

**'Archives from the Past' series**

# **The War of Independence in County Wexford**

as revealed in extant documents, photographs and objects  
from collections in Wexford County Archive

This online exhibition is one of the commemorative projects identified by Wexford County Council  
for delivery under the Community Strand of the 2021 Decade of Centenaries Programme



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultuir,  
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán  
Department of Tourism, Culture,  
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media



Comhairle Contae  
Loch Garman  
Wexford  
County Council



# Introduction

In the second of our 'Archives from the Past' series of online exhibitions, we commemorate the War of Independence in County Wexford (1919-21).

Wexford County Archive is the official repository for the archives and records of Wexford County Council and for each of the county's former town councils. The Archive is also home to a diverse range of collections of private origin which document life in County Wexford from many perspectives - political, military, maritime, property, commercial, domestic, medical, educational and legal.

We hold extensive primary source materials relating to the Decade of Centenaries in County Wexford (1912-23) - in particular, for the latter half of the period, including a significant 1916 collection of original manuscripts and artefacts.

Rather than providing a detailed historical account of the War of Independence in County Wexford, this exhibition will focus on key documents, photographs and artefacts drawn from a number of collections in the county archive, and employ them to narrate and depict this turbulent period in our county's history. It should be noted that some key events of the period are not included due to the absence of

material in our holdings (e.g. the shooting of Captain Percival Lea Wilson in Gorey on 15 June 1920 and the explosion at St Kearn's, Saltmills on 12 October 1920). The local government response in the county is addressed only briefly here, as the majority of our local authority minute books have been digitised and are available online for more in-depth study. Further research on the period can be complemented by accessing the Local Studies local newspaper collection at Wexford Town Library and in researching the Bureau of Military History witness statements and military service pension records held by the Military Archives, Dublin.

Most of the items featured are from the republican perspective. While our holdings include the private papers of several leading local republican figures from the period, we also hold material for some rank and file members who might not otherwise be represented in written histories. To this end, Wexford County Archive is anxious to acquire further archival material (especially photographs) for members of each of the main organisations, in particular for Cumann na mBan and for the RIC in County Wexford during the 1919-23 period (contact details provided on last page of exhibition).





Detach this part and return to subscriber.

3851 84862  
No. ....

**GOVERNMENT OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC.**  
**5 per cent. Registered Certificates (1919) (Internal).**

RECEIVED from *M. S. Mac Eocaid*  
of *New St. Enniscorthy*  
the sum of *One* pound, being  
the amount payable on application for: *(one pound)*

Date *14 SEP. 1920*, 1919.

**FULLY PAID**

£ *1* -

MICHEAL O COILEAIN, Minister of Finance.  
Per *EF*

DAIL ÉIREANN  
14 SEP. 1920  
DIRECT AR510

Preserve this receipt carefully. It will be exchanged in due course for the definite certificate.

Following its establishment in January 1919, the new Dáil Éireann had to devise a strategy for generating its own funds. A domestic campaign got underway with Michael Collins, as Minister for Finance, coordinating the campaign nationally.

**Image featured:** Receipt issued to Miceál S. Mac Eocaid, New Street, Enniscorthy for the sum of £1 towards the purchase of registered certificates for the national loan. Signed by E. F. (Eamonn Fleming) on behalf of Michael Collins. Dated 14 September 1920

*From the Miceál and Mgr. Lory Kehoe collection at Wexford County Archive*







## Seamus O'Brien

Originally from Morristown, outside Kilmuckridge, Co. Wexford, Seamus had been an active participant in the 1916 Rising in Enniscorthy. Following his release from prison after the Rising, he moved to Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow where he jointly opened a grocery business on the main street. During the War of Independence, he served with 'A' Company, 4th Battalion, IRA in Rathdrum and was appointed Brigade Commandant of Wicklow East Brigade. On the evening of 12 February 1920 during a pursuit by two RIC constables of three men, one of whom was alleged to have shot at the officers on Main Street, Rathdrum, Seamus was shot by a bullet from a constable's gun while he stood in the doorway of his premises. He subsequently died from his injuries. He was posthumously awarded the 1916 active service medal and the Service (1917-21) medal in 1943. Seamus is buried in Ballyvaldon cemetery, Blackwater and was the first casualty from County Wexford that occurred during the War of Independence.

**Image:** Seamus O'Brien

*Displayed by kind permission of the Flynn and O'Brien families*







## Image

Portion of cloth from a billiard table in the National Foresters' Hall in Court Street, Enniscorthy. The hall was raided in July 1920 by members of the Devonshire Regiment who were stationed at the Courthouse in the town during 1920 and 1921. A building aligned to the National Foresters would have been an obvious target given that the organisation supported Irish nationalism and its constitution called for a government for Ireland by the Irish people 'in accordance with Irish ideas and Irish aspirations'.







**Image:** Bear mascot (148cm high) from a Crossley tender used by the Black and Tans while they were stationed in Enniscorthy in 1920-21. These vehicles were the preserve of the RIC and the Black and Tans and comprised a light lorry which could carry cargo of up to 11 men - three in front and eight in the rear sitting on a bench with seats down the centre or on each side of the cargo area.



**Image:** Photograph showing the apprehension of a prisoner by the Black and Tans c. June 1920. The Black and Tans were a group of mainly ex-soldiers and veterans from the First World War who were recruited and sent to Ireland in early 1920 to provide reinforcements for the RIC in their campaign against the IRA. They quickly gained a reputation for brutality, drunkenness and casual violence.

The prolonged IRA campaign led to a further recruitment initiative from July 1920 - the Auxiliaries, who comprised former British Army officers, were deployed in areas of significant insurgent activity.

