

# *All that Delirium of the Brave – Kildare in 1798*



*Siege of the Barracks of Poplar.*

**Mario Corrigan**

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of the Brave -  
Kildare in 1798*

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Kildare in 1798*

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Mario Corrigan: *All that Delirium of the Brave* –  
Kildare in 1798

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For My Family  
Paschal and Kathleen  
Paschal and Margaret  
and in memory of  
DARWIN – Christy Dowling (Kyle)

“It’s better to die with a pike in my hand  
than be shot like a dog at my work  
or see my children faint for want of food before my eyes.”  
(a tenant of the Duke of Leinster – June 1798)

“Patriotism is a fatal form of madness.”  
(Tom Dowling – Kildare 1997)

Front cover  
Cruikshank’s depiction of attack on Prosperous  
(W. H. Maxwell, *History of the Irish Rebellion in 1798*)

“All that delirium of the brave”  
is a quotation from “September 1913” by W. B. Yeats



## Preface

The purpose of this book is to examine the realities behind the rebellion in Kildare in 1798. It is an attempt to demythify and break from that seemingly inherent Irish trait of finding some sort of dignity in disaster. The triumph of failure has beatified its martyrs in stone and in print, in songs and poems regardless of their human weaknesses. Often we are confined to those centrifugal forces but the rebellion papers give us an insight into the world of the faceless masses.

The introduction provides an insight into the politics of the last decade of the century and an analysis of the Defenders and United Irishmen within this context. Chapter one is a brief note on the topography of Kildare and its potential as a centre of rebellion, as well as evidence of Defenderism prior to 1797 and 1798. The second chapter primarily discusses the role of Lord Edward and while understanding his weaknesses attempts to revitalise his role. In examining his relationship with prominent United members within this county it offers an explanation for the crippling desertion of Thomas Reynolds, who became a key government informer and witness. Chapter three examines the effect of the military repression prior to the outbreak of rebellion which was a crucial factor in provoking a rising in Kildare. The rebellion itself is analysed in chapter four and I hope I have provided an authentic account which was sometimes difficult to salvage from amid the various conflicting information. The final chapter examines the Rebellion Papers more closely in an effort to understand the reason for a rebellion in Kildare. So much work has been done on this period and yet these papers offer an opportunity to envisage the paranoia of the loyalists and confusion and desolation of the rebels, first hand. The archaeologist meticulously records his findings and analyses them within the context of known supportable material. A similar approach to historical evidence must provide similar advantages and the evidence contained in the Rebellion Papers merit such a meticulous analysis.

I wish to thank the staff of the National Archives in Bishop Street and the staffs at UCD and Newbridge, the Kildare County Library, particularly Mary Coughlan. Much praise is due to Mr James McGuire, my supervisor, for unwarranted patience with his phantom student. Thanks is also due to Susan at Castlemartin, Martin Dempsey at Kildare and Vincent Connelly for his present of the proof

of the United Irishmen which hangs proudly on the wall. The photographs were taken by my friend and photographer extraordinaire Patrick Sheridan. Most praise is, however, reserved for my mother Kathleen whose indefatigable enthusiasm and encouragement ensured its completion. Special thanks also to Mary Burke and Eamon Mulvihill for their encouragement and interest and to Fr Seán Mac Suibhne for his help in locating a copy of his uncle's *Kildare in '98*.

I am grateful to the Kildare County Council Commemorative Committee for their sponsorship and to Stan Hickey and the staff of the Leinster Leader for their efforts and patience. A heartfelt thanks to the County Librarian, Breda Gleeson and the staff at Newbridge and Athy libraries.

There are no words of thanks available, to express my appreciation to Michael Kavanagh, Executive Librarian, for his editorial skills, his patience and his perseverance – my sincerest gratitude.

