See also Professor Terence Dooley and Dr. Donal Hall’s report, ‘2018 Historical survey of the provenance of 10–25 Moore Street, Dublin, c.1901–1970’
<https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2019/05/dooley-and-hall-report-april-2019.pdf>

⁹⁴ Mark McCarthy, Marie Mannion and Shirley Wrynn, eds *Galway County 1916 Rising Heritage Trail: Go Explore the Historic Sites & Memorials: Go Explore the Historic Sites & Memorials* (Galway, Galway County Council & Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology).

⁹⁵ Sara McDowell, ‘Selling Conflict Heritage through Tourism in Peacetime Northern Ireland: Transforming Conflict or Exacerbating Difference?’ in *International Journal of Heritage Studies Volume 14, 2011 - Issue 5* 405–421

⁹⁶ <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/1ea89c-minister-boxer-moran-welcomes-strong-tourism-figures-at-key-opw-visit/> Accessed 2 January 2021

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study commenced with three specific aims: *to furnish new insights into the War of Independence in County Galway, from 1919–1921; to analyse how, why, and in what ways memories of this conflict have transmitted, from 1919–2021; and lastly, to use practice-based approaches to generate an original set of heritage initiatives for the general public, thus leaving behind a significant legacy for current and future generations.*

By exploring the local histories of the War of Independence some distinctive patterns began to emerge on the nature of how this conflict unfolded in County Galway. Just as in other communities, the rise and success of the political Sinn Féin party bolstered the confidence of its ambitious members and IRA Volunteers alike. However, further into the conflict, once the guerrilla tactics began to produce results for the IRA elsewhere, difficulties emerged in County Galway. The complexities surrounding issues such as leadership, lack of critical munitions, or the early detainment of leading active republicans, all contributed to a curtailing of IRA activities. Yet despite this, incidents such as the killing of Fr Griffin, Eileen Quinn and the Loughnane brothers, brought significant attention to the county and the suffering of the communities involved.

Beyond the remit of local history, this study has also sought to yield fresh perspectives on the memories and heritages of County Galway's War of Independence. The traumatic impact of the War of Independence and its cultural context can be traced in the inscriptions on monuments and plaques, the artefacts that remain, and also in the memorabilia that has been lovingly preserved. These tangible materials are the visible representations (particularly during the period of first-hand living memory) of memory-making and commemoration. The cultural values placed upon those who died during the conflict is substantiated by the naming of roads, GAA clubs and community centres. During the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, hard-line republican voices became more vociferous at annual commemorations in County Galway. However, the violence in the North was eventually paused as a peace accord was negotiated and finally, The Good Friday Agreement was signed in 1998. Although incidents of violence did not cease completely, this commenced the configuration of a new set of heritage values from a governmental perspective, one that now gave consideration to the various heritages of those on both sides of the border's cultural

and political divides. The fluidity of cultural heritage narratives during this period, while sometimes contested, created a curiosity or interest that would encourage and potentially interconnect the heritages of alternative 'other' voices.

As seen in the previous chapter, the impacts of this research has yielded a comprehensive catalogue of heritages associated with the War of Independence in County Galway. By displaying the results in this form, it has the potential to expand and uncover hidden heritages if crowdsourcing is successful. Also, further engagement by the present writer with community heritage groups has the potential to uncover additional information and generate more initiatives such as exhibitions and/or publications. Similarly, the analysis of women's histories, the Loughnane brothers' story or newly uncovered artefacts, such as Fr Griffin's stole and lock of hair, provides further insights into the heritages of the War of Independence in County Galway. In terms of research gaps that still remain, it is worthwhile observing that if additional work was conducted on other conflicts such as the Civil War of 1922–1923, it could enhance an understanding of the histories, memories and heritages of the Irish revolutionary years even further.

Lastly, whilst engaged in the collection of insights into the impacts that the conflict had upon the local experiences and identities, this writer has been struck by the sheer resilience exhibited by the people of County Galway amidst the terror they endured. Their determination to remember those whose lives were taken in such horrific manner is the epitome of a community's sense of place. Altogether, it is hoped that the unearthing of local histories, memories and heritages of the Irish revolutionary years in this study of County Galway will stand as testament to their fortitude. Also, by striving to illuminate enduring connections between the past and present, it is hoped that the fruits of the research conducted will leave behind a worthwhile cultural legacy for current and future generations.

Appendices

Appendix 10.1. Historic sites and memorials included in the two versions of *The Loughnane Brothers Heritage Trail*

Note: H = historic site; M = memorial

1	Site of the former residence of the Loughnanes, Shanaglish	H	SAT NAV: 53.0118023, -8.8393797	👁 PRIVATE PROPERTY
2	Former Royal Irish Constabulary Barracks, Barrack Street, Gort	H	SAT NAV: 53.0674349, -8.8181839	👁 PRIVATE PROPERTY
3	Drumharsna Castle, Drumharsna	H	SAT NAV: 53.1433135, -8.8428961	
4	Celtic cross memorial beside Moy O'Hynes' Wood, Carrowgarraff North, Raheen	M	SAT NAV: 53.1496798, -8.8753378	
5	Turlough at Owenbristy, Raheen	H	SAT NAV: 53.1601440, -8.8424450	👁 PRIVATE PROPERTY
6	Site of the former residence of the Hynes family, Dungory West, Kinvara	H	SAT NAV: 53.1401748, -8.9294322	👁 PRIVATE PROPERTY
7	St Coleman's Church, Ballybranagan, Kinvara	H	SAT NAV: 53.1402942, -8.9554372	
8	St Anne's Church, Shanaglish	H & M	SAT NAV: 53.0121844, -8.8390552	
9	Grave of the Loughnane brothers, New Cemetery, Shanaglish	H & M	SAT NAV: 53.0146961, -8.8440927	
10	Quinn-Loughnane Hall, Labane	M	SAT NAV: 53.1416912, -8.8052382	
11	Loughnane forge and remembrance park, Shanaglish	M	SAT NAV: 53.0104795, -8.8386599	

Appendix 10.2. The front cover of the 82-page bilingual guide book, *The Loughnane Brothers Heritage Trail: Explore Historic Sites & Memorials of Ireland's War of Independence*



Appendix 10.3. A screen grab of the opening section of the ArcGIS ESRI StoryMap version of *The Loughnane Brothers Heritage Trail: Explore Historic Sites & Memorials of Ireland’s War of Independence*, which will be available for viewing on Galway County Council’s ‘Galway: Decade of Commemoration’ website, www.galwaydecadeofcommemoration.org



THE LOUGHNANE BROTHERS HERITAGE TRAIL

Explore historic sites and memorials of Ireland’s War of Independence



Introduction

Welcome to this eleven-point heritage trail, which incorporates historic sites and memorials linked to the capture and killing of brothers Harry (Henry) and Pat (Patrick) Loughnane. The brothers, who lived in Shanaglish village in south County Galway, were prominent members of the local Sinn Féin organisation. They also played with Beagh GAA Club’s hurling team. Pat, aged 29, was the full-back and Harry, aged 21, was the goalkeeper. Pat served with the Irish Republican Army (IRA) during Ireland’s War of Independence. He was a suspect in an engagement with the Royal Irish Constabulary at Blackwater, Gort, on 12 September 1920, in the Castledaly Ambush on 30 October 1920, and in a raid on the residence of a retired policeman on an unknown date.

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