*From the Sinnott collection (as featured in the Nicholas Furlong photographic collection at Wexford County Archive)*







Joseph Smith was born in Tomnalossett, Enniscorthy in 1887. He served as a RIC constable in Graiguenamanagh, Co. Kilkenny in 1913. He was stationed in Borris, Co. Carlow in 1918 and also served at Castletownsend, Co. Cork. He retired in 1922 when the force was disbanded. Joseph died in 1966 and is buried in Davidstown cemetery.

**Images:** Photograph of RIC officers in Borris, Co. Carlow, 1918. Joseph Smith is pictured fourth from the left in the back row. Also featured is his RIC barracks bed plate.

*Displayed by kind permission of the Redmond family, Enniscorthy and the Doyle and Smith family in the UK*





# Weaponry

Although the IRA and the British forces used many similar weapons including rifles, revolvers and shotguns, the British had better access to firearms and ammunition. While they also had access to more elaborate weapons such as the Lewis machine gun, the IRA had a number of Thompson submachine guns which they smuggled into Ireland during the War of Independence.

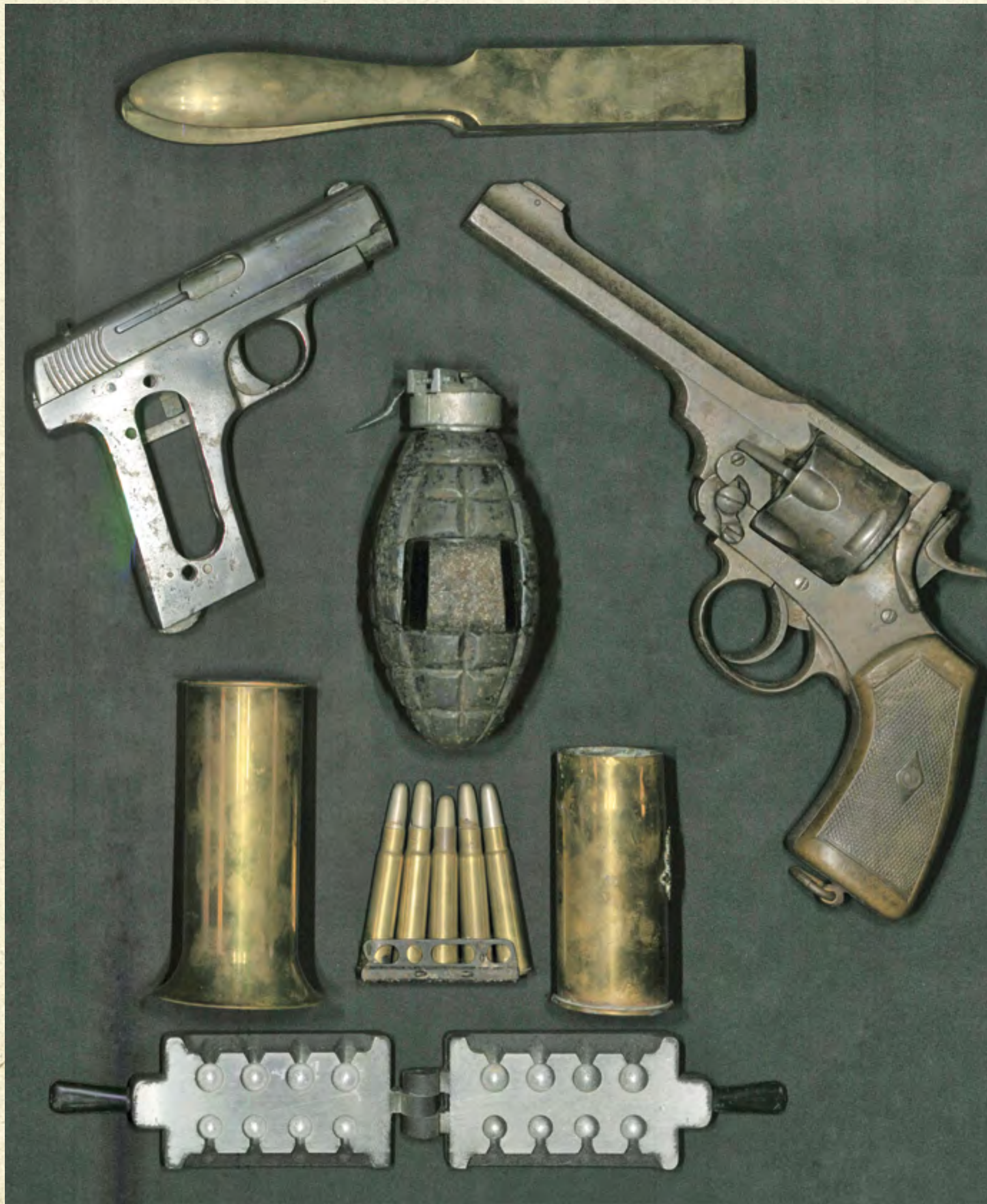


## Image

1916 Lee Enfield SMLE No. 1 Mark III (with sword bayonet). The Lee Enfield rifle was one of the most popular firearms used by the Irish Volunteers/IRA during the 1916-23 period, although they had limited supplies which led to numerous raids on homes to supplement their armoury. The Lee Enfield was also in use by the British military and by the RIC.

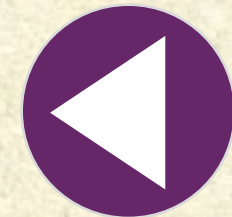






## Image

This image features a selection of handguns, bullets, bullet moulds, artillery shells and a hand grenade. A Spanish Astra revolver is displayed on the left of the image - this .32 ACP version was designated 'the 1916 model'. On the right is a Webley and Scott Mark VI revolver. The Webley was standard issue for the British army from 1887 onwards. The Webley Mark VI was first introduced in 1915 during the First World War. Handguns were also in regular use by the RIC.