MARIO CORRIGAN

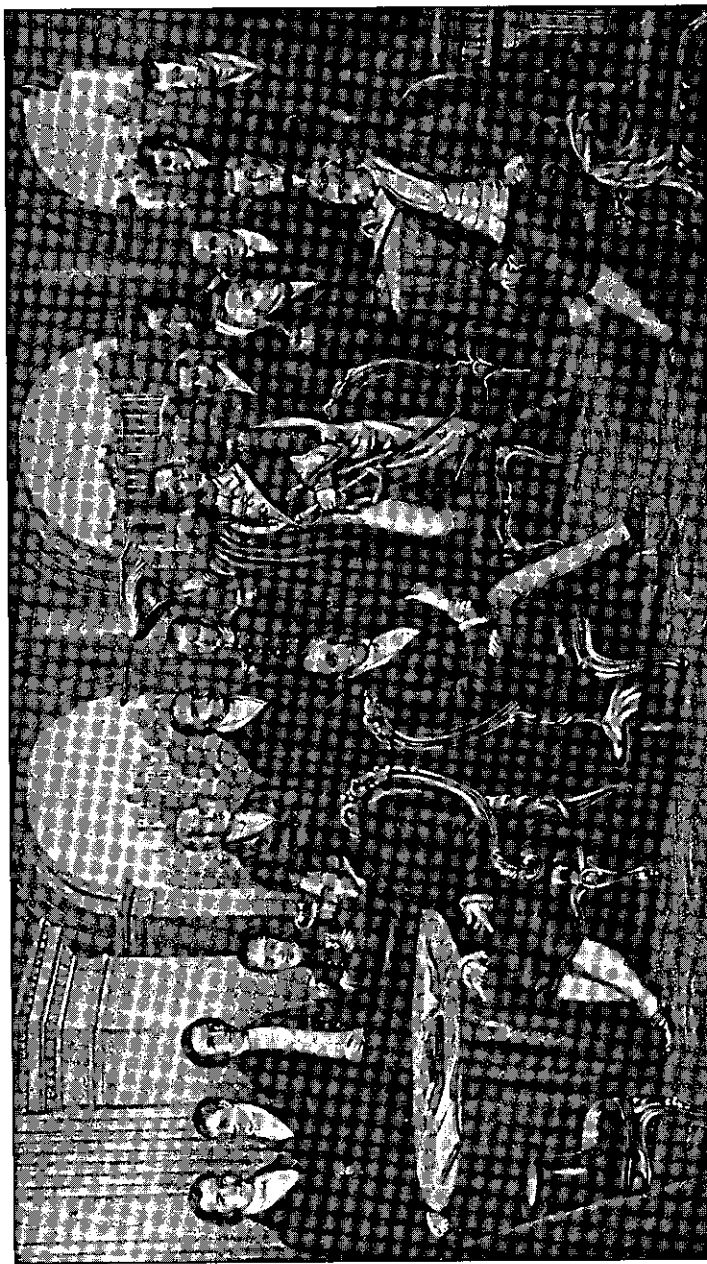
September 1997

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

H.M.C.	Historical Manuscripts Commission
I.H.S.	Irish Historical Studies
J.K.A.S.	Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society
M.SS.	Manuscripts
n.d.	no date
P.R.O.N.I.	Public Record Office Northern Ireland
Reb. Pap.	Rebellion Papers

## MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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The United Irish Patriots of 1798. Back: Samuel Neilson, Michael Dwyer, John Sheares, William Corbett, A. H. Rowan, William Jackson, Mathew Teeling, Robert Emmet, Henry Sheares, T. Wolfe Tone, T. A. Emmet, Thomas Russell, Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Seated in front: Arthur O'Connor, W. J. MacNevin, J. Napper Tandy, James Hope, H. J. Mac Cracken.

## INTRODUCTION

# The Ghost of History Past

Fraught with anomaly, ignorance and inconsistency, Ireland in the eighteenth century humbles the historian in his search for definitive truth. This is never more self-evident than in chronicling the embryonic politicization of the hitherto benign masses which, apparently, prematurely exploded into national consciousness in the 1798 rebellion. If the historian has a hunger for acquiring knowledge he adversely retains a passion to disseminate it multifariously, contritely obvious in the enormous outpourings on emergent mass politicization in the eighteenth century. Incontrovertibly we are drawn, like bees to honey, to the matrix, to the latter decades.

The 1770s witnessed the emergence of firm Castle government with the end of the Undertaker system under Townshend and Harcourt<sup>1</sup> and conversely a subsequent convulsion in the political framework due to the American War of Independence, the war with France, the rise of the Volunteers and politics in London.<sup>2</sup> Newfound strength and arrogance in Opposition politics led to the abeyance of primal "garrison" urges and the first consequential Catholic Relief Act in 1778, though it undoubtedly owed much of its existence to British intervention and the entry into war with France.<sup>3</sup>

The 1780s succumb to the success of 1782, the aphorism of legislative independence, followed by the *reductio ad absurdum* of the marriage of reform and further Catholic relief. 'Admitting Catholics to political citizenship was a very different matter from admitting them to Volunteer companies.'<sup>4</sup> The Renunciation Crisis, the disassociation of patriots from 'outdoor' political pressure<sup>5</sup> and the end of the American War of Independence sapped vital energies from the 1782 menagerie of Irish constitutional patriots. Pretension remained defiant, exhibited in the hostile reaction to Pitts' Commercial Propositions and facile display of independence in the Regency debacle in 1789, a crippling blow to Opposition politics despite efforts to consolidate the Whigs into propriety with the formation of the Whig Clubs.

*Le fin de siècle*, translated misunderstood francophilia, radicalism and renewed Catholic reforming vigour, into republicanism, disunion and rebellion. Misinterpreted by the government, fuelled by ascendancy bigotry (not strictly religious) the response was bilious and

immediate, resulting in unmitigated repression on a local and national level. The broken olive branch was ground into the dust by 'pacification and proclamation' as a terrified minority responded intuitively.<sup>6</sup>

Every decade, from the 1760s was marked by outbreaks of violence. In the words of Edith Mary Johnston, the latter decades of the eighteenth century was, 'for the élite an age of elegance, and for every section of the community an age of insecurity'.<sup>7</sup> Incidents of peasant violence, generically termed Whiteboyism, were essentially apolitical and nonsectarian. They demonstrated peasant frustration with largely economic localized issues, though by implication they exacerbated latent Protestant fears of Catholic resurgence, depravity and depredation. This effect on the Protestant mind must not, indeed cannot, be under-estimated.<sup>8</sup> 'Political fear and religious disdain must figure prominently in any account of the penal laws and any examination of interdenominational relations thereafter.'<sup>9</sup>

