

1916 IN LAOIS

FIRST SHOTS OF RISING FIRED IN LAOIS



Published by
LAOIS 1916 COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE

Edited by
Jim & Brendan Fleming

1916 IN LAOIS

An account of the activities of the

Laois Volunteers

up to and including

The 1916 Rising

Published by

LAOIS 1916 COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE

Edited by

Jim & Brendan Fleming

Published in Ireland by
Laois 1916 Commemoration Committee
c/o Secretary, Jim Fleming, The Swan House, The Swan, Co. Laois.

© Easter 1996

ISBN 0 9527973 0 5

2nd Edition 2016

All Rights Reserved

Compiled and edited by Jim and Brendan Fleming

Cover shows monument design by Robert Ballagh

Printed by Mochua Print and Design www.mochuaprint.ie

CONTENTS

	<i>Page No.</i>
Acknowledgements	4
Foreword by Paddy Lalor	5
1916 in Laois	7
Biographical Notes	28
Contributors	37

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LAOIS 1916 COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE

Paddy Lalor (Chairperson), Jim Fleming (Secretary),
Andy Doogue and Matilda Uí Chuana (Joint Treasurers),
P.J. Kavanagh, Cora Sharkey, John Carroll, Eileen Carroll,
James Cooney M.C.C., Brendan Fleming, J. Mitchel Fleming,
Billy Ramsbottom, John Lalor, Tom Whelan, Andy Fleming,
John Headen, Eileen Foley, Colm Foley, Sheila Allen and Brendan Duff

The account of the activities of the Laois 1916 Volunteers was compiled from the statements of P.J. Ramsbottom, Laurence Brady and Michael Gray to the Bureau of Military History and also from the general statement by members of the Portlaoise Company of the Irish Volunteers.

Special thanks is due to the families of the Volunteers for allowing access to these statements and for providing biographical material and photographs.

The co-operation of the following organisations and individuals is also gratefully acknowledged:-

Bord na Móna (who donated the site)

Laois County Council

Bureau of Military History

Public Record Office

National Library of Ireland

Pearse Museum

Killeshin Hotels Group

The Nationalist and Leinster Times

Leinster Express

The late Prof. T.P. O'Neill,

Seán O'Mahony

Mary Carroll

Jim Ring

Liz Lalor

Bernard & Margaret Dempsey

Maria Fleming

Padraig Fleming

Ned Daly

Maureen Brady

Máire O'Gormon

FOREWORD

by Paddy Lalor

In the run-up to the 1916 Rising there were a number of Volunteers in Laois who had trained and equipped themselves to participate in the planned-for National Uprising. There has been a consciousness among a number of Laois men and women over the years, that not sufficient if any credit had been given to those Laois Volunteers who had in fact played their part in that Insurrection. This led to a number of us getting together, some time ago, in order to commemorate their memory, on the 80th Anniversary of the Rising in as fitting a way as we could. Hence, the unveiling of this monument commemorating the Laois involvement is a significant event.

Irish people today are extremely mindful of our indebtedness to the signatories of the Proclamation and their volunteer colleagues for the part played by them in our capital city during Easter Week, 1916, which led to our status in the world today. Laois was one of the few locations outside Dublin where military activities in connection with the Rising took place.

We in Laois are proud of our tradition in this regard. We are very mindful of the fact that the "Declaration of the Right of the People of Ireland to the Ownership of Ireland" carried in the Proclamation was a direct extract from the doctrine and writings of our own James Fintan Lalor. In fact it was these writings of J.F. Lalor that were the inspiration for the cohesion of thinking between the idealism of Pearse and the socialism of Connolly. All during the 19th Century, from the emergence of Catholic Emancipation and the election of tenant farmer Pat Lalor of Tinnakill to be the Laois M.P. at Westminster - Irish Nationalism developed and spread all over the country. Honest Pat Lalor fought against paying tithes to the Established Church and his son James Fintan championed the cause of Irish tenant farmers and ignited the demand for the "three F's" (Fair rent, fixity of tenure, freedom of sale). His philosophy led in turn to the creation of the Fenian movement which in turn led to the Land League Movement. Towards the end of the century, the electors of Laois chose Pat Lalor's son, and James Fintan's youngest brother Richard, to represent them in Westminster and to join Parnell in representing their interests. In fact, in the Westminster elections of 1885, the Irish people returned 85 Home Rule Candidates for the 103 Irish Constituencies in order to emphasise the Irish demand for Home Rule.

It appears to me, at this remove over a hundred years later, that it was this ignoring of the democratic demands of 82% of the Irish people, coupled with the growing internal revulsion of the oppressor in the aftermath of the awful famine earlier which ultimately led to the 1916 Rising.

In that context it was not surprising therefore, and it ~~was~~ most appropriate, that the first shot of the 1916 Rising should have been discharged with-in gunshot sound distance of Tinnakill.



Patrick Pearse, aged 18 years

1916 IN LAOIS

The Portlaoise Company of the Irish Volunteers was formed on the 17th of October, 1914. Patrick J. Ramsbottom of Portlaoise was elected Company Captain.

Prior to this he had joined the Sinn Féin movement in May 1906. In September of the same year he joined the Gaelic League. He took an active part in the work of Sinn Féin and the Gaelic League and assisted in the organising of Feiseanna and Aeríochta in County Laois, or Queen's County as it was known at that time.

In 1910 he left home for Athlone and shortly afterwards he was sworn into the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.) by Seamus O'Brien of Athlone. There he met Liam Mellows, who had come to organise the first branch of Na Fianna Éireann in Athlone. This coincided with a British Army campaign of recruitment. Two bands - a pipe and a brass band - of the 5th Leinster Regiment were parading in the town. Liam Mellows, P.J. Ramsbottom and a few others, known locally as "Irish Irelanders", attacked the two bands, who fled back to the military barracks. The group held an anti-recruiting meeting outside the barracks, with Liam Mellows and Owen Sweeney presiding. This incident later led to questions in the House of Commons and the group received many messages of congratulations from around the country.

P.J. Ramsbottom left Athlone in 1914 and went to live in Dun Laoghaire. There he joined "B" Company, 1st Battalion, Dublin Brigade, Irish Volunteers. Eamonn Daly, who was Company Captain at that time, was subsequently executed on 4th May, 1916 for his part in the Rising. While in Dublin, P.J. met Tom Clarke on several occasions and procured a Martini-Henry rifle from him.

In October 1914, P.J. returned to Portlaoise. There was no Circle of the I.R.B. in Laois at that time, and according to his statement to the Bureau of Military History, there were only about 12 Irish Volunteers in the whole county. The vast majority of the people were followers of John Redmond. When Tom Clarke heard he was returning to Portlaoise, he asked him to organise the I.R.B. in County Laois. Clarke impressed on P.J. the importance of taking only men who had a proper national outlook.

On the 1st of June, 1914, Laurence Brady of Lalor's Mills joined the Ballyroan Company of the Irish Volunteers. In his statement to the Bureau of

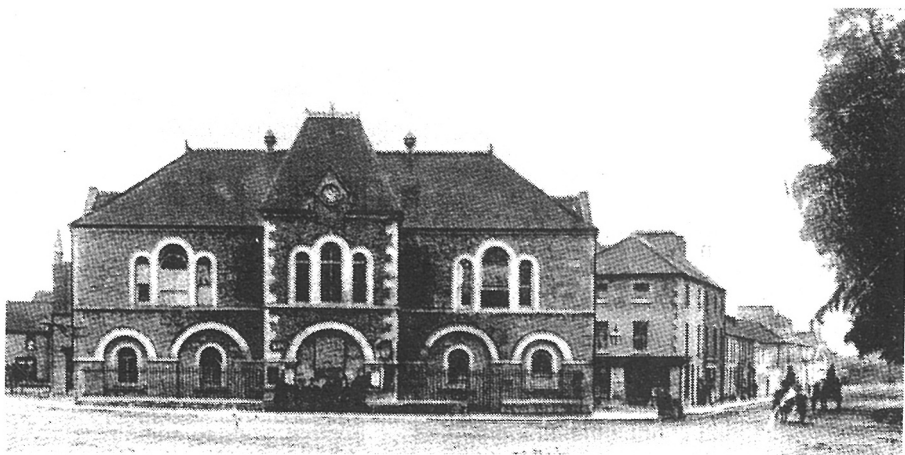
Military History, he states that there were about 50 men in the Company. He also states that the Ballyroan Company was the only one in Laois that did not go to Portlaoise for John Redmond's review of Volunteers in September 1914.

On Sunday, 25th October, 1914, the first Convention of the Irish Volunteers was held in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin. Joseph Fitzpatrick, Main Street, Portlaoise, represented the Portlaoise Company and Laurence Brady represented the Ballyroan Company.

It was extremely difficult to keep the Volunteers organised, mainly due to the "Redmondites" influence in the county. The Secretary of the Ballyroan Company, a "Redmondite" held up all correspondence from Volunteer Headquarters, with the result that within a couple of months after the Volunteer Convention was held in Dublin, the Ballyroan Company ceased all activities despite Lar Brady's best efforts to keep it functioning.