## Image

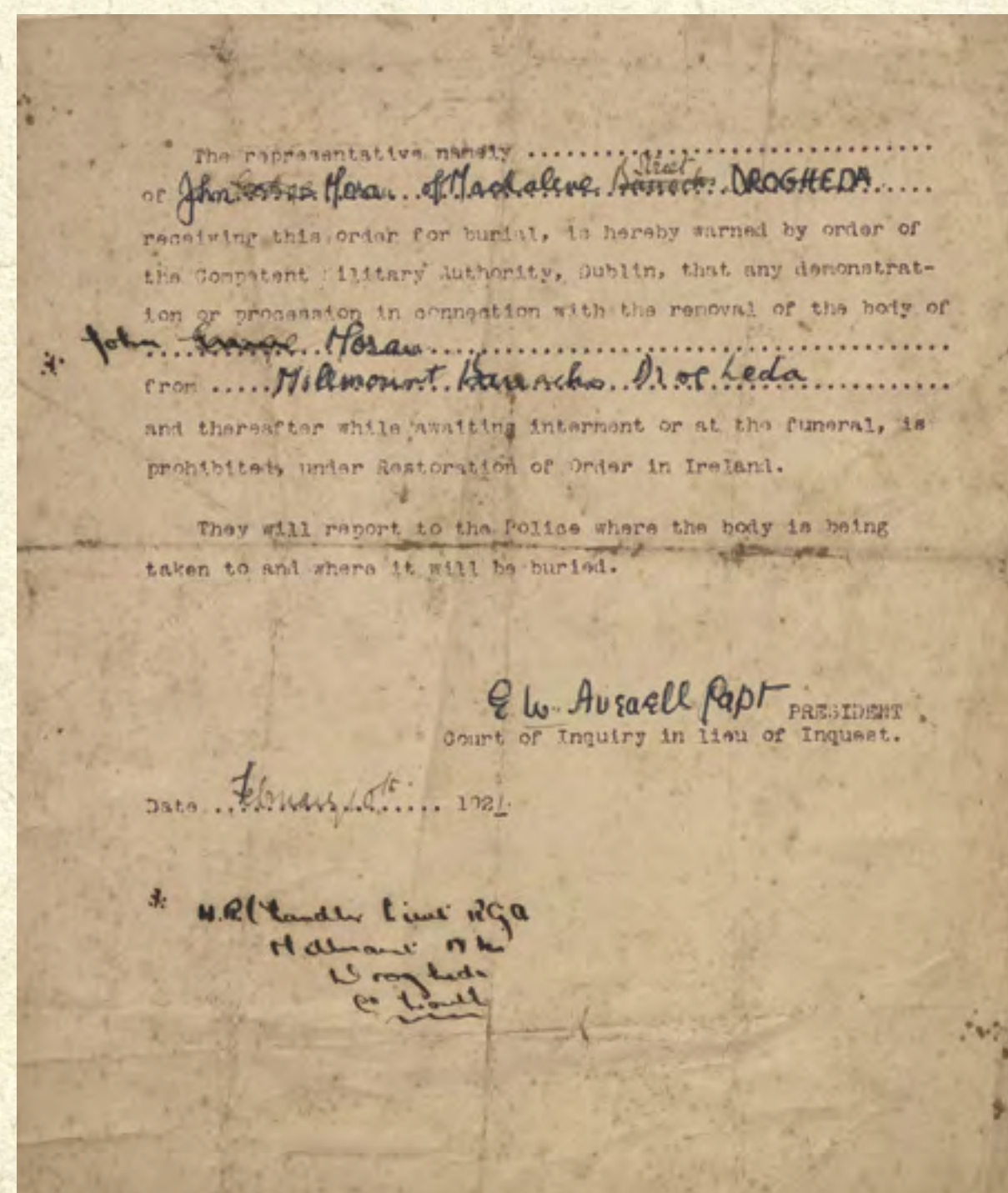
Thompson submachine gun (or 'Tommy gun') used by the IRA during the War of Independence







**Image:** Seán Moran



**Image:** Order issued by the military prohibiting any demonstration or procession in connection with the removal of Seán (John) Moran's body from Millmount Barracks, Drogheda, Co. Louth and at the subsequent funeral and interment in St Mary's cemetery, Enniscorthy (10 February 1921).

# Seán Moran

The home of Seán Moran and his family in Church Street, Enniscorthy was constantly raided by the RIC and the military during the 1915-23 period. William Moran the father carried on a tailor's business at his home. His six children (four girls and two boys) were brought up with the motto 'Ireland first, Ireland last, Ireland over all'.

Seán, the oldest of the six children helped Liam Mellows establish a branch of Na Fianna Éireann in Enniscorthy town in 1915 - there were c. 30 boys in the sluagh, some of whom participated during Easter Week 1916 (including Liam Moran, Seán's youngest sibling). Seán's four sisters - Máire, Brigid, Kathleen and Sighle - were also actively involved in the local Cumann na mBan branch.

Seán trained as a printer with the local press office, The Echo, in Enniscorthy. During the 1916 Rising, he organised a company of Volunteers in Ferns for which he was subsequently interned in England. After marrying in 1919, he moved to Drogheda where he worked as a printer in Cahill's Printing Works. He was a member of 'A' Company, 1st Battalion of the South Louth Brigade of the IRA at the time. On the night of 9 February 1921, Seán, along with Alderman Thomas Halpin, a Sinn Féin member of Drogheda Corporation were taken from their homes by the Black and Tans and shot. Seán was 30 years old.







The Cumann na mBan organisation continued to be an integral support to the IRA during the War of Independence and were indispensable in carrying guns, ammunition, despatches and in gathering intelligence. Many of those who had been actively involved in 1916 continued their military activity during the 1919-23 period including Ellen (Nell) Ryan, Kathleen Browne, Theresa and Ellen Keegan and Máire Deegan. Membership of the various branches within the North and South Wexford Brigades of the organisation increased significantly during the 1919-21 period.