Inherent Protestant paranoia convulsed with the escalation in sectarian violence between Defender and Peep O'Day Boy factions. Bishop Woodward's contention that neither Catholics nor Presbyterians could safely be entrusted with political power because they both held beliefs inimical to a Protestant constitution, was substantiated in the eyes of Protestant ultras with the development of Francophile sympathies among an awakening radical middle class.<sup>10</sup>

Wolfe Tone's *An Argument on behalf of the Catholics of Ireland*, in 1791, described the necessity of a convivial union between Presbyterians and Catholics in the wake of the changes in France and the resurgence of the Catholic question.<sup>11</sup> Similar views were held by Dr. William Drennan of Belfast.<sup>12</sup> His hopes for a new political society, a 'religious brotherhood, knit together by some awful formality, by the solemnity of abjuration, by something mysterious in its manner, like the freemason society',<sup>13</sup> entertained from the mid 1780's, were realised in October and November 1791, with the formation of the Belfast and Dublin societies of United Irishmen. Such a 'constitutional conspiracy'<sup>14</sup> was intended to be the voice of reform not of revolution, its latter course being determined by government reaction and repression and the apparent termination of constitutional methods with the recall of Fitzwilliam in 1795.

Co-existent with the United Irishmen were what Francis Higgins described as 'clubs of Journeymen, artificers and tradesmen ... something ... above the common rabble', who had learned their revolutionary principles from 'reading newspapers' or from 'Paine's politics of *Liberty and Equality*'.<sup>15</sup>

These self-styled Sons of Freedom, the Philanthropic Society, the Liberty Boys or the Friends of Parliamentary Reform, according to Marianne Elliott, had many who were eventually subsumed into Defenderism and less completely into the United Irishmen and corresponded to similar clubs in Britain.

To substitute the common name of Irishman in place of the denominations of 'Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter',<sup>16</sup> or, 'to make all Irishmen Citizens – all Citizens Irishmen',<sup>17</sup> were fascinating goals when one considers the volatile sectarian nature of Irish Society in the late eighteenth century. Yet they did not seem unobtainable in the eyes of the enthusiastic United Irishmen although 'the effect of such political vaporising on the mass of the Catholics is difficult to assess'.<sup>18</sup>

But while Tone, Neilson, Russell or Drennan may have understood the legacies of Swift and Molyneux, the Philosophes of the Enlightenment or the significance of the events in France, mass assimilation of the rudimentary principles did not necessitate either education or an ability for metaphysical delineation.

Tone suggested that the debate on Burke's, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, and Paine's *The Rights of Man*, 'changed in an instant the politics of Ireland'.<sup>19</sup> One of his biographers, Henry Boylan, commented that with this debate, 'The monarchy and the institution which surrounded it no longer seemed unassailable. The ideas of republicanism and separatism, appeared to be realities capable of achievement. This was heady wine for a subject people.'<sup>20</sup> Both Tone and Boylan are anachronistic and overly simplistic. The real change in political consciousness was due to a vast array of factors which lay outside the realm of political theory though not oblivious to it.

The Catholic Relief Act in 1793, was negated by the contemporaneous Militia Act which was resisted in almost every county. New dimensions were added to the previous winters Defender war in Down, Cavan, Meath, Monaghan, Kildare and Dublin, as the country seemed on the verge of rebellion.

A Convention Act prevented unlawful general assemblies and the resurrected, French styled, Volunteers were suppressed. This was followed in 1794 by the suppression of the United Irishmen. The Fitzwilliam debacle demonstrated the banality of constitutional opposition politics and despite some loss in respectability, the United movement swung towards a union with the Defenders, as separatism and republicanism became their new official dogmas.<sup>21</sup>

Fitzwilliams recall in 1795 coincided with the offer of French help and Tone landed in France, from his enforced exile in America, in 1796 as a United Irish emissary.<sup>22</sup> As parliamentary opposition drifted towards secession, more stringent measures were adopted to deal with the degenerating situation, most notably, the Insurrection and Indemnity Acts of 1796. These were augmented by the formation of a Yeomanry force in October of that year.<sup>23</sup> Events had been further complicated by the formation of the Orange Order in September 1795<sup>24</sup> and forthright military repression with the pacification of Ulster in 1797.

To understand the reasons for the rebellion in 1798, we must understand the effect of these factors on the United Irishmen and the Defenders and the union of overt radical politics and covert terrorism. A long prevailing interpretation of Defenders as being all 'of the Roman Catholic persuasion; in general poor, ignorant, labouring men, sworn to secrecy and impressed with an opinion that they are assisting the Catholic cause ... (who also) ... talked of being relieved from hearthmoney, tithes, county-cesses and of lowering their rents',<sup>25</sup> has proven inadequate. Modern historiography has proven the extent of their politicisation<sup>26</sup> which developed independently rather than being reliant upon their links with the United Irishmen. The interaction and alliance of the two organisations terrified the government and the Protestant Ascendancy, and provoked the retaliation which ultimately was a prime factor in the outbreak of rebellion in 1798.