In January 1915, a Circle of the Irish Republican Brotherhood was formed in Portlaoise. The following people were sworn in by P.J. Ramsbottom:-

Laurence Brady, Lalor's Mills, Portlaoise
Thomas Brady, Lalor's Mills, Portlaoise
Patrick, Muldowney, Portlaoise
John Muldowney, Portlaoise
Colum Holohan, Portlaoise
Michael J. Sheridan, Portlaoise
Michael Gray, Portlaoise
Michael Walsh, Portlaoise



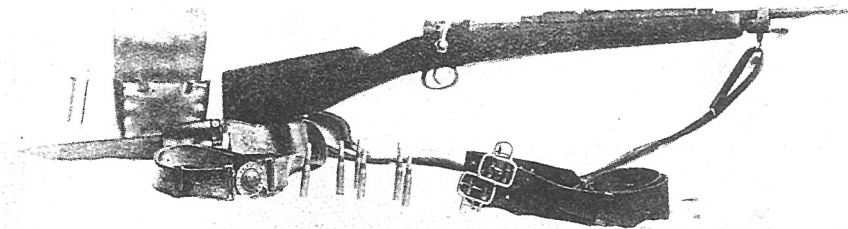
Town Hall, Portlaoise

Michael Gray stated later that for all practical purposes the I.R.B. controlled the Volunteers because practically all the members of the local Volunteer Company were members of the I.R.B. Organisation. This I.R.B. Circle covered the entire county.

The Company held a parade on one night per week with Denis Dunne acting as their instructor. The training included drilling, bayonet exercises and instructions in the use of arms. Arms were scarce at the time. They had in their possession perhaps three rifles. Later they were able to buy shot-guns. Michael Gray carried a .25 automatic pistol. On Sundays they carried out rifle practice at Collier's Sandpit, Ballytegan.

Dynamite, which was extensively used in the coalmines at Wolfhill and Modubeagh was secured by Tom Dunne. This was smuggled to Volunteer Headquarters in Dublin by various methods. Packages of dynamite were conveyed by bicycle from Wolfhill to Portlaoise and from there to Dublin by James Ramsbottom, Fossey, Timahoe. The I.R.B. in Laois were also responsible for the capture of a consignment of gelignite from Kynocks of Arklow. This took place at Kingsbridge in Dublin. The British Army subsequently discovered this in the G.P.O. after the evacuation in 1916.

On another occasion gelignite was conveyed to Dublin on the day of O'Donovan Rossa's funeral. This was handed over to Donal O'Hannigan and Sean Tobin who were attached to the Headquarters of the Irish Volunteers Executive. Tom Brady and the other members of the Company who went to Dublin that day, brought back a Belgian Mauser rifle, which was landed on the day of the Howth gun-running.



*Mauser Rifle of the type brought from Dublin on the day of O'Donovan Rossa's funeral
by Tom Brady
(Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)*



*Sean MacDiarmada who reviewed
the Volunteers at The Swan in 1915*

During the late summer of 1915, they organised an Aeríocht in Portlaoise. The money raised by this event was used to buy arms for the Company - mainly shotguns. This Aeríocht was attended by Captain Tom McCarthy and Donal O'Hannigan.

The area was next visited by Liam Mellows and Sean MacDiarmada, who held a review of Irish Volunteers at The Swan, Wolfhill.

In October 1915, Liam Mellows again attended a meeting of the Circle members at the home of John Dowling, Ridge Road, Portlaoise.

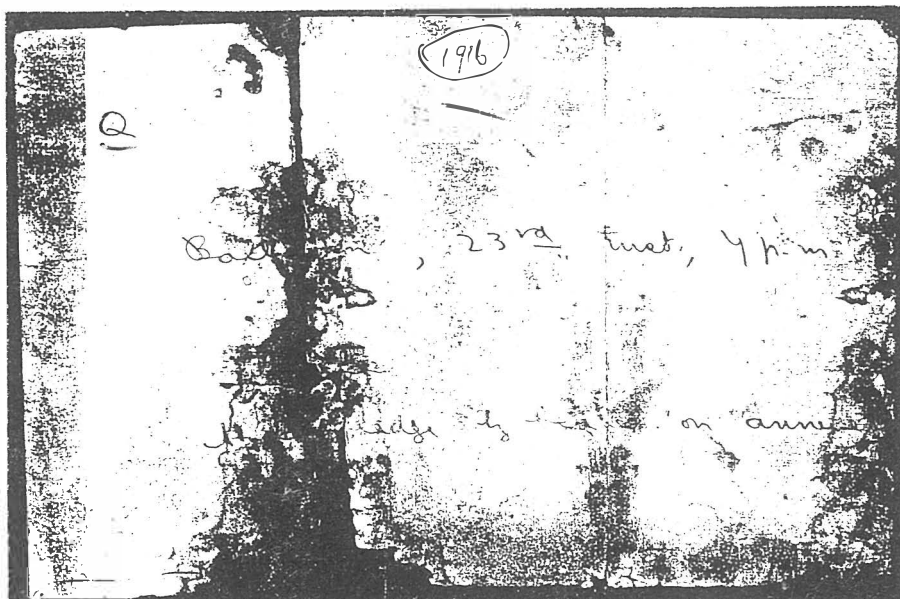
At the meeting, Liam Mellows, gave a lecture on army demolition work. The Company were being kept in trim, and Michael Gray states that "they were given to understand that the Volunteers would take definite action to strike for freedom before the Great War ended". In the autumn of 1915, the Company was asked to attend a lecture on the demolition of railways at Volunteer Headquarters, 2 Dawson Street, Dublin.

In January 1916, the Company was visited by Piaras Beaslai and Lieutenant Eamon O'Kelly. This meeting was held in the Town Hall, Portlaoise. They delivered addresses impressing on the Volunteers, the urgency of organising and of more intensive training in view of the imminence of the Rising. After this meeting Beaslai and O'Kelly dealt with the position of the I.R.B. and the possibility of it being extended, strengthened and better organised throughout the county. A short time later, Gregory Murphy came down from General Headquarters in Dublin, and gave the Company a lecture on small arms and musketry.

The next meeting of the Circle was attended by a representative from Headquarters, Eamon Fleming, whose home address was The Swan. This meeting was held in the open, on the Meelick Road, which links the Portlaoise/Abbeyleigh road with the Portlaoise/Timahoe road. The message Eamon Fleming brought from Dublin was that they should be on the alert as the Rising was planned for around Easter.

On Sunday, 16th April, 1916, Eamon Fleming came down from Headquarters and met the Laois Volunteers in St. Patrick's Hall, Portlaoise - also known as the Old Tin Shed. He told the Company that the Rising would definitely take place and that he would come down again from Dublin with details of the date and hour and what missions the Laois Volunteers were to undertake. He impressed on the Volunteers that notwithstanding any countermanding orders that might come from the Volunteers Executive, these duties were to be carried out. When the meeting ended, Eamon Fleming told P.J. Ramsbottom secretly that the Rising in Laois was planned for 7 p.m. on Easter Sunday night. He instructed P.J. to call a meeting of the Company for St. Patrick's Hall on Holy Thursday night and that he would attend and tell the Company of the decision to rise.

P.J. Ramsbottom states in his statement to the Bureau of Military History that at the time the Company had the following arms in their possession: "One Martini-Henry rifle and 100 rounds of ammunition belonging to Tom Brady. There were five .25 automatic pistols and 25 rounds for each of them. In addition we had a stone of blasting powder with some fuses and detonators".



Pearse's order to start the Rising in Laois received on Good Friday by Paddy Fleming and delivered on the same evening to Eamon Fleming. It reads, Q, 1916 Ballyfin, 23rd inst, 7pm. Acknowledge by bearer on arrival.

Towards the end of Holy Week, Eamon Fleming and P.J. Ramsbottom purchased about twelve single barrel shotguns from James Maloney, who was then manager of J.J. Aird & Sons, Hardware, Portlaoise.

On Holy Thursday night, 20th April, 1916 Eamon Fleming returned to Portlaoise again as promised and met the Company in the Old Tin Shed. At this meeting he had definite plans for the group. Their orders were to start the Rising in Laois at 7 p.m. on Easter Sunday, the 23rd of April. These orders came directly from Commandant General, Patrick Pearse. Eamon Fleming must have been given these orders verbally by Patrick Pearse because on Good Friday the written order from Pearse was received by Paddy Fleming (Eamon's brother) and this was delivered to Eamon on that same evening. The codeword to start the Rising in Laois was "Ballyfin".

The plans for the Company were the demolition of sections of railway lines in the area. The purpose of these activities was to prevent or delay British troop reinforcements from reaching Dublin via Waterford and Rosslare. After carrying out these duties they were to proceed to the Scallop Gap near Borris, County Carlow, where they would link up with other forces and await further orders.

The plans for the demolition of the railway lines were carefully worked out on that Holy Thursday night. The exact spot on the Abbeyleix-Portlaoise line was picked by Lar Brady, as he was very familiar with the line in the Colt Wood area. He picked an area of the line on a slight bend and also because there were no occupied houses nearby. They also decided to cut the Carlow-Kildare railway line near Athy, but the exact location was not decided upon at this meeting.