This image features Margaret Power (née Murphy) from Bargy Bar, Bridgetown. A lifelong member of the Gaelic League, Margaret won a scholarship to Ring College and later taught the Irish language in many centres across South Wexford. She was an active member of the Bridgetown branch (South Wexford Brigade) of Cumann na mBan during 1921 and 1922 under O/C Nellie Ryan.

**Image:** Margaret (Maggie) Power

*Displayed by kind permission of John Power, Kilmore*







Máire Moran, sister of Seán, was very active in the republican cause from a young age. During the Rising, she carried dispatches, collected and delivered guns and did intelligence work. Important dispatches from HQ in Dublin were left at the Moran house and Máire and her three sisters would deliver them across the county. Continuing her activity in the 1919-23 period, she helped organise the Enniscorthy district and assisted in raids carried out on nine post offices in the area. During the Civil War, she was entrusted to deliver a despatch from Ernie O'Malley to Countess Markievicz in Dublin. She was arrested in early 1923 in Enniscorthy and brought to Wexford where she was detained for one month before being released due to ill health.

**Image:** Máire Moran in military uniform and her Cumann na mBan brooch

*Displayed by kind permission of Des Fitzpatrick*







**Image:** On 5 April 1920, a number of Irish Volunteer prisoners in Mountjoy Prison, Dublin pledged to go on hunger strike in protest against their lack of political prisoner status. This photograph shows some of those released on 6 May 1920 after having spent ten days on hunger strike. Taken in the grounds of the Mater Hospital, Dublin following medical treatment it includes Michael Whelan from Irish Street, Enniscorthy (front, far right). Whelan was subsequently returned to Mountjoy in late November 1920 to complete a nine-month sentence for riotous assembly in Enniscorthy in 1919.

*"Political Prisoners"*  
 Proposed by Mr Thomas McCarthy Sec by Mr Andrew Doyle  
 and passed.  
 "That we protest against the inhuman treatment  
 at present being meted out to the political  
 prisoners in Cork Jail including Messrs. Sinnott (2)  
 Doyle, O'Brien, & Francis of Enniscorthy, who according  
 to authentic reports, are prohibited from going  
 to Mass. or outside their cell doors, for any purpose, and  
 are compelled to eat their meals off the prison floor"

**Image:** Motion passed by Enniscorthy Urban District Council at its meeting on 5 February 1919 condemning the 'inhuman treatment' meted out to political prisoners from County Wexford who were detained in Cork Jail.





# Prison correspondence

Prison correspondence represents an important primary source in gaining an insight into the stark reality of prison life and in humanising these men and women in their portrayal of their concerns, hopes, and ideals.

Reg No 32  
Patrick J. Byrne  
Remains  
A. Capda  
H. M. Prison  
Waterford  
5/2/20

I was taken to the jail  
last night. & will remain here  
until next trial day. I do not  
know if visits are allowed.  
so if you wish to see me. if it  
would not be too much trouble  
you can call up to gate & if they  
refuse well & good. I am  
allowed letters & parcels.  
I would like to see you. if possible  
if not shall the day that trial  
comes off.  
I must thank you

**Image:** Letter from Patrick J. Byrne to his friends - he is writing from H. M. Prison, Waterford. Dated 5 February 1920

From the Micéal and Mgr. Lory Kehoe collection at Wexford County Archive





1428, Thomas D. Sinnott, Hut 15, 'F' Co.  
No. 2, Camp, Ballykinlar, Co. Down.

My dear Mother,

Many thanks for letter and parcel received this week. I was very glad to hear that you were all so well. I am keeping in good form myself as are most of the Enniscorthy lads although colds are rampant just now. I had along and very interesting letter from Miss Conlan a few days ago and have, unfortunately, no chance of answering her this week. Please do not forget to tell her how extremely thankful I am for her kind thoughtfulness and assure her that I will enclose a short note of thanks in my letter next week. Tell her that I have not yet received the parcel from Liza but that I am expecting it daily. The weather has been bitterly cold for the past few days and snow and sleet have been the order of the day. There is a slight change for the better to-day. I hope it will last. I trust you got my letter last week. If you have not sent me the things by the time you get this send atie and a couple of handkerchiefs. That would be interesting.