To actually understand the reality of the threat this combination posed we should look at the event of the rebellion. Recognition of their power in the field can help us to better understand their composition and objectives, their abilities and their failure. In Wexford we were afforded the opportunity to envisage what life might have been like if the United Irishmen had successfully established a Republic in Dublin in 1798.<sup>27</sup> The chaos is comparable to that in Paris in the early days of the Revolution. These successes in Wexford cannot be fully appreciated out of context and they contrast sharply with the sporadic, fragmented rising in Kildare which was the first county to rise.

Kildare was potentially extremely dangerous because of its proximity to the capital and its position in relation to the avenues of communication. The failure of the rebellion in Kildare demonstrates the realities of Defender and United Irish potential in May 1798. Elliott was correct in identifying 1797 as the year of lost opportu-

nity,<sup>28</sup> as the United movement increased its strength following the stimulus, albeit an impotent one in the crucial sense, of the Bantry expedition.

The capture of most of the leaders in March 1798 was in effect the death knell of the movement which they refused to heed. The splits, baronial committees, county committees, provincial delegations and Executive, organised in military format, reliant on secrecy, defeated their own purpose by their reliance on a handful of men at the top. That a rising took place amidst the communication disaster is proof of strength of conviction not competence – it was a desperate last throw measure which lacked a realistic appraisal of the situation. The sectarian nature of the conflict in Wicklow and Wexford demonstrated what raw courage and fanatical religious zeal could achieve but it simultaneously destroyed forever the United Irish ideal. Conversely the rebellion in Kildare was more symptomatic of the degeneration of the United movement by the end of May 1798 – a rebellion which realistically proved to be a military shambles without strong French intervention.<sup>29</sup>

We should be careful not to distance ourselves from the context of the time. The rebellion can only be understood in its eighteenth century context – the ghost of history past can never be laid to rest.

1. Thomas Bartlett, 'The Townshend Viceroyalty 1767-72' in Thomas Bartlett and D. W. Hayton (eds), *Penal Era and Golden Age* (Belfast 1979).

2. For Volunteer Politics see P. D. H. Smyth, 'The Volunteers and Parliament 1779-84' in Bartlett and Hayton, op. cit.; and *The Volunteers, 1778-84*, in PRONI Education Facsimiles series, 141-160 (1974). For an overview of this whole period see David Dickson, *New Foundations: Ireland 1660-1800* (Dublin 1987), Ch. 5, 'Coalition under Stress', pp. 128-55.

3. R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London 1988), p. 245.

4. Peter Smyth, Introduction to P.R.O.N.I., *The Volunteers 1778-84*, op. cit., p. 14.

5. e.g. Grattan and Charlemont see Foster, op. cit., p. 256.

6. For government reaction see Dickson, op. cit., p. 188-190.

7. Edith Mary Johnston quoted in M. Bric, 'Priests, Parsons and Politics' in C. H. E. Philpin (ed.), *Nationalism and Popular Protest in Ireland* (1987), p. 163.

8. James Kelly 'The Genesis of "Protestant Ascendancy": The Rightboy Disturbances of the 1780s and their impact upon Protestant Opinions' in Gerard O'Brien (ed.), *Parliament, Politics and People* (Dublin 1989). Kelly also describes the development of the term 'Protestant Ascendancy'.

9. James Kelly, *ibid.*, p. 95.

10. *ibid.*, p. 123.