The next day, Good Friday, was spent collecting the tools and equipment needed to complete the job. Colum Holohan, who was an employee of the Railway Company (Great Southern and Western Railways), gathered most of the tools from the railway workshops and these included cross-cuts, hatchets, wire cutters, crowbars, cold sets, wrenches and spanners. This equipment was brought to the Brady farm at Lalor's Mills. That night Lar and Tom Brady carried some of the equipment through the fields to Colt Wood in preparation for their demolition job on Easter Sunday night. It was the early hours of Saturday morning before they returned home.

On Easter Saturday night, the Company had their final meeting in the Old Tin Shed, which is now the site of the Vocational School. At this meeting, the Company elected Eamon Fleming as their Commanding Officer because the members were influenced by his good standing at General Headquarters

and with Patrick Pearse of St. Enda's. The meeting went on late into the night as final details were worked out.

The following people were designated to carry out the job on the line at Colt Wood:

P.J. Ramsbottom, Laurence Brady, Thomas F. Brady,
John Muldowney, Patrick Muldowney,
Michael Sheridan and Colum Holohan.

P.J. Ramsbottom took charge of this group, while Eamon Fleming, Michael Gray and Michael Walsh were to meet south of Athy and demolish the line in this area, if possible. Michael Gray says in his statement that a stranger from Dublin was also part of this group. Later on Easter Saturday night, Lar and Tom Brady transported the rest of the equipment from their home in Lalor's Mills to Colt Wood where they concealed it. It was early on Easter Sunday morning when they returned home.

After dinner on Easter Sunday, P.J. Ramsbottom and Michael Sheridan made their way to the Brady farm at Lalor's Mills. Patrick and John Muldowney with Colum Holohan made their own way to the site of operation by pony and trap. The other four met them in Colt Wood at precisely 6.50 p.m.

Meanwhile, Eamon Fleming, Michael Gray, Michael Walsh and the stranger from Dublin, met at their appointed time outside Athy at 7 o'clock. This group cut down a telegraph pole and placed it across the railway line. Michael Gray stated later that there was some disappointment about the tools and the number of personnel who turned up to do the job. It is possible that other Volunteers were to turn up here to help in this operation, but failed to do so and because of this it was not the same success as the Colt Wood operation.

Back at Colt Wood the group of seven Volunteers were unaware that a courier had arrived in Portlaoise looking for P.J. Ramsbottom. He called to his father's licenced premises, but nobody knew of P.J.'s whereabouts. Later, when the Volunteers heard of this they assumed that it was Eoin MacNeill's Countermanding Order. The order countermanding the Rising had appeared that day in the Sunday Independent. It is generally believed now that the Laois Volunteers never saw the Sunday Independent that Easter Sunday. Eoin MacNeill possibly realising this was the case, not just in the Laois area but throughout the country, had sent couriers around to the various counties to make doubly sure his Countermanding Order reached all units.

Having collected the equipment from where it was hidden the Volunteers set about their task. Michael Sheridan and Patrick Muldowney were designated to do sentry duty. They both took up positions about 300 yards on either side of the demolition site. The first task was to cut the telegraph poles and then the wires. When three poles were cut down it was easy to snap the wires with a pliers. This immediately cut communication between Abbeyleix and Portlaoise. The unit knew that it would be discovered soon in either Abbeyleix or Portlaoise that something was wrong on the line. They felt they had to get on with the job quickly. It was difficult for them to loosen the nuts holding down the rail tracks due to rust. After briefly discussing the problem, Lar Brady stated afterwards, "I picked up a sledge hammer and with youth and strength on my side, I came down hard on a nut holding the rails together and to my surprise, the bolt cracked clean off". This was the start of the demolition of the rail line. They then lifted the rail tracks and sleepers, carried them over a boundary fence and dumped them in a gripe. The unit was quite pleased and happy with themselves, having completed the orders sent from Dublin by Patrick Pearse.

At the time, it was general practice in Ireland for people to use railway lines for walking from place to place. While the operation at Colt Wood was in progress, three young girls - two Miss Sheerans from Clonbar and a Miss Whelan from "The Wood", Clonad - came along the line. They were taken to their homes and were advised to stay indoors for the rest of the night.

At about 9 p.m. rain started to fall and the party moved into Colt Wood for shelter. A little over an hour later they observed a man moving towards them along the railway line, and carrying a lamp. It was assumed, and later confirmed, that he was a railway employee making an inspection of the line in consequence of the failure of the block signal system between Portlaoise and Abbeyleix. This was due to the cutting of the telegraph wires by the group. This person came from the Portlaoise direction and when he was opposite to where the party were located, they ordered him to halt. This, he failed to do. P.J. Ramsbottom then fired at him. He extinguished the lamp and escaped in the darkness towards Abbeyleix. It was subsequently confirmed by the railway employee, William Dalton, that three shots were fired in his direction. IT IS NOW AGREED BY HISTORIANS THAT THESE WERE THE FIRST SHOTS OF THE 1916 RISING.

The group remained in Colt Wood for some hours afterwards even though they were drenched to the skin. Early on Monday morning they made their way back to the Brady farm at Lalor's Mills.

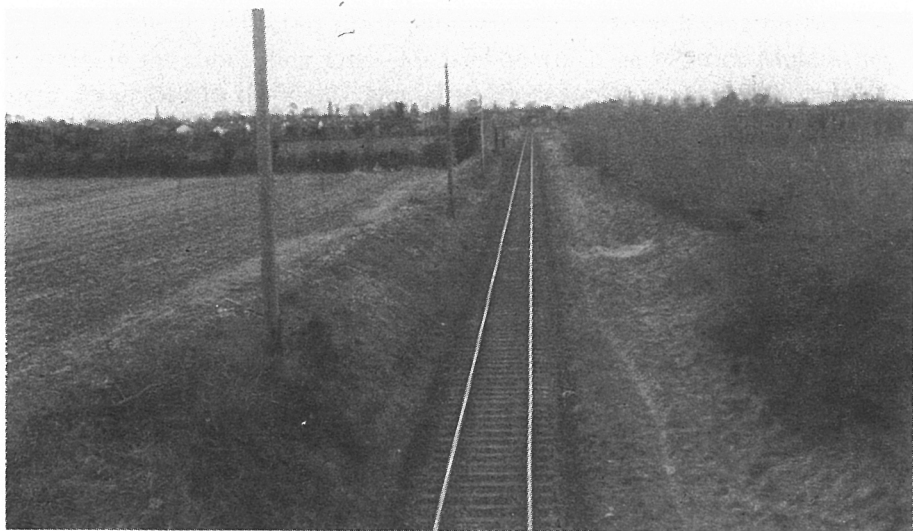


*Derailed Train at Colt Wood.
(Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)*

Michael Gray, who was one of the group that went to Athy, stated afterwards that his group slept at a school house that night but he did not say where. On Easter Monday morning this group also made their way to the Brady farm at Lalor's Mills and joined Paddy Ramsbottom's group there. With Eamon Fleming, Michael Gray and Michael Walsh was a young man called Seán Maguire who for some time previously had been "on the run". This young man had been working at Modubeagh Collieries, Wolfhill.

Before Eamon Fleming returned with his unit, May Brady, a sister of Tom and Lar Brady, was sent to Portlaoise to find out what was happening in Dublin and the rest of the country. May brought back the day's newspapers which reported on the twin disasters off the south coast. These were of course, the scuttling of the German arms ship *The Aud*, by its crew after it was arrested by the Royal Navy and the capture of Roger Casement following his landing on Banna Strand. This news depressed the Volunteers to some degree.

However, their spirits were lifted when Lar Brady's other sister, Kathleen, brought back news on Easter Monday evening that the Rising had taken place in Dublin. It was unclear what had happened throughout the rest of the country but the Company had an idea that there was not a widespread Rebellion. This worried them a little, as it might appear that their actions at Colt Wood and Athy would be viewed as criminal acts. But they were in an excellent mood as they knew that the rebels had taken several prominent positions in Dublin and had hoisted the flag of the Republic on top of the G.P.O.



Section of railway line at Ardreich, Athy where attempted demolition took place on Easter Sunday night, 1916.

The two Brady brothers decided to continue their daily lives as usual so as not to draw attention to themselves. The rest of the group were hidden in a store-house some distance away. The Brady sisters had a lot of extra cooking to do to look after these men. Food had to be brought across fields, sometimes under cover of darkness, to the house where the men were concealed.

On Easter Monday, word circulated in the area about the events at Colt Wood.* A scout train had been sent out from Portlaoise to inspect the line as the Railway Company knew there were problems in the Colt Wood area. On board the train were three company employees and five officers of the R.I.C. When they approached the section where the rails were taken up, the engine driver, Mr. J. Healy, was unable to stop it in time, and consequently the train toppled over on its side. The occupants were thrown clear and were reportedly uninjured.

On Easter Tuesday morning, a Constable Hogan called to the Brady farm, where the Bradys were organising farmyard manure for potato sowing. They had a brief conversation about events in Dublin but Lar would have been aware of the real reason for the constable calling. It would have been known by now that some young men from Portlaoise were missing from their places of employment in the town.

Later on Tuesday evening, Paddy Fleming, The Swan, and Terence Byrne of Knocklaide, along with two others, joined the group at Lalor's Mills. They held a meeting on Tuesday night and they decided to try and make contact with the Carlow-Kilkenny Volunteers. Eamon Fleming and Michael Walsh set out for Borris, Co. Carlow, on bicycles. The man they were seeking was a Dr. Dundon, the officer in charge of the Carlow Volunteers. When they called to his house he was not there and their best efforts failed to locate him.