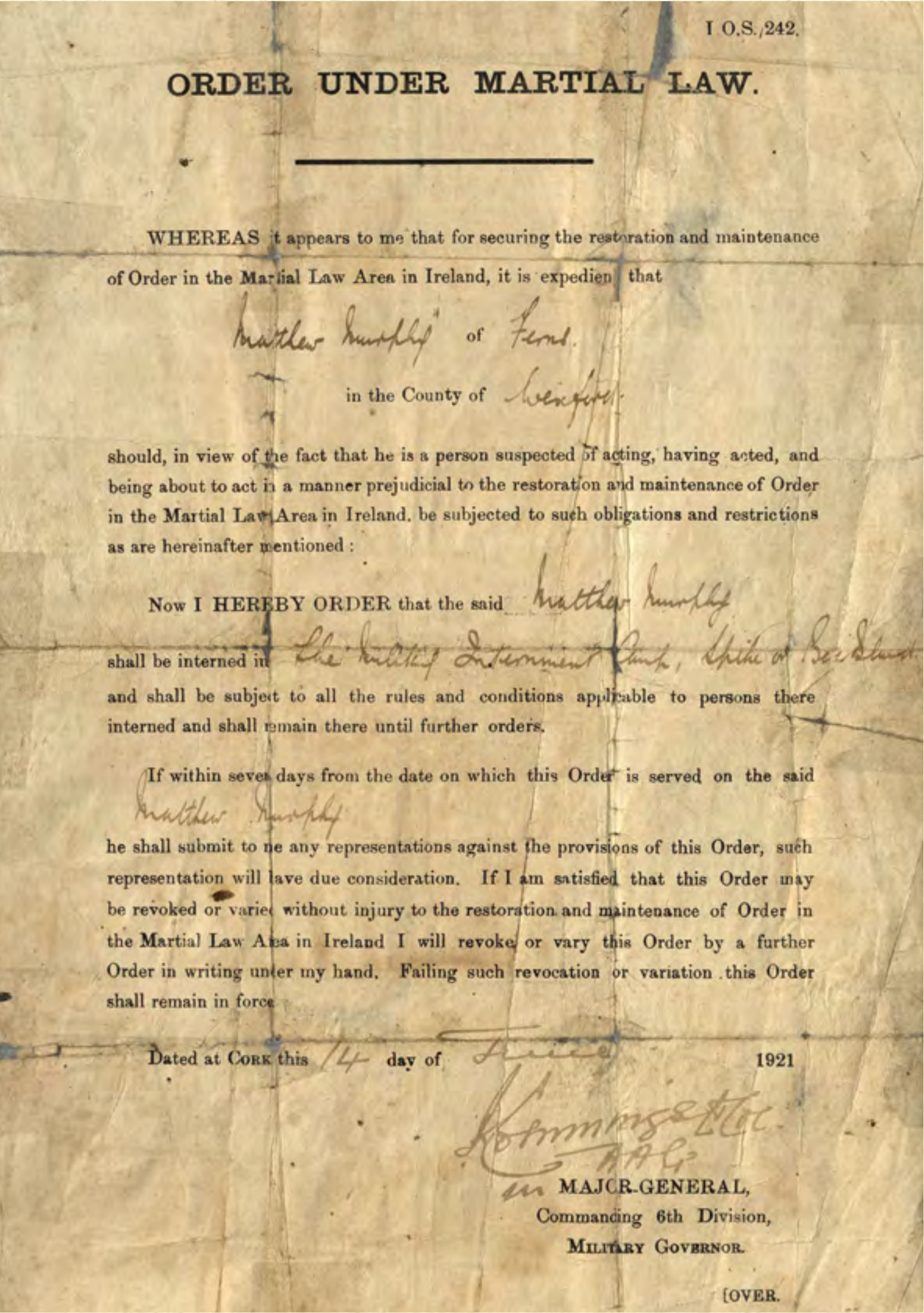
**Image:** Letter from T.D. Sinnott to his mother - he is writing from Hut 15, 'F' Company, No. 2 Camp, Ballykinlar, Co. Down. He expresses the hope that although 'times are still strenuous', there is 'every indication of an early improvement, and personally, I expect it any moment'. Dated c. December 1920

Thomas D. Sinnott had been one of the leaders of the Easter Rising in Enniscorthy in 1916 and was subsequently arrested and transported to England. He spent periods of detention in Stafford Jail and in Frongoch until his release under a general amnesty at Christmas 1916. He opened a stationery and tobacco business in Rafter Street, Enniscorthy on his return and was re-arrested in August 1918 and spent six months in Cork Jail. He was elected to Enniscorthy Urban District Council in January 1920 and as chairman of the Enniscorthy Board of Guardians in June that year. Towards the end of 1920, he was again arrested and after periods of detention in Waterford, Kilworth and Cork prisons, was interned in Ballykinlar camp, Co. Down.

*From the T.D. Sinnott collection at Wexford County Archive*







# Martial Law

Martial law was extended to County Wexford in January 1921. Raids, searches and arrests by Crown forces were a feature of everyday life throughout the county. Targets ranged from private houses to businesses and even to local government offices. Copies of the martial law proclamation were displayed across the county, in many cases on the homes of known republicans. The holding of fairs and markets was banned while residents were severely restricted in their movements, with permits for bicycles and motor cars sparsely issued, and cycling after dark prohibited.

**Image:** Order from the Military Governor for Matthew Murphy of Ferns, Co. Wexford to be interned on Spike Island with the proviso that if within seven days of the notice he submits any representation against the provisions of the order, the latter will be revoked. Dated 14 June 1921.





Enniscorthy 16. 7. 21  
W. P. Kenny is authorised  
by order of O.C. Troops  
Enniscorthy to use motor  
cycle MI-6595 to go to  
Ballindaggin on commercial  
business from 2.00pm to 6.00pm  
on this date.  
P. Sloane  
Sgt. R.I.C.

**Image:** Permit for W.P. Kenny to use his motorcycle registered MI 6595 to travel to Ballindaggin on commercial business from 2-6pm on 16 July 1921. Issued by P. Sloane, RIC Sergeant by order of O. C. Troops, Enniscorthy.

COUNTY OF WEXFORD      MARTIAL LAW AREA.      CMP 200  
Complying with Brigade Proclamations No. 11.      E. 108  
Permit to ride a Bicycle.

|                     |                    |   |                                   |
|---------------------|--------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Riders Name.        | Foster Thackaberry |   |                                   |
| Address.            | Co Davis.          |   |                                   |
| Occupation.         | Errand Boy.        | Where.                                    | Enniscorthy                       |
| Reasons for Permit. | Business           |   |                                   |
| Date.               | 23/5/21 to 23/7/21 | Time.                                     | During Business Hours <u>Only</u> |
| Enniscorthy.        | 23. 6. 21          | J. H. & J. L. L. O.C. Troops. ENNISCORTHY |                                   |
| 23/4                |                    | for business only                         |                                   |

Stamp: MOTOR CYCLE PERMIT

**Image:** Permit for Foster Thackaberry, an errand boy at Davis's Mill, Enniscorthy to ride his bicycle during business hours only in Enniscorthy town from 23 May 1921 to 23 July 1921. Issued by O. C. Troops, Enniscorthy, 23 June 1921.