11. Tom Dunne, *Theobald Wolfe Tone: colonial outsider* (Cork 1982), ch. 2, p. 24.



12. Dr. William Drennan – Sam McTier, Belfast, 3 July 1791 – P.R.O.N.I Education Facsimile No. 62: *United Irishmen* (Northern Ireland 1974)
13. Drennan – Rev. William Bruce, August 1785 – PRONI op. cit., No. 61.
14. *ibid.*
15. Francis Higgins the government spy and subject of William J. Fitzpatrick, *The Sham Squire* (1865), quoted in Marianne Elliott, *Partners in Revolution. The United Irishmen and France* (1982), ch. 1 p. 16. See also James Smythe, 'Dublin's Political Underground in the 1790's' in Gerard O'Brien (ed.), *Parliament Politics and People*.
16. Wolfe Tone from his 'Life' quoted in Dunne, ... *Colonial Outsider*, ch. 2, p. 25.
17. Main United Irish policy document issued from Dublin on 5 Dec. 1791, in Elliott, *Partners ...*, p. 23.
18. Elliott, *ibid.*, p. 15.
19. Tone from his Journal, quoted in Henry Boylan, *Wolfe Tone*, Gills Irish Lives series (Dublin 1981), p. 16.
20. Boylan, *ibid.*, p. 16.
21. There were Defender lodges in thirteen different counties, including Kildare in 1795 – Thomas Bartlett, 'Defenders and Defenderism in 1795' in *I.H.S. x.x.i.v.* No 95, May 1985 (p. 373-394), p. 384.
22. Elliott, *Partners ...*, pp. 41-46.
23. For these Acts see Dickson, *New Foundations ...*, pp. 188-190. The only voice raised against the Insurrection Act was that of Lord Edward Fitzgerald – Thomas Bartlett, 'Indiscipline And Disaffection In The French And Irish Armies During The French Revolutionary Period' in Hugh Gough and David Dickson (eds.), *Ireland and the French Revolution* (Dublin 1990) pp. 195-196.
24. Hereward Senior, *Orangeism in Ireland and Britain 1795-1836* (1966); Peter Gibbon, *The Origins of Ulster Unionism* (1975), pp. 12-38.
25. Secret Committee of the House of Lords 1793, - in George Cornwall Lewis, *Local Disturbances in Ireland* (1836), p. 30.
26. For an excellent account of the United Irishmen and Defenders see Part 1 of Elliott's *Partners in Revolution*. Also Louis Cullen, 'The Political Structures of The Defenders'; and Tom Dunne, 'Popular Ballads, Revolutionary Rhetoric and Politicisation'; and Kevin Whelan, 'Politicisation in County Wexford and the Origins of the 1798 Rebellion' all in Gough and Dickson (eds.), *Ireland and the French Revolution*.
27. See Kevin Whelan, 'Politicisation in County Wexford and the Origins of the 1798 Rebellion' – Gough & Dickson, *ibid.*
28. Elliott, *Partners in Revolution*, ch. 5.
29. See Lord Edward's apparent plans for the forthcoming campaign dating from February 1798, contained in Thomas Reynolds depositions in Thomas Moore, *The Life and Death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald* (1st ed., 1831 – Cameron & Ferguson edition Glasgow, no date – author) p. 163. 'Some of the United Men would certainly join in the French lines and of course would soon become disciplined; but as to the multitude, all they would have to do would be to harass the escorts of ammunition, cut off detachments and foraging parties, and, in fine, make the King's troops feel themselves in every respect in an enemy's country while the actual battle would be left to the foreign troops.'