James Ramsbottom, Fossey, Timahoe, was sent to Kilkenny. His contact there was a Mr. Patrick Corcoran, an old I.R.B. man. Having arrived in Kilkenny, James discovered that Mr. Corcoran had been arrested earlier that morning and had died suddenly as a result of a heart attack. No information was obtained in Kilkenny.

Meanwhile, R.I.C. activity was increasing in the Lalor's Mills area. Constable Sexton cycled past Brady's house but did not call. Then on Thursday a Constable McCarthy called to the Brady farm. He met Tom Brady on this occasion and had a brief conversation with him. The constable enquired as to Lar's whereabouts, but Tom told him that he was gone to Mulhall's of Pass of the Plumes. In fact, he was in the back yard handling some of the equipment belonging to the Volunteers.

People in the Portlaoise area who were disposed towards the Rising, tried to obtain information about what was happening in Dublin and throughout the country, but were unable to do so. Lar Brady stated later that a number of people helped them with their enquiries at the time, including Mr. P.J. O'Neill, Market Square, Portlaoise, and later Secretary of Laois County Council, Mr. Frank Fahy, Portlaoise, press reporter for the Leinster Leader, Naas, who subsequently took up reporting for the Carlow Nationalist because Michael Sheridan was on the run, and Mr. L. Dunne, Crissard, Wolfhill.

Before leaving Dublin, on Holy Thursday, Patrick Pearse had told Eamon Fleming to be wary and sceptical of all reports in the papers, about what was happening in the country after the Rising had commenced. Pearse knew that the press would be hostile to the Rising.

Lar Brady told Dick Barrett in his 1966 interview that relatives and friends started to turn up at their house, knowing that something was afoot. This became awkward for Lar and his family and they had to display a huge amount of diplomacy and patience so as not to give any indication that they were involved in anything serious. Towards the end of the week the Volunteers slept at Brady's house and returned to their dug-out after breakfast each morning. The unit were happy with this because they were feeling the cold at night in the dug-out. All the time, they remained on high alert.

On 1st May, 1916, Eamon Fleming decided to go to Dublin to try and find out more definite information about what was happening there and around the country. He spoke to a Mr. McEvoy, an old I.R.B. man. This man was known to Eamon Fleming but he was unable to give him any definite information about events. However, he did tell Eamon that all the leaders had been arrested and that the Rising was almost over.

When Eamon returned from Dublin the unit continued to stay in hiding in their dug-out. They made a conscious decision to keep out of sight and not to get involved with anybody, and above all, not to engage in any hostilities with the R.I.C. Not having received any orders to surrender they continued under arms for about two weeks.

Again, Eamon Fleming went to Dublin, this time accompanied by P.J. Ramsbottom. Their mission was to determine the exact situation. First they met Peadar Kearney who told them that the Rising was finished. Later they met Fr. Augustine, O.F.M. Cap., who told them that the Rebellion was definitely crushed. Further confirmation of this was given to them by Fr. Costello, curate in S.S. Michael and John's Church, Lower Exchange Street. Fr. Costello insisted that the two of them stay with him in the presbytery that night as there was a considerable military presence in the area. They left the next morning and headed back for Laois to report the position to the Company.

While they were debating their situation and considering the best steps to take to safeguard themselves, Rev. J.J. Kearney, C.C., Portlaoise arrived at Brady's farm. "Where are those fellows you have around here?" he asked Lar Brady. It was obvious to Lar that the clergyman knew of the presence of the others in the area. Fr. Kearney's intention was to get the men to surrender to the County Inspector of the R.I.C. in Portlaoise. If they surrendered, he would use his influence to see that they were treated leniently.

The men agreed to see Fr. Kearney. He tried to persuade them to give up their arms and surrender but they refused to accept his conditions. Later that night Fr. Kearney returned again with the same intention. A heated argument took place between the priest on the one hand and Eamon Fleming and Tom Brady on the other. The conditions laid down by the priest were again rejected by the group. The priest departed and did not return again.

It was now make your mind up time for the group. If they surrendered they knew they would be treated like ordinary criminals, which they were not. There was no option but to disband and go on the run.

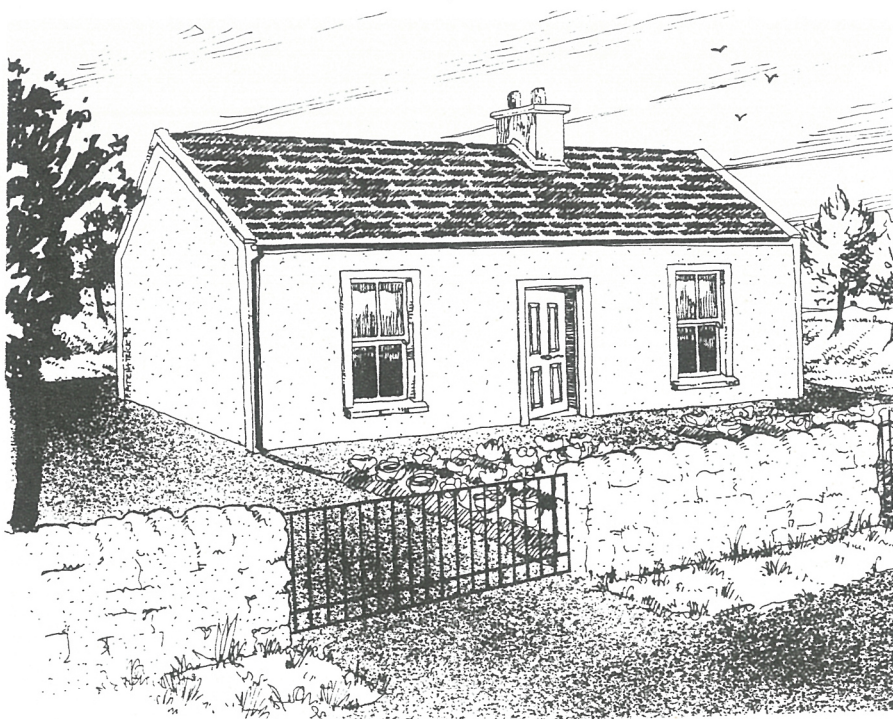


The Brady household at Lalor's Mills in 1916. Breda on left with Noreen.

It was a sad parting for this brave group of men. They were aware of defeat for the time being, despite the high hopes they started out with. However, all of them lived to see and experience a brighter day. Before they dispersed Eamon ensured that the weapons were stored at a secure location before he returned to Dublin. Perhaps he had a feeling they would be needed again. Paddy returned to his parents at the Swan and remained there some days after the Rising.

Eventually the RIC arrived at the Swan to interrogate him. As they led him out of the house, a group of footballers who were in the local pub emerged onto the road when they saw what was happening. The atmosphere became tense and the police decided to withdraw. Retreating from the Swan they declared that they would return and arrest him.

Michael Gray gave the best description of his experiences on the run to the Bureau of Military History. In it he states, that he and two companions, Michael Walsh and Seán Maguire, took refuge in a wood at The Heath, Portlaoise. The wood was on a small hill and they lived there for a number of days. Some of the local people supplied them with food. They awoke one morning to crashing sounds in the wood. They knew their position was known to the authorities, whether by accident or design they were not sure. One of them climbed a tree and saw a large number of soldiers on horseback coming through the scrub from every direction. The three made their escape to higher ground. The camp was found by the army, but none of the Volunteers were captured. That night they escaped from the area. Michael Walsh, decided to go to Cork, probably Youghal, as he had relations there. Michael Gray and Sean Maguire went to Dublin where they were looked after by some old members of the Fenian Organisation.



Pat Fitzpatrick's artistic impression of Wolfhill R.I.C. Barracks in 1916 from the memory of Bernard & Margaret Dempsey, Crissard, Wolfhill.

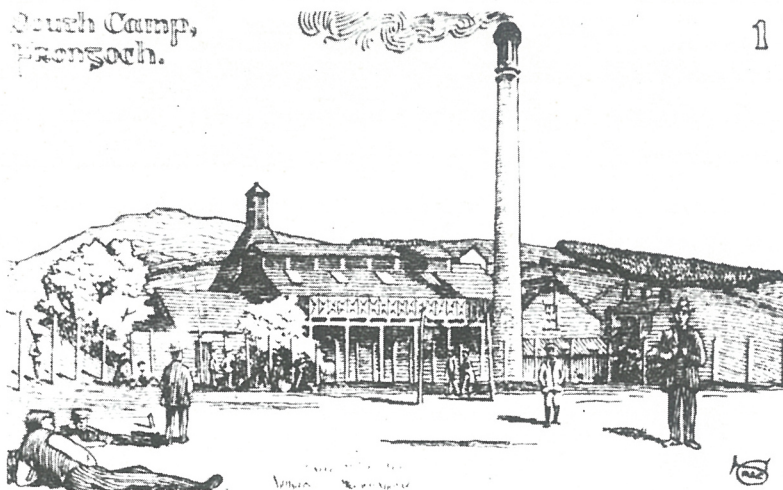
The barracks was burned down in July, 1920 by the I.R.A.