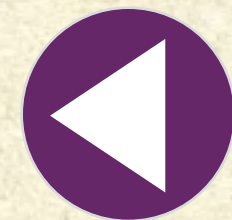
A meeting of G. A. A. Board & capt of teams  
held on 28/6/21. C. McInerney presiding present  
J. McCarthy, F. Drohan, Mr. Bennetton, J. Barry,  
J. Moran, S. O'Donovan & J. Dolan. Eire O'g's.  
R. Murphy Ashes, & Mr. Martin, Griffins, The  
sec. R. Whelan also attend. minutes of previous  
meeting read & signed. The sec. reported that  
the following teams were returned as winners in  
1st round of the Senior Champd. Emmetts, Rossas  
Ashes, Griffins, Eire Nuad, & Eire O'g. Winners  
of Junior ties were Pearas, Rossas, Ashes  
Aungiscors & Eire O'g. The game between Eire  
Nuad & Mac Curtains being postponed to 3/7/21.  
Draws were then decided to be made for 2nd  
round. Mr. Bennetton pro & J. Moran sec. that  
a new draw take place. & Mr. Drohan pro. & J.  
Barry sec an amendment that the draws be made  
in the usual manner by pairing the teams as  
drawn for the first round. The amendment was  
carried by 6 votes to 3.

# Internment

Due to the volume of those arrested as the War of Independence progressed, a number of internment camps were set up by the British authorities in Ireland - these included camps at Ballykinlar, Co. Down, Hare Park in The Curragh and on Spike Island. This minute book from our holdings documents the activities of the GAA Board in Ballykinlar No. 2 Camp during 1921 including the setting up of clubs and a camp championship for the junior and senior divisions within the camp. The volume was maintained by Richard Whelan, Enniscorthy in his capacity as secretary to the Board.

**Image:** Extract from minute book documenting the activities of the GAA Board in Ballykinlar No. 2 Camp, 19 May 1921 - 26 November 1921

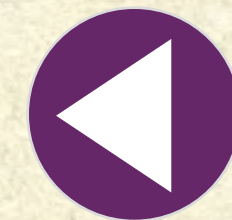
The above minute book and accompanying documentation will be digitised and made available online in late 2021 as part of Wexford County Council's Decade of Centenaries Programme 2021







**Image:** Official paper money tokens used as internal currency in Ballykinlar camp. Three denominations survive in this collection, 1d. 1s. and £1. Each token bears the logo 'Gaedil fé glas / Campa a dó / I mBaile Coinnleóra (Gaels in prison / Camp 2, Ballykinlar).





Men on Hunger Strike  
Spike Island  
Aug 30<sup>th</sup> 1921

|               | men        |
|---------------|------------|
| Cork County - | 186        |
| Lip "         | 28         |
| Dublin "      | 1          |
| Carlow "      | 1          |
| Wexford "     | 31         |
| Kerry "       | 15         |
| Kilkenny "    | 21         |
| Limerick "    | 8          |
| Clare "       | 12         |
| Waterford "   | 9          |
| <u>Total</u>  | <u>312</u> |

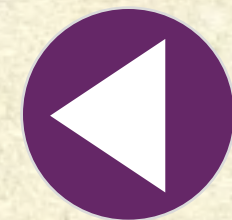
Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> Oct 1921  
Break up at Spike  
Island. O'Rourke and  
O'Mahoney arrested  
Hunger Strike declared  
for their release on  
Monday at 3 P.M.  
O'Mahoney and O'Rourke  
released on Tuesday  
morning from cells  
wrecking again  
Commenced at 9 o'clock  
same morning.  
At Prisoners except

## Seán Sinnott Diary

**Image:** Extract from an autograph book / diary belonging to Seán Sinnott during his internment on Spike Island, detailing the number of men from each county on hunger strike there in August 1921. Seán from 7 Grattan Terrace, Wexford was an IRB man and an active Irish Volunteer who had been ready to take part in the 1916 Rising. After the Rising, he was arrested and imprisoned in Dublin, Stafford Jail in England and in Frongoch internment camp, Wales. He was released in October 1916 but re-arrested the following month and sent to Cork Gaol. He was subsequently detained in a number of jails and barracks on his arrest in 1920 and in April 1921 was sent to Waterford Military Barracks. He was later transferred to Spike Island internment camp where he remained until November 1921 when he was transferred to Portlaoise prison and released the following month. He did not participate in the Civil War.

Displayed by kind permission of Oliver Sinnott, Casement Terrace, Wexford

Seán Sinnott's autograph book/diary will be digitised and made available online in late 2021 as part of Wexford County Council's Decade of Centenaries Programme 2021







## Edward Roe collection

At 16 years of age, Edward Roe, from Begerin Loftus, New Ross joined the Cushinstown Company of the South Wexford Brigade of the IRA. He was active during the War of Independence and took part in many of its operations. Towards the end of the war, he was arrested by the Black and Tans and brought to Waterford prison before being transferred to Kilworth Camp near Fermoy, Co. Cork. In late 1921 he escaped along with 18 others by digging a tunnel from inside their hut to a spot outside the camp fence. During the Civil War, he sided with those opposed to the treaty. He was arrested by Free State troops and was imprisoned in Kilkenny Jail from which he briefly escaped before being recaptured. By the end of the hostilities, he was Captain of the Cushinstown Company of the IRA and Quartermaster with the South Wexford Brigade, and in later years, was secretary of New Ross and District Old IRA. He died on 28 November 1969.