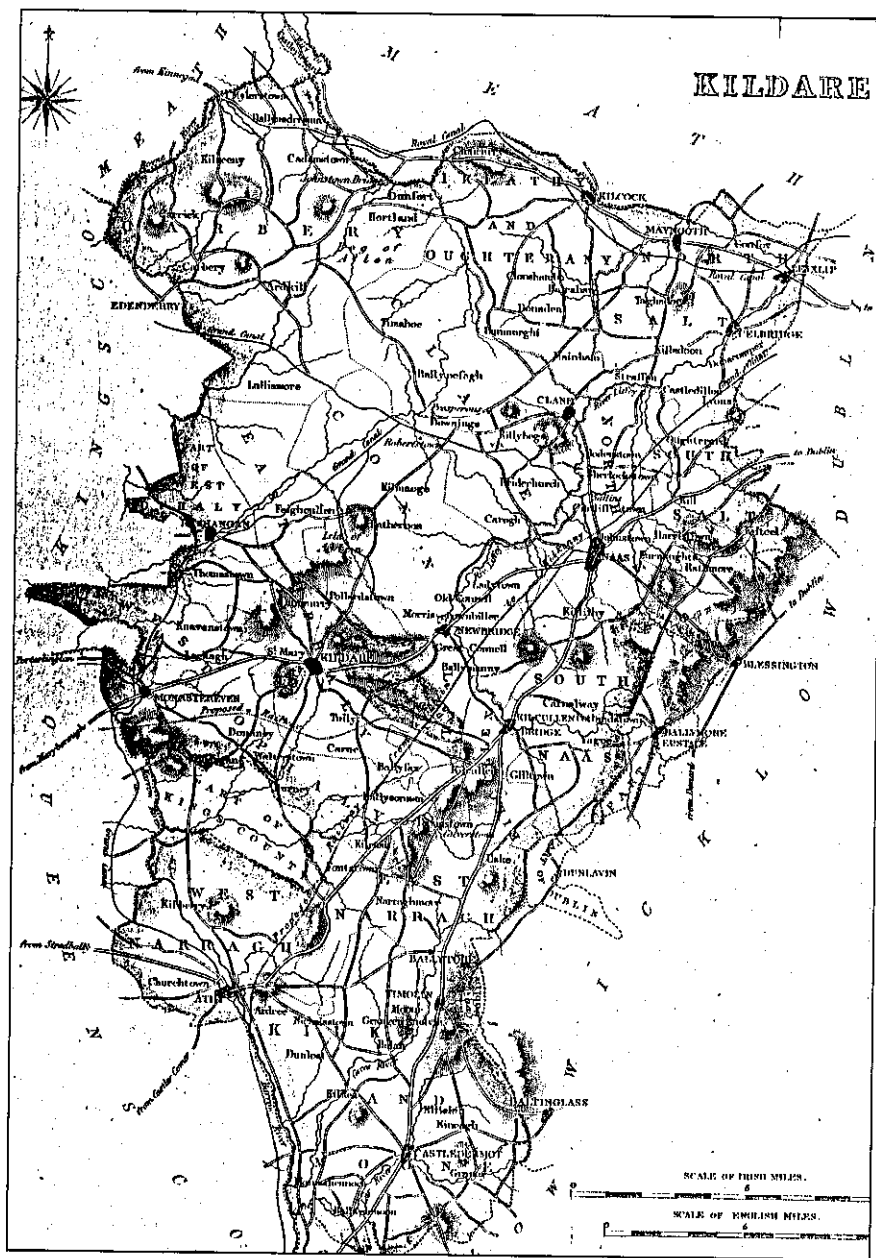
## CHAPTER I

## The Lie of the Land

'Kildare, a midland county of Leinster is bounded on the north by Meath, on the east by Dublin and Wicklow, on the south by Carlow and on the west by the King's and Queens's counties; containing 201,220 acres of arable pasture and meadow ground, 41,035 acres of bog; total 242,245 acres plantation measure, contained in fourteen baronies and half-baronies. It is about thirty-two miles long, and twenty-one broad, mostly flat, of fine arable soil, much exhausted as, from its vicinity to Dublin, it has been for centuries the county, from which the capital has principally drawn its supplies of grain. The population is immense particularly in the vicinity of turbaries, where the lower orders collect to enjoy the blessing of cheap fuel, with which this county so abounds.'<sup>30</sup>

Of the 41,035 acres of bogland 25,274, (according to Rawson's Survey) were situated in the northern and western baronies of Carberry, Connell, Clane and West Ophaley.<sup>31</sup> It was almost in the centre of this area, at Timahoe, that William Aylmer was to concentrate the rebel forces under his command and maintain his 'predatory guerilla war'.<sup>32</sup> The topography of the county allowed the campaign to survive for almost two months. Apparently the terrain suited a disciplined army and frustrated the rebels, a point commonly mooted by many, not unbiased, nineteenth century historians such as Charles Hamilton Teeling. He remarked that "The open and extended plains of Kildare afforded neither mountain nor fastness",<sup>33</sup> for the rebels protection, but failed to observe the difficulties encountered by the king's troops, in a county where one sixth of the acreage was bogland with high densities of population.

The proximity of the county to Dublin, and the reliance of the capital on Kildare for supplies and communications, can explain the contemporary hysteria when news of the rebellion in Kildare reached Dublin. Kildare was a mere days march away, even less. The Cork, Limerick and Galway mails traversed the county as did the Grand and Royal canals.<sup>34</sup> Once the mail coaches were attacked and destroyed the capital was cut off from the rest of the country. This was reciprocal and before Major General Sir James Duff reopened the lines of communication, Munster and parts of the south and west were cut off from the capital, unsure and in some



Map of Kildare from Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* (1837).

parts unaware, of what had actually happened, for nearly six days.<sup>35</sup>

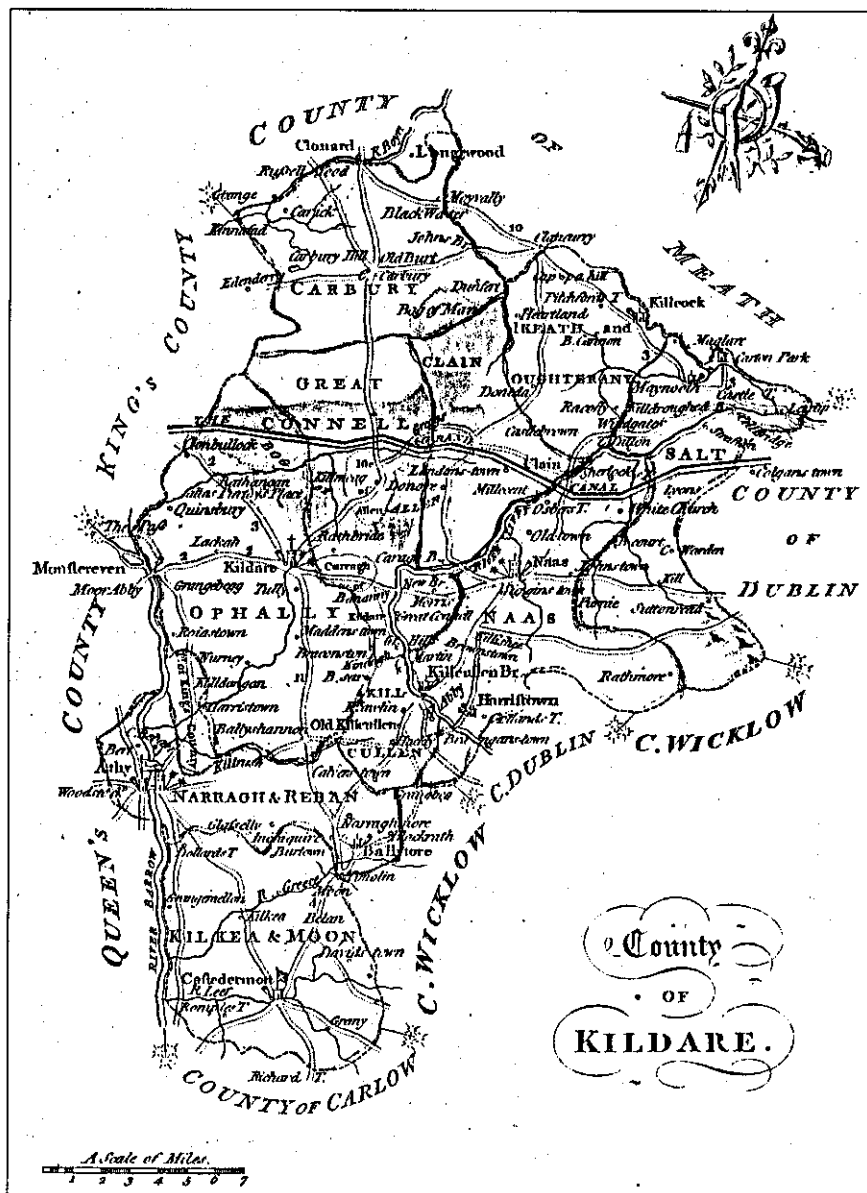
On the positive side, from the point of view of the government, Kildare was fairly well protected with particularly strong garrisons at Naas and Athy.<sup>36</sup> Kildare's position was vital to security and this was recognised by the Marquis of Buckingham in a letter to his brother Lord Grenville in which he praised the amnesty in Kildare. Just two days after the battle of Ballinamuck he wrote that 'if the Kildare rebels had continued in arms I protest I do not know how they could have been forced; and you will remember that the whole of our southwestern army has for the last eighteen days been supplied with every military store, and with their *daily bread* along this very line.'<sup>37</sup>