The final incident that took place that Easter week in Laois was the raid on the R.I.C. Barracks at Wolfhill. John Frawley was the young man who carried out this action. While he was not part of the Portlaoise unit, he was obviously moved to action by events in Dublin. The exact date of this action is not known at the moment. It is generally believed that it was during the first few days of Easter week.

John burst his way into the barracks which was less than one hundred yards from his home. He captured a small quantity of arms with the intention of joining with the rebels in Dublin. However, he was arrested at Athy railway station and charged a short time later at Naas Court. He was sent to Kilkenny jail, and from there he was sent to Perth on detention and later to Frongoch Internment Camp in Wales.

South Camp,
Frongoch.

1



Two views of Frongoch, where John Frawley was interned after the Rising.

North Camp,
Frongoch.

2



Easter Week Rising, 1916.

List and Signatures

of Irish Volunteers who participated in operations
in Laoighis viz:- Demolition of Railway Lines - (Attylins Portlough
section) - (Carlow-Kildare section) and Raids on Wolfhill P.I.C. Barracks

- Canon - Henry - J -

Hutchinson, J. Vanebottom. - Vice C.

James - Henry - J. -

James - J. -

Michael - J. -

James - J. -

John - J. -

John - J. -

James - J. -

James - J. -

James - J. -

James - J. -

James - J. -

James - J. -

John - J. -

In January 1936, the participants met together for the first time since 1916.

They all agreed to sign this scroll.

Michael Walsh, Sean Maguire & Kathleen Brady were out of the country.

May Conroy (nee Brady) had died before 1936.

FIRST SHOT IN 1916 RISING

On Easter Sunday night, 23rd April, 1916, acting under the direct orders of Patrick Pearse, the Laois Volunteers participated in the demolition of a section of the Abbeyleix-Portlaoise railway line at a location near here.

The purpose of this exercise was to prevent British military reinforcements from reaching Dublin via Waterford after the Rising had started. This demolition was followed by the firing of the first shot of the 1916 Rising.

Other activities engaged in by the Laois Volunteers, included an attempted similar demolition of the Carlow-Kildare railway line and a raid on the Wolfhill R.I.C. Barracks.

This Memorial has been erected in honour of the Laois Volunteers listed below, as a tribute to their foresight, bravery, and enterprise.

Eamon Fleming O/C - The Swan

Patrick J. Ramsbottom Vice O/C - Portlaoise

Lorcan O'Brádaig Q.M. - Lalors Mills

Thomas F. Brady - Lalors Mills

Patrick Muldowney - Portlaoise

Colum Holohan - Portlaoise

Terence Byrne - Knocklaide

Patrick J. Fleming - The Swan

Michael J. Sheridan - Portlaoise

Breda Conroy (nee Brady) - Lalors Mills

Kathleen Brady - Lalors Mills

Mrs May Conroy (nee Brady) - Lalors Mills

Michael Gray - Portlaoise

John Muldowney - Portlaoise

Michael Walsh - Portlaoise

James Ramsbottom - Fossey

Noreen Brady - Lalors Mills

John Frawley - Wolfhill

Seán Maguire - Dublin

Do cum Glóire Dé agus Onóra na hÉireann

Text of Inscription on Monument at Clonad, Portlaoise.

POBLACHT NA H EIREANN

THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

OF THE

IRISH REPUBLIC

TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty; six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights, and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government,

THOMAS J. CLARKE,	
SEAN Mac DIARMADA,	THOMAS MacDONAGH,
P. H. PEARSE,	EAMONN CEANNT,
JAMES CONNOLLY,	JOSEPH PLUNKETT.

POBLAUGHT NA H ÉIREANN

RIALTAS SEALADACH

PHOBLAUGHT NA H ÉIREANN DO MHUINTIR NA H ÉIREANN

A FHEARA AGUS A MHNÁ NA H ÉIREANN: In ainm Dé agus in ainm na nglún a chuaigh romhainn agus óna bhfuair sí seanoideas na náisiúntachta, tá Éire, trínne, ag gairm a clainne faoina bratach agus ag bualadh buille ar son a saoirse.

Tar éis di a fir a eagrú agus a oiliúint ina heagraíocht rúnda réabhlóideach, Bráithreachas Phoblacht na hÉireann, agus ina heagraíochtaí míleata poiblí, Óglaigh na hÉireann agus Arm Cathartha na hÉireann, agus tar éis di a riallhbéas a thabhairt go foighneach chun foirfeachta agus feithcamh go buanseasmhach leis an bhfaill chun gnímh, tá sí ag glacadh na faille sin anois, agus, le cabhair óna clainn ar deoraíocht i Meiriceá agus ó chomh-ghuaillithe calma san Eoraip, ach, thar gach ní, le muinín as a neart dílis féin, tá sí ag bualadh buille i ndóchas iomlán go mbéarfaidh sí bua.

Dearbhaímid gur ceart ceannasach dochloíte ceart mhuintir na hÉireann chun seilbh na hÉireann, agus chun dála na hÉireann a stiúradh gan chosc gan cheataí. Níor cuireadh an ceart sin ar ceal leis an bhforghabháil a rinne pobal eachtrannach agus a rialtas air le cian d'aimsir ná ní féidir go brách a chur ar ceal ach trí dhíothú mhuintir na hÉireann. Níl aon ghlún dá dtáinig nár dhearbhaigh pobal na hÉireann a gceart chun saoirse agus ceannas a náisiúin; sé huair le trí chéad bliain anuas dhearbhaíodar faoi airm é. Ag seasamh dúinn ar an gceart bunaidh sin agus á dhearbhu arís faoi airm os comhair an tsoil, fógraímid leis seo Poblacht na hÉireann ina Stát Ceannasach Neamhspleách agus cuirimid ár n-anam féin agus anam ár gcomrádaithe comhraic i ngeall lena saoirse agus lena leas, agus lena móradh i measc na náisiúin.

Dlíonn Poblacht na hÉireann, agus éilíonn sí leis seo, géillsine ó mhuintir uile na hÉireann, idir fhir agus mhná. Rátháíonn an Phoblacht saoirse creidimh agus saoirse sibhialta, comhchearta agus comhdheiseanna, dá saoránaigh uile, agus dearbhaíonn sí gurb é a rún sean agus sonas a lorg don náisiún uile agus do gach roinn di, le comhchúram do chlainn uile an náisiúin, agus le neamhairt ar an easaontas a cothaíodh d'aontoise eatarthu ag rialtas eachtrannach agus lér deighleadh mionlucht ón tromlach san am atá imithe.

Go dtí go dtabharfaidh feidhm ár n-arm an t-ionú dúinn Buan-Rialtas Náisiúnta a bhunú ó theachtaí do phobal uile na hÉireann arna dtoghadh le vótaí a cuid fear agus ban, déanfaidh an Rialtas Sealadach, a bhunaítear leis seo, cúrsaí sibhialta agus míleata na Poblachta a riaradh thar ceann an phobail.

Cuirimid cúis Phoblacht na hÉireann faoi choimirce Dhia Mór na nUile-chumhacht agus impímid A bheannacht ar ár n-airm: iarraimid gan aon duine a bheas ag fónamh sa chúis sin do tharraingt easonóra uirthi le mílaochas, le mídhaonnacht ná le slad. San uain oirbheartach seo is é dualgas náisiún na hÉireann a chruthú, lena misneach agus lena dea-iompar agus le toil a clainne á dtoirbhirt féin ar son na maithéasa poiblí, go dtuilleann sí an réim ró-uasal is dán di.

Arna shíniú thar ceann an Rialtais Shealadaigh,

TOMÁS Ó CLÉIRIGH,

SEÁN MAC DIARMADA, TOMÁS MAC DONNCHADHA,
PÁDRAIC MAC PIARAIS, EAMONN CEANNT,
SÉAMUS Ó CONGHAILE, IÓSEPH Ó PLUINGCÉAD,

April 29th 1916

RAILS TORN UP.

ENGINE AND CARRIAGE DERAILED.
SERIOUS AFFAIR NEAR MARYBORO'.

A great sensation has been caused in Maryborough and district, and, indeed, all over the country by the news that on Easter Sunday night, at a spot known as Colt Wood, about three miles from Maryborough, on the Maryborough to Waterford line, the rails were torn up and the telegraphic communication cut. The stationmaster at Maryborough (Mr. Dunne) was the first to surmise that something was wrong, and not satisfied with the pilot's information that all was well, he despatched a porter along the line with a lamp. When the porter came near the spot where the outrage took place, his lamp was, it is stated, fired on three times, and immediately extinguished the light and returned. The stationmaster, in the meantime, detained the special excursion train which was returning from Thurles, and sent an engine and carriage along the line to discover whether it was passable. The driver, however, overstepped the mark, and engine and carriage toppled over into the ditch, all the parties, police and railwaymen, luckily escaping injury. It was then found that about eight or ten yards of rails had been taken up. The damage was quickly repaired the following day, by laying a new road, and the trains are now running as usual. It is unknown up to the present who the perpetrators of the thing must have been, but the police are actively engaged hunting up clues, and scouring the country in motor cars.