The Edward Roe collection will be digitised and made available online in late 2021 as part of Wexford County Council's Decade of Centenaries Programme 2021







## Dr Peadar 'Pax' Sinnott collection

Peadar Sinnott from Newtown, Clonevan, Gorey, was born into a strongly nationalist family. Described as 'intensely patriotic', he took time out from his medical studies to serve with North Tipperary Brigade of the IRA during the War of Independence. He was known as 'Pax' after having invented an explosive mixture to which he had given the name 'Paxo'. He resumed his medical studies on the cessation of hostilities in 1923, and worked in the Mater Hospital, Dublin and in dispensaries across County Wexford before being appointed Medical Officer of Wexford No. 2 Dispensary District in 1936. He gave numerous lectures on County Wexford's history and heritage and was an accomplished sportsman. He died on 7 March 1957 and is buried in Donaghmore cemetery, Ballygarrett, Gorey.

**Image:** 'Pax' Sinnott on active service with North Tipperary Brigade area, 1921

*From the Sinnott collection (as featured in the Nicholas Furlong photographic collection at Wexford County Archive)*





To. N. B. O. Newlan 'A' Coy  
at Mandlins  
Time 5.15 PM  
From Coy. Asst  
at North St  
Date 10 <sup>12</sup>/<sub>21</sub>

Matter of order - Returns.

You will at once see - that everything got in con-  
nection with the Mandlins cases is returned forthwith  
These things should have been back 10 days ago. Harry them up  
& get them returned Signed R.H. Asst.

To. Vol. Jas Mullany 'A' Coy  
at Rostercon  
Time 4 o'clock  
Matter of order Duty  
From Coy Asst.  
at North St  
Date 10 <sup>12</sup>/<sub>21</sub>

You will report this evening at 6 o'clock (as  
announced at parade last evening) for Rathgarogue  
camp for night's duty  
Signed R.H. Asst.

To. Vol. Mr. O'Connor 'A' Coy  
at South St.  
Time 12 noon  
From Coy Asst.  
at North St.  
Date 10 <sup>12</sup>/<sub>21</sub>

Matter of order - Training

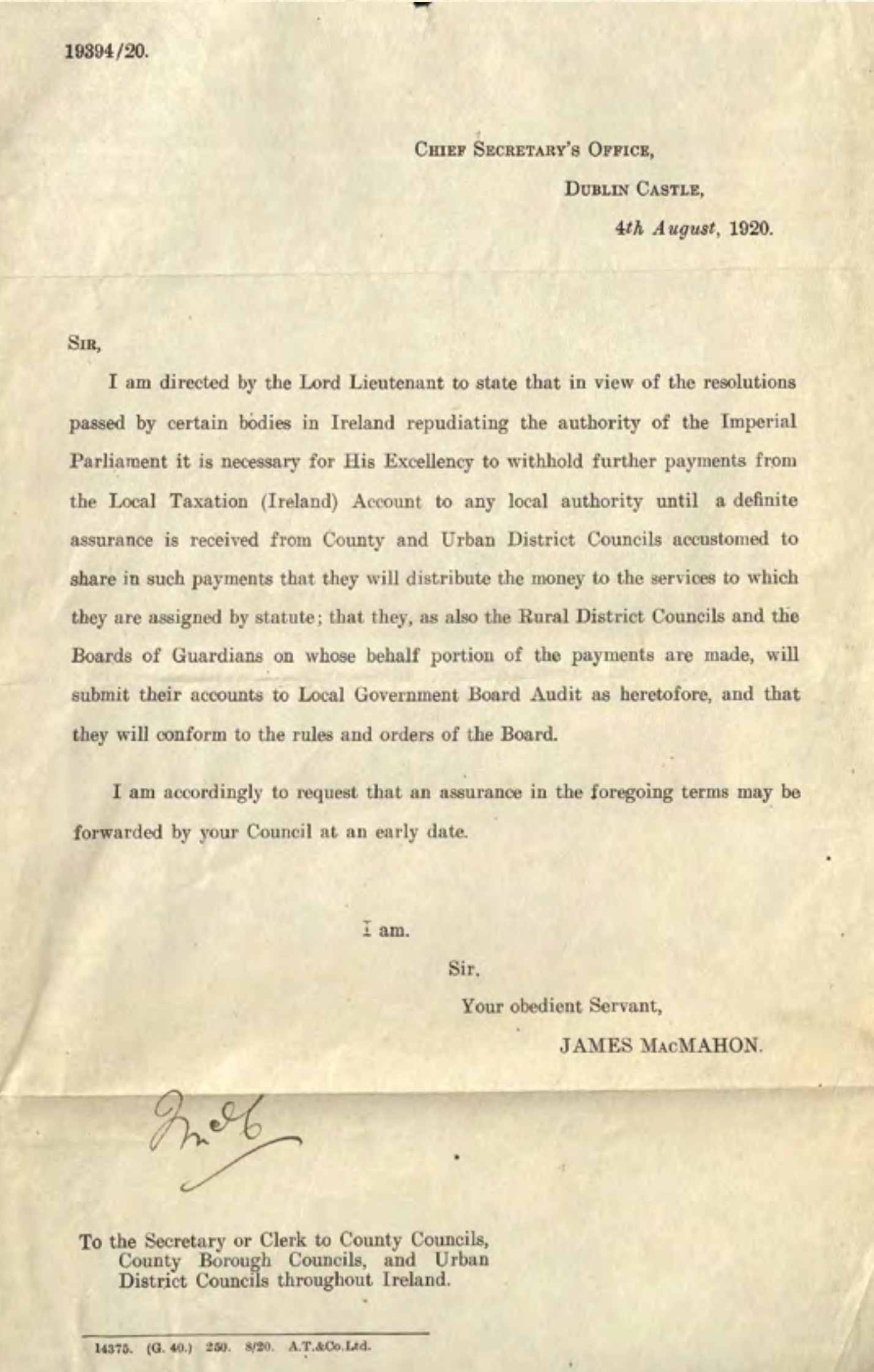
You will report at 2 p.m. on Sunday with at Rathgarogue  
camp for training Signed R.H. Asst.