The returns of the United Irishmen for the 26th February, 1798, which Thomas Reynolds, a provincial delegate, gave the government, account for 10,863 armed men in Kildare pledged to the cause.<sup>38</sup> This had evidently built on the old defender allegiances of the early 1790's.<sup>39</sup> Lecky highlighted this formidable movement – 'In Kildare which had hitherto been a very peaceable and prosperous county, with a large resident gentry, the Defenders movement almost assumed the dimensions of a rebellion and it was noticed that some of the magistrates against whom the popular feeling ran most furiously, were Catholics.'<sup>40</sup> This was the situation, despite the fact that the magistrates seemed particularly energetic in the county.

The evident hysteria in the state papers against Defenders or Regulators, attests both to their strength and the fear they could instil.<sup>41</sup> Even up to the Rebellion itself people seemed more concerned about Defenderism than the United Irish system, unless we are to assume that there was little or no distinction between them.

One case worthy of note was that of Lawrence O'Connor, a schoolteacher who was executed at Naas for administering oaths and being a Defender. It seems he was the local leader and an attempt was made to rescue him by several hundred men. Witnesses and magistrates were threatened; one magistrate was shot at three times and wounded but O'Connor met his 'fate'. The Roman Catholic clergy refused to attend him at the time of his execution, or to administer the Sacraments to him. His carcase is buried in the courtyard of the gaol and his head is to be sent up upon a pole in the front of the building.<sup>42</sup> Camden expressly ordered his beheading.

In his speech to the court, O'Connor represented the old agrarian tradition – it was non sectarian and apolitical and directed against



Robert Sayer and John Bennett's Map of Kildare in 1776.

the social evils of rack-rents etc. Wolfe Tone credited himself with knowing 'that however it might be disguised or surpassed there existed in the breast of every Irish Catholic an inextinguishable abhorrence of the English name and power'.<sup>43</sup> The realities, however, were much less explicit, and even more complicated with the merger of the United Irishmen and the Defenders. But whatever the complications were at the lower levels the leadership of the new combination was a United Irish one and Kildare had more than its fair share of prominent members.

30. Thomas Rawson, *Statistical Survey of the County of Kildare* (Dublin; 1807), Part 1, Chapter 1, pp. 1-2. Samuel Lewis. *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* (London, 1837), quotes these figures from the Ordnance Survey, total 392,435 acres; 325,988 cultivated, 66,447 non cultivable and bog: Rawson's comments are useful because of his involvement in 1798 against the rebels. The vast differences in the figures are mainly due to Irish and British measurements.

31. Rawson, *ibid.*, p. 203.

32. W. E. H. Lecky, *A History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* Vol 5 (first ed. 1892; new ed. London 1909), p. 13.

33. Charles Hamilton Teeling, *History of The Irish Rebellion of 1798 a Personal Narrative* (1828 first ed: Glasgow 1876), p 84.

34. Post towns were Maynooth, Monasterevin, Castledermot, Athy, Naas, Kilcullen, Ballitore, Kilcock, Kildare, Leixlip.

35. Thomas Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty: The Bloody Story of the Great Irish Rebellion of 1798* (First Print 1969; Reprint London, 1972), p. 185. Rev. Patrick F. Kavanagh, *A Popular History Of The Insurrection of 1798* (Dublin, 1884 - 4th ed), Said no mail in Dublin from 23-31 May, Chap. II, p. 22.