On Easter Sunday night a farmer named Nolan, who lives at Ardreich, Athy, when walking along the railway line there discovered that a telegraph pole had been cut down and placed across the rails. He removed the obstruction and proceeded to a signal house where he reported the matter. The outrage must have been perpetrated between 8 and 9.30, as about the former hour the line was clear a train having passed. At the time of the discovery a train was almost due, and though the obstruction would have scarcely caused a wreck there can be little doubt but that the act was a malicious one. The police visited the scene and are pursuing inquiries, but no arrests have as yet been made.

A youth in the Wolfhill district has been arrested and conveyed to Kilkenny Jail arising out of a reported attempt to take a rifle from the local police barracks. The boy is the son of an ex-member of the R.I.C. No importance is attached to the affair.



*Ballyroan Football Team, Laois Champions 1914 - 1915.
Tom & Lar Brady are fourth and sixth from left, respectively, in the back row.*



50th Anniversary gathering in Portlaoise in 1966

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

EAMON C. FLEMING - O/C



Eamon C. Fleming

Born on 25th December 1891. Was a pupil of Thomas MacDonagh. He was the link between Patrick Pearse and the Volunteers in Laois prior to the Rising.

After the Rising he went on the run to Dublin. Arrested on various occasions, he did prison terms in Crumlin Road Jail and in Reading Jail. He was a driver for Michael Collins at various stages. He was also a staff captain in the I.R.A. He acted as an intermediary in the Four Courts during the Civil War.

He worked in the Department of Finance in the 1920's and 30's. He was very active in G.A.A. and athletic circles in Dublin. Eamon was also a member of the Irish Olympic Council and was an official at the 1928 Olympics. He was married and had three children. He died on Good Friday, 1938.

P.J. RAMSBOTTOM - VICE O/C

P.J. was born in Portlaoise on 21st May, 1891. He was the main organiser of the Volunteers in Portlaoise prior to the Rising. He was in command at Colt Wood on Easter Sunday night.

After going on the run in 1916, he returned to Portlaoise in early 1917. He re-organised the Portlaoise Company at this time, and also throughout the county. He was elected Battalion Commandant for the county. Acting as bodyguard to Kevin O'Higgins while in Laois, they collected over £13,000 for the 1st Dáil Éireann loan. This was the largest amount collected in any county in Leinster outside Dublin. P.J. brought this money to Dublin on a bicycle and handed it over to Michael Collins.

He was arrested in 1920 and sent to Harepark Internment Camp, later to Arbour Hill Detention Barracks and finally to Ballykinlar Internment Camp, Co. Down. He was released in 1921. After the troubles he joined the Gardaí and was stationed in Wexford, Carlow and the Phoenix Park. He retired in 1953 and worked in the Department of Education for some years. He was married and had no children. He died in April, 1965.



P.J. Ramsbottom



Lar Brady

LAR BRADY - Q.M.

Lar was born on January 20th, 1892. After the 1916 Rising he continued his republican activities throughout the country. He was one of the main organisers of the I.R.A. in Laois during the War of Independence. In 1919 he was imprisoned in Mountjoy for a period.

He was elected to the Dáil in 1923 as a Sinn Féin candidate, but did not take his seat. He was also a member of Laois County Council. After this he joined Fianna Fáil and remained a lifelong member.

He became President of Laois G.A.A. and served as Chairman for forty years. His interest in the Irish language was well known.

Lar was a farmer all of his life at Lalor's Mills and was noted for his tidiness and efficiency. He was unmarried and died on 14th April, 1973.

TOM BRADY

Tom was born on December 18th, 1890. At an early age he was imbued with patriotism, his grandfather having been part of the Young Ireland Movement of 1848. Those who knew him have stated he was a natural leader and was deeply respected as a soldier by his comrades.

He became vice o/c in the Laois Brigade of the I.R.A. in 1918 and later o/c. Some time after this he was interned at the Curragh.

Later in life, he became deeply involved in the G.A.A. He played football for Ballyroan and Laois and hurling for Clonad. Tom was also involved in the Local Defence Forces. He remained a farmer all of his life. He was married and had no children. He died on 5th January, 1949.



Tom Brady



Patrick Muldowney

PATRICK MULDOWNEY

Patrick was born on 13th July 1896 in Portlaoise. Educated at the C.B.S. Portlaoise. He was working as a Post Office clerk when he joined the I.R.B. with his brothers John and Tim.

Some time after the action at Colt Wood in 1916, he was arrested on Trumera Bog near Mountrath by a Constable McCarthy. Like the other Volunteers he played his part in the War of Independence. He was arrested again and sentenced to one year in Ballykinlar Internment Camp.

After the troubles he married Kitty O'Keeffe and had no family. He died on 30th March 1964.

JOHN MULDOWNEY

John was born on 25th April 1894, and was educated at the C.B.S. Portlaoise. He was working in Stenson's Pub, Portlaoise when he joined the I.R.B. with his brothers Pat and Tim.

After the Rising in 1916, he went on the run to Dublin under the alias, Downey. He worked in Kennedy's Public House at Westland Row while in Dublin. He joined the I.R.A. when it was formed and became a member of an Active Service Unit at Headquarters.

During the War of Independence, he was engaged in action at the Custom House where he was arrested and jailed at Kilmainham. He was released on the signing of the Treaty.

He joined the Free State Army and was stationed at Portobello Barracks. He joined the Garda Síochána c.1926 and served in Goresbridge and Kevin Street, Dublin. He retired in 1954. John was married to Bridget Prior and they had three daughters and one son. He died on 27th December, 1979.



John Muldowney



Colum Holohan

COLUM HOLOHAN

Colum was born in Portlaoise on 23rd October 1888. He was one of the first Volunteers to join the Portlaoise Company on 17th October 1914. Colum was an employee of the Great Southern & Western Railway at that time. It was he who supplied the vital tools for that Easter Sunday night from the railway workshops in Portlaoise which led to the total success of the job.

Later in life he worked as a gardener and maintenance man for Fr. Hoyne, Tullaroan, Co. Kilkenny. On his retirement he went to live at Coadys, Tubberboe, Durrow. Colum was unmarried, but was known locally to be an avid reader and collector of books. He also had a wonderful sense of humour.

He died on 18th March, 1970 in St. Vincents Hospital, Mountmellick and he is buried at the New Cemetery, Portlaoise.

JOHN FRAWLEY

John Frawley was born in Kilkenny in April 1893. His father took early retirement from the R.I.C. and moved to Wolfhill, Co. Laois. John raided Wolfhill R.I.C. barracks during Easter week 1916, capturing arms and ammunition. He spent time in Kilkenny Jail and was interned in Perth and Frongoch.

On release he went to the United States, where he joined a Socialist Organisation. He came to the attention of the American Government who wanted to return him to Ireland. The Cosgrave Government of the twenties refused to allow him to return here. However, he did return in 1932.

He started a business with his sister in Dublin on his return from the United States. His great interest was Conradh na Gaeilge of which he was treasurer. He was unmarried and died at the end of December, 1963.



John Frawley



Terence Byrne

TERENCE BYRNE

Terence (Terry) Byrne was born on 4th August 1893 at Knocklaide, Timahoe. From being involved with the Laois Volunteers in 1916, he later became o/c of the 4th Battalion of Laois I.R.A. He suffered terms of imprisonment in Portlaoise, Montjoy and also in Dartmoor during the War of Independence where he was sentenced to five years penal servitude. After two years he was released.

Later he was steward at Powers Estate, Belleview, Waterford. When this estate was divided he was given 30 acres by the Land Commission. He subsequently acquired more land. He was a lifelong member of Fianna Fáil and held several positions in the Slieverue Cumann. Terry was very popular in his area. He was married and had five children, four girls and one boy.

He died on 11th August 1971 and is buried at Slieverue Cemetery.

MICHAEL WALSH

Michael was born in early 1895 and lived at 11 New Cottages, Mountjoy Prison. His father was chief warder at the prison until 1902 when he was transferred to Portlaoise.

Mick, as he was known to his friends, became involved with the Volunteers in Portlaoise prior to the 1916 Rising. After the Rising he went on the run to Cork. The date that he returned to Portlaoise is not known but he became o/c of the 1st Battalion in Laois in April 1918. He left the county again in August 1918.

Later he was involved with Michael Collins, Richard Mulcahy and Eoin O'Duffy.

At the end of the Civil War he sailed for Canada where he went prospecting. He also worked in the U.S. He wrote home but never returned to Ireland. His last letter was dated June 1954, after which no further contact was made with his family in Ireland. He was unmarried.



Michael Walsh



Michael J. Sheridan

MICHAEL J. SHERIDAN

Michael Sheridan was born in Castlebar, Co. Mayo in 1876. He was working as a journalist in Portlaoise for The Nationalist & Leinster Times at the time of the 1916 Rising. He was one of the first Volunteers to enlist in the Portlaoise Company.

After going on the run he continued gathering intelligence for the Volunteers and the I.R.B. He stayed at the Brady farm for several months while on the run. After the Local Government Elections of 1920, he carried dispatches from local public bodies to the Dáil Local Government Department. He made arrangements for withholding public bodies funds from the British Local Government Board. Michael was active in the anti-conscription movement and assisted in the establishment of the Republican Courts.

Earlier he had been interned at The Curragh and at Ballykinlar Camp, Co. Down.