**Image:** Extract from a training log book maintained by Richard Hanrahan from North Street, New Ross who was Adjutant of 'A' Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, South Wexford Brigade of the IRA during the War of Independence and Civil War. The volume details Richard's orders to the various ranks within 'A' Company to report to Rathgarogue camp for training purposes and for duty work. He also names those selected for signalling work, as despatch riders and for transport services, intelligence, first aid, munitions and as armourers (5 November 1921 - 31 March 1922) WXCA/P 464

Displayed by kind permission of Michael Hanrahan







# Local Government

Sinn Féin met with resounding success in the January and June 1920 local elections. Many of those elected members were serving Volunteers, and a number were in prison at the time of their election. John (Seán) Etchingham, one of the leaders in the 1916 Rising in Enniscorthy was elected as chairman (in absentia) of Wexford County Council in June 1920 – a position he didn’t take up until the end of August 1921. The newly elected councils wasted no time in passing resolutions recognising Dáil Éireann and thereby rejecting the British Local Government Board. This was an important step in the legitimacy of Dáil Éireann but one which had serious consequences for those authorities that did. Local authorities lost their grant assistance and refused to hand over the rates collected locally which led to legal cases against them. The document on the left was circulated from the Chief Secretary’s Office, Dublin Castle to Wexford County Council and to the urban and borough councils in the county in August 1920 advising them of the withholding of further payments to local authorities ‘until a definite assurance is received’ from them that they will ‘distribute the money to the services to which they are assigned by statute’ and that they will submit their accounts to Local Government Board Audit as heretofore’.

**Image:** Circular from Chief Secretary’s office, Dublin Castle, 4 August 1920

*From the Enniscorthy Urban District Council collection*





297.

Malicious Injury to Foulksmills  
R.I.C. Barracks.

Foulksmills 26.12.20.

They report that following an  
attack on Foulksmills R.I.C. Barracks  
at 2.45am on 18th December 1920  
Sergeant Daniel Dunne examined the  
building at 9am same date, and  
found that an outer door leading  
into the back yard size 6 feet 6 inches  
X 3 feet together with the casing had  
been destroyed, also a hole appeared  
in the gable wall behind the casing  
size about 2 feet X 1 foot.

Fourteen panes of glass were  
also broken in the Barrack Windows.

Daniel Dunne Supt.  
Co. Inspector's Office.  
The Clerk of the Urban Council  
New Ross  
Wexford 22.12.1920  
Transmitted  
M. Green  
Cl.

Numerous attacks on RIC barracks were carried out by the IRA during 1920 and 1921, the first attack taking place on the barracks in Clonroche. At a meeting of Wexford County Council on 26 May 1920, the council's solicitor, Mr. R. W. Elgee reported that he had received 27 claims for the burning of vacated constabulary barracks. The image on the left relates to a report of substantial damage occasioned to the barracks at Foulksmills that was submitted by Sergeant Daniel Dunne to the clerk of New Ross Urban District Council on 28 December 1920.

Notices of intended applications to the County Court Judge for compensation for malicious injury done to person and property were submitted as follows.

Peter McGovern, D. I., R. I. C. Claiming £15,000 for injury to the person.

Robert W. Deyne, High Sheriff, claiming £20,000, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Wexford, £1,000, Alice Barry, The Slad, £1,000, James McNally, £100, Mary G. McNally, £500, Wexford Gas Consumers' Co. Ltd. £25 for injury to property done by the burning down of the Wexford County Courthouse.

Adhering to the principle of non-recognition of English Courts of Law, the meeting took no action in the way of safeguarding the interests of the town in these cases.

Other malicious injury claims under consideration by the local council bodies in County Wexford during this period ranged from the destruction of private property, to the burning of the County Courthouse and damage caused to public infrastructure across the county including to telegraph lines and to the railway network.

**Image:** Some of the applications for malicious injury claims considered by Wexford Corporation at its meeting on 4 July 1921







Raids upon council offices across the county were frequent towards the latter half of 1920. It was reported at a Wexford County Council meeting on 7 December 1920 that a number of police had visited the council offices on the previous week and had taken away 'two minute books, three letter books, a bank pass book and rate collectors' receipts and forms'. That same afternoon, a number of civilians held up staff in the council offices and seized a number of lodgement records, rate ledgers, abstracts of accounts and finance and expenditure volumes.

A number of resignations of those elected members from Wexford County Council who were still incarcerated took place towards the last quarter of 1920 and in early January 1921 - including those of Dr James Ryan, vice-chair; and councillors John Sinnott, Albert F. Smith, John O'Byrne (Gorey), James Doyle and Philip Lennon.

County Hall, the headquarters of Wexford County Council was commandeered by the RIC in early July 1921 and the council moved temporarily to Wexford workhouse for meetings. Owing to the unsuitability of the accommodation, they subsequently transferred to the Town Hall in Wexford in early October. It was not until April 1922 that the council was reinstated in County Hall following the evacuation of the RIC from the building the previous month.

**Image:** Image of Wexford County Council offices on Hill Street, Wexford

The War of Independence ended in a truce on 11 July 1921 between the IRA and the British government. Negotiations commenced and culminated in the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty on 6 December 1921, which established the Free State government in the 26 southern counties. The majority of prisoners were released after the signing of the Treaty in December 1921. Some though, had to wait until after the Treaty was ratified.





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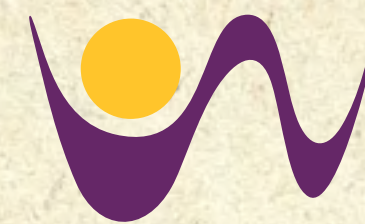
If you would like further information on any of the items featured in this exhibition or you would like to deposit archival material from the period, please contact us below:

**[archivist@wexfordcoco.ie](mailto:archivist@wexfordcoco.ie)** or on 053 919 6572

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