As a journalist he also worked for The Examiner, The Leinster Leader and The Leinster Express. He married in 1917 and had two children, a boy and a girl. He died in 1953.

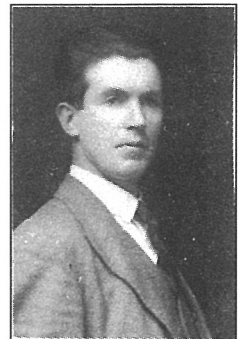
PATRICK J. FLEMING

Born 21st March 1894. He was arrested in Cork in early 1917. O/c of the 3rd Eastern Division of the I.R.A. Earlier o/c of the North Kilkenny Brigade. Sentenced twice to Kilkenny Jail from which he escaped twice. He escaped from Mountjoy Jail with 20 others. He also did a term in Kilmainham Jail. Went on four separate hunger strikes in Portlaoise Jail.

Paddy went to the United States in 1919 with Eamon de Valera, Liam Mellows and Harry Boland to collect money.

After the troubles he was a wine importer in the 1920's. He was also Foreign Director of the Irish Sweeps. Founded Flemings Fireclays in 1935. He was also a member of the first Prices Commission.

He married in 1925 and had five children. He died on 5th December 1952.



Patrick J. Fleming



Michael Gray

MICHAEL GRAY

Michael Gray was born in Main Street, Portlaoise on 18th October 1898. His father had a shop in the town and a farm outside at Derrygarron.

Michael joined the Volunteers and later the I.R.B. on the day of O'Donovan Rossa's funeral in August 1915. After the Rising he went on the run until the release of the Frongoch prisoners.

In 1919 he was involved in the Sinn Féin election campaign, and was a judge of the Sinn Féin Courts during the War of Independence. He was Brigadier for Co. Laois. He was imprisoned twice by the British and took part in the General Hunger Strike of 1919.

He took the Treaty side in 1921 and was liaison officer for the county during the truce and evacuation of British Forces. He was also at this time a member of the Supreme Council of the I.R.B.

In August 1921, he married Mary Power of Borris Road, Portlaoise and had a family of nine girls and three boys.

He entered the Irish Army on its formation and remained in it until his retirement in 1953 with the rank of Commandant. He served in Athlone, Cork, The Curragh, Bray and McKee Barracks, Dublin.

He died on 8th November, 1985.

SEÁN MAGUIRE

The information available to us on Seán Maguire is limited because we have been unable to trace his relatives.

It is known that he was from Dublin and while in Laois he worked in the coalmines at Wolfhill and Modubeagh. He would have been responsible for the passing of gelignite and dynamite from the mines to the Volunteers in Laois and from there to Headquarters in Dublin.

He was known as the "boy scout" among his friends which probably meant he was a member of Na Fianna Éireann a boy scout organisation founded by Countess Markievicz.

Whatever his activities were in Dublin, while he was in Wolfhill he was "on the run". He was probably one of the group that went to Athy with Eamón Fleming on Easter Sunday night. He ended up at the Brady farm on Easter Monday. After the Rising he returned to Dublin. When the "Scroll" was signed in 1936, he was not in Ireland.



James Ramsbottom

JAMES RAMSBOTTOM

James was born at Fossey, Timahoe on 10th May, 1888. Because he had an excellent teacher in Timahoe School, he acquired a great love of literature. He received his secondary education at the Christian Brothers in Portlaoise.

Prior to the Rising he was busy ferrying gelignite from Wolfhill coal mines to Portlaoise and from there to Dublin by bicycle. He went on the run when the Rising failed.

James helped to organise I.R.A. units at the time of the War of Independence. He was Brigade Intelligence Officer for the area. He was part of a unit of 18 men that attacked an R.I.C. patrol in Abbeyleix on 29th March 1921. Even though there were several bursts of gunfire, no casualties were reported. He also spent time in Portlaoise Prison in 1923.

After 1923 he had a haulage business which included the transportation of Guinness to various towns in the midlands. He also had a farm at Fossey, Timahoe. He had a keen interest in the G.A.A. and was a lifelong member of Fianna Fáil. He was married with one daughter, who is now a Medical Missionary of Mary nun. He died at his residence, O'Moore Street, Mountmellick on January 10th, 1968.



Andy Doogue points to the spot on now defunct railway line, where the train was derailed on Easter Monday, 1916.

THE BRADY SISTERS

The support given by the Brady sisters after Easter Sunday was possibly without parallel in Ireland at that time. They made their house and its environs available to the Volunteers and provided food and shelter when it was most needed.

Kathleen and May went to Portlaoise on Easter Monday and subsequent days to obtain information on what was happening in Dublin and the rest of the country.

After 1916 and up to the ending of hostilities, their house was raided several times by the British army and R.I.C. The Brady women were active in Cumann na mBan and it was widely known throughout Ireland that their home was a safe house for men on the run. Breda, Noreen and May remained in Laois for the rest of their lives. Kathleen was a teacher and taught in Paris from the 20's until her death in February 1960. Noreen was unmarried and died on 9th April 1980 while Breda died on 16th September 1966. May was married in Clonaslee and she died on 10th June 1920.



May (b. 1893)



Breda (b. 1894)



Kathleen (b. 1896)



Noreen (b. 1902)

CONTRIBUTORS

The Committee wish to thank the following people, companies and organisations without whom this project would not have been possible.

A.C.C. BANK, PORTLAOISE
A.I.B, PORTLAOISE
SHEILA ALLEN, CAHIR
ANONYMOUS, PORTLAOISE
ANONYMOUS, WALES
AVONMORE FOODS, KILKENNY
GERRY ADAMS
BALLYROAN FIANNA FAIL CUMANN
BALLYROAN G.A.A. CLUB
BANK OF IRELAND, PORTLAOISE
JOHN BEHAN, TOLERTON
JOE BENNETT, COOLNAMONA
PADDY BENNETT, PORTARLINGTON PATRICK
& PEGGY BENNETT, COOLNAMONA JIM
BERGIN, PORTLAOISE
JIM BIRCH, PORTLAOISE
KEN BLACK, PORTLAOISE
BOOTH CONCRETE, BALLYROAN MAUREEN
BRADY, DUBLIN
GERRY BROWNE, PORTLAOISE
MICHAEL BYRNE, STRADBALLY
MARY BYRNE FLEMING, FERRYBANK

J.J. CAMPION, MOUNTRATH
MARY JOSEPHINE CARLIN, GLASNEVIN
JOHN & EILEEN CARROLL, BALLYROAN LIAM
CASEY, PORTLAOISE
MATILDA UI CHUANA, LUGGACURREN ALEX
CLELAND, PORTLAOISE
KATHLEEN CODY, PILTOWN
TOM COLGAN, PORTLAOISE
PATSY CONDRON, BALLYADAMS

GER CONNOLLY, T.D., BRACKNAGH
JOE CONROY, PORTLAOISE
MICHAEL & PEGGY CONROY, LUGGACURREN
SHEILA CONROY, PORTLAOISE
TERRY CONROY, CLONASLEE
J.J. CONWAY, THE RUSHES
JAMES COONEY, M.C.C., LUGGACURREN
MARTIN COSTIGAN, CLONAD
COUGHLAN OIL, PORTLAOISE
THOMAS CULLETON, T.C., MOUNTMELICK
JOHN CUSHEN, PORTLAOISE

NED DALY, FAIRMOUNT
MR. & MRS. M. DEARLOVE, BIRMINGHAM
AIDAN DELANEY, PORTLAOISE
GRELLAN DELANEY, PORTLAOISE
LOUGHLIN DELANEY, PORTLAOISE
SEAN DELANEY, PORTLAOISE
SHEM DELANEY, BALLYROAN
MICHAEL DEMPSEY, PEDIGREE CORNER
SIOBHAN & DONAL DENHAM, GENEVA
MICHAEL DINEEN, WOLFHILL
DENIS DOHENY, PORTLAOISE
SEAMUS DONOGHUE, PORTLAOISE
ANDY DOOGUE, CLONAD
JOE DOWLING, CORK
PAUL DUFFIN, TOGHER
JOE DUNNE, M.C.C., PORTLAOISE
MARTIN DUNNE, PORTLAOISE
VINCENT DUNNE, ABBEYLEIX
DUNNES STORES, PORTLAOISE

CONTRIBUTORS CONTINUED

- E.B.S., PORTLAOISE
 JOHN EGAN, PORTLAOISE
 SENATOR TOM ENRIGHT, BIRR
- JOHN FARRELL, MOUNTRATH
 JOHN FEIGHERY, MOUNTMELICK
 JOHN FENNELL, PORTLAOISE
 FINGLETON, WHITE & CO., PORTLAOISE
 FIRST NATIONAL BUILDING SOCIETY, PORTLAOISE
 JIM FITZPATRICK, PORTLAOISE
 LIAM FITZPATRICK, PORTLAOISE
 RICHARD FITZPATRICK, TOGHER
 TOM FITZPATRICK, BALLYROAN
 STEIN FJELLAKALNES, CALIFORNIA
 CHARLES FLANAGAN, T.D., PORTLAOISE
 ANDY FLEMING, TIMAHOE
 BRENDAN FLEMING, MALAHIDE
 BRENDAN FLEMING, ONTARIO
 CYRIL FLEMING, THE SWAN
 EAMON FLEMING, THE SWAN
 JACK FLEMING, CARLOW
 JIM FLEMING, THE SWAN
 JOE FLEMING, LONDON
 J. MITCHEL FLEMING, ATHY
 SR. LAZERIAN FLEMING, MIDDLESEX
 LAZERIAN FLEMING, BRAZIL
 LEO FLEMING, SANDYFORD
 LEONARD FLEMING, ATHY
 MARGARET FLEMING, LIMERICK
 MARGARET FLEMING, THE SWAN
 MITCHEL FLEMING, DUBLIN
 PADRAIC FLEMING, THE SWAN
 PAT FLEMING, ATHY
 SEAN FLEMING, CASTLETOWN
- ALAN FLYNN, PORTLAOISE
 EILEEN FOLEY, CARLOW
 JOE FRAWLEY, CARLOW
- JIM GANNON, PORTLAOISE
 MARY GIBBONS, CASTLEKNOCK
 MICHAEL GILTRAP, BARROWHOUSE
 TERRY GILTRAP, BARROWHOUSE
 JOE GING, PORTLAOISE
 DENIS & MARY GOWING, PORTMARNOCK
 GEORGE GOWING, LONDON
 PAULINE & FRANKIE GOWNING, PORTLAOISE
 P.J. GOWING, BALLINAKILL
 FR. TOM GOWING, CALIFORNIA
 MICHAEL & EILIS GRAE, CILL FHIIONNTAIN
 SR. ANN GRAY, M.M.M., DROGHEDA
 ELLEN GRAY, SUTTON
 SR. ENA GRAY, BALLSBRIDGE
 MR. & MRS. P. GRAY, HEREFORDSHIRE
 TOM GRAY, LETTERKENNY
 UNA GRAY, RANELAGH
 GUINNESS IRELAND GROUP, DUBLIN
- MAY HACKLEY, STAFFORDSHIRE
 DONAL HASKINS, TULLOW
 MRS. L. HAYMAN, WICKLOW
 JOHN HEADEN, SPINK
 ANNE HEFFERNAN, LONDON
 BILLY HENNESSY, BALLYROAN
 FINTAN HENNESSY, STRADBALLY
 HIBERNIAN HOTEL, ABBEYLEIX
 FINTAN HINCH, MOUNTMELICK
 JOHN HOLMES, PORTLAOISE
 FRANK HOLOHAN, CORK

CONTRIBUTORS CONTINUED

- GERRY HOLOHAN, CO. CORK
 PAT HOLOHAN, CORK
 STEPHEN & MICHELLE HORAN, ATHY
 JOE HOSEY, BALLYROAN
 MICHAEL HUGHES, PORTLAOISE
 LEOLINE HURLEY, SUTTON
 LIAM HYLAND, T.D., M.E.P., BALLACOLLA
- IRISH PERMANENT, PORTLAOISE
- TOM JACOB, M.C.C., PORTLAOISE
 BRIAN & SANDRA JACOBS, ZAMBIA
 MICHAEL & ROSE JOHNSON, LUGGACURREN
- LARRY KAVANAGH, M.C.C., MOUNTRATH
 P.J. KAVANAGH, PORTLAOISE
 MGT. PATRICIA KAVANAGH DOUSETT, CALIFORNIA
 SCARLETT KAVANAGH DOUSETT, CALIFORNIA
 SEAN KAVANAGH DOUSETT, CALIFORNIA
 TARA KAVANAGH DOUSETT, CALIFORNIA
 PETER KEALY, DOONANE
 DR. JOHN KEATING, ABBEYLEIX
 BERNIE KEEGAN, PORTLAOISE
 JOHN KEEGAN, BALLYROAN
 MATTHEW KEEGAN, PORTLAOISE
 TOM KEENAN, M.C.C., PORTLAOISE
 ÁINE KEIGHTLEY, THE SWAN
 MARGARET KELLEHER, DRUMCONDRA
 MICK KELLY, CASTLETOWN
 TOM KELLY, ABBEYLEIX
 JOHN KENNEDY, PORTLAOISE
 BRIAN KENRICK INSURANCES, PORTLAOISE
 JOE KERRY, PORTLAOISE
 JIM KEYES, TOGHER
 DAN KINSELLA, BALLYROAN
 MR. & MRS. MICHAEL KIRBY, GEORGIA
- PAT & PATSY KIRBY, RHODE ISLAND
 MARTIN KIRWAN, BORRIS-IN-OSSORY
- JOHN LALOR, BALLYROAN
 PADDY LALOR, ABBEYLEIX
 PADDY LALOR, LALOR'S MILLS
 LAOIS ASSOCIATION, NEW YORK
 LAOIS FIANNA FAIL
 LAOIS FINE GAEL
 LAOIS HUNT
 LAOIS I.C.M.S.A.
- LAOIS IRISH NATIONAL CONGRESS
 LAOIS G.A.A. COUNTY BOARD
 LAOIS LADIES G.A.A. COUNTY BOARD
 LAOIS PHARMACY, PORTLAOISE
 LAOIS TOURISM
- ALBERT LAWLOR, LIMERICK
 LEOLINE LAWLOR, BALLSBRIDGE
 TONY LAWLOR, AUSTRALIA
 LEINSTER EXPRESS, PORTLAOISE
 JIM LEONARD, PORTLAOISE
 PHIL LEWIS, PORTLAOISE
 MICHAEL LOONEY, CRETTYARD
- TONY MADIGAN, BALLYROAN
 MARY MAHER, ABBEYLEIX
 PEADER MAHER, ABBEYLEIX
 MIDLAND OFFICE EQUIPMENT, PORTLAOISE
 JOHN MILLER, BOLEYBEG
 PAT MILLER, PORTLAOISE
 JOHN MOLONEY, M.C.C., MOUNTMELICK
 MOUNTRATH MART
 PAT MULCAIR, LIMERICK
 MARY MULDOWNY, DRUMCONDRA
 TIMMY MULDOWNY, PORTLAOISE

CONTRIBUTORS CONTINUED

- PADDY MULHALL, ABBEYLEIX
SEAMUS MULHALL, BALLYROAN
TERESA MULHARE, M.C.C., THE HEATH
DEIRDRE MULLINS, SUTTON
SHELIA MULLINS, SLIGO
SEAN & KATE MURPHY, PORTLAOISE
WILLIE MURPHY, PORTARLINGTON
MICK MURRAY, BALLYROAN
- ANDY McDERMOTT, DUNDRUM
CHARLIE McDONALD, BALLYROAN
WILLIE McGRATH, BALLYROAN
- NEW P.M.P.A. INSURANCE, PORTLAOISE
JOHN NOLAN, BALLYROAN
MARY NOLAN, KILDARE
NORESIDE FARM RELIEF, KILKENNY
- DR. LIAM Ó BANAIN, DURROW
O'BRIEN'S MENSWEAR, PORTLAOISE
MR. & MRS. DES O'CARROLL, KILKENNY
CATHERINE O'DONOVAN, RATHFARNHAM
O'FLAHERTY, MCGOVERN & DUGGAN, ATHY
MAIRE O'GORMAN, COOLOCK
NED O'KEEFE, THE SWAN
DR. A.J.F. O'REILLY, KILCULLEN
GEORGE O'SULLIVAN, PORTARLINGTON
MARY O'TOOLE, ATHY
- MICHAEL PARSONS, PORTLAOISE
GERARD PHELAN, ABBEYLEIX
TERESA & PADDY PHELAN, WOLFHILL
KITTY PODGER, KILDARE
PORTLAOISE CREDIT UNION
PORTLAOISE G.A.A. CLUB
PORTLAOISE TRAVEL
- JOHN PURCELL, ABBEYLEIX
- BILLY RAMSBOTTOM, GARRYGLASS
DESMOND RAMSBOTTOM, LUGGACURREN
EAMON RAMSBOTTOM, LUGGACURREN
JOHN RAMSBOTTOM, STADBALLY
MARK RAMSBOTTOM, TIMAHOE
NOEL RAMSBOTTOM, ORCHARD
PADDY RAMSBOTTOM, STRADBALLY
FR. PAT RAMSBOTTOM, NAAS
SEAN & BRID RAMSBOTTOM, FOSSEY
MARTIN ROHAN, BALLINAKILL
LIAM RYAN, PORTLAOISE
- ROCKY SCULLY, PORTLAOISE
SHAWS, ATHY
EAMON SHEEHAN, PORTLAOISE
JOHN SHEERAN, CAMROSS
MARTIN SHERIDAN, DUN LAOGHAIRE
SUPER VALU, ABBEYLEIX
- JACKIE TIMMONS, PORTLAOISE
TOUGHER OIL, PORTLAOISE
TOM TREACY, THE HEATH
ALAN TSANG, PORTLAOISE
MICK TURLEY, VICARSTOWN
- UNITED BEVERAGES, PORTLAOISE
- MARY WALSH, TIMOGUE
EAMON & EUGENE WHEATLEY, DOONANE
MARY WHEATLEY, M.C.C., DOONANE
JIM WHELAN, BALLYROAN
MARY WHELAN, EDENDERRY
MICHAEL WHELAN, COLT
TOM WHELAN, BALLYROAN