36. Naas was the county (-shire) town.

37. Buckingham-Grenville, 10 Sept. 1798, *H.M.C. FORTESCUE MSS.*, Vol. iv (1905), p. 305.

38. Moore, *Life and Death of Lord Edward*. Table, p.162. Third largest returns behind Wicklow and Queens County in Leinster.

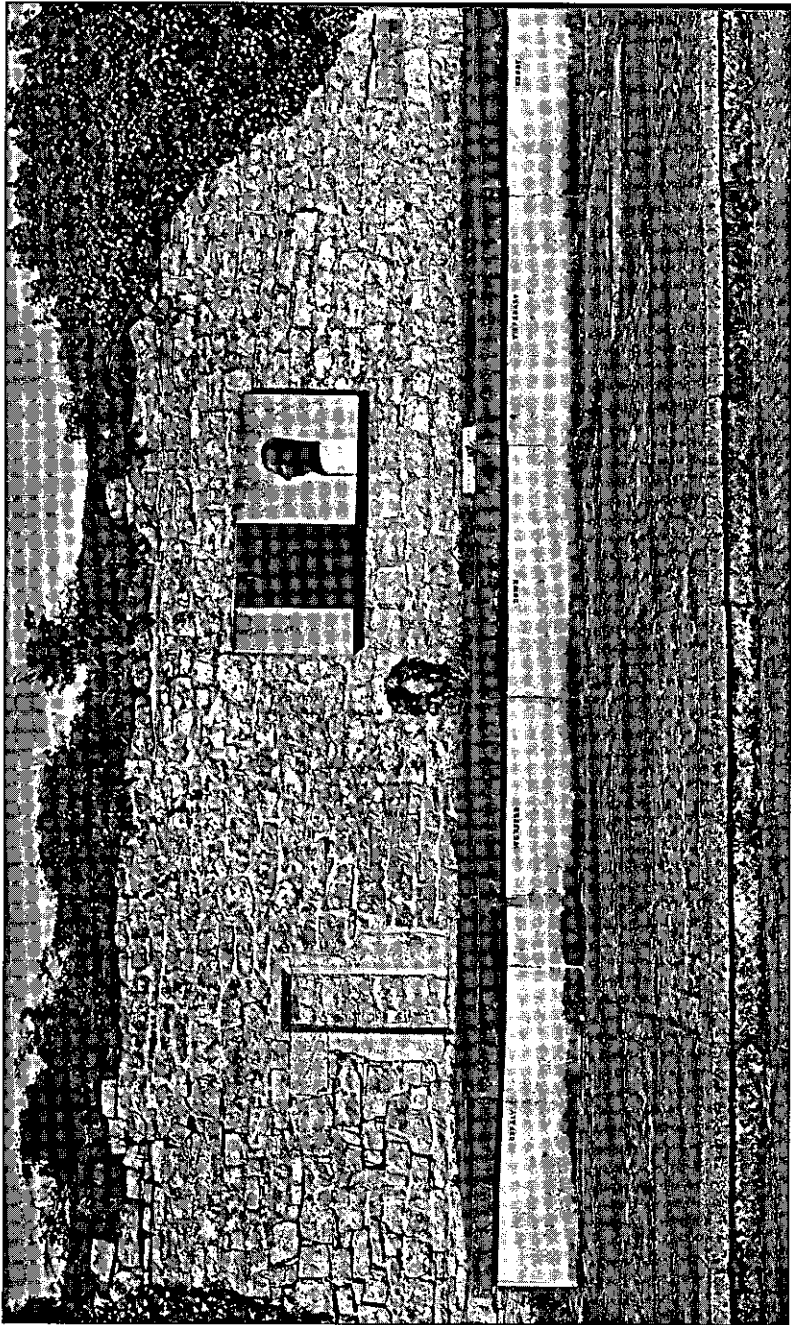
39. For evidence of Kildare Defenders see note 21 above; also Whiteboysism in 1775 and 1781 in Kildare - Con Costello, *Kildare: Saints Soldiers and Horses* (Naas 1991), p. 77.

40. Lecky, *A History of Ireland ...*, Vol 3, p. 391.

41. e.g. Reb. Pap. 620-24-97; 620-29-315; 620-37-231.

42. Taken from Pelham Correspondence - quoted in Lecky, *A History of Ireland ...*, Vol 3, p. 392.

43. Wolfe Tone, quoted in Lecky, *ibid.*, p. 205: An interesting anecdote concerns his being robbed at Bodenstown in 1786, 'Of all the adventures wherein I have been hitherto engaged this undoubtedly was the most horrible' - Con Costello, 'Looking Back', *Leinster Leader* (series 504), 28-5-92.



Wolfe Tone Memorial at Bodenstown.

## CHAPTER II

# Lord Edward's County

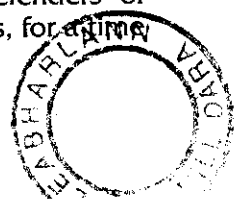
Kildare's connection with the United Irish movement is chiefly remembered through the activities of Lord Edward Fitzgerald but Wolfe Tone lived there for a short time at Bodenstown. He inherited his first names (Theobald Wolfe), from his father's young landlord and it was here that his first child, Maria, was born in 1786. It was also here that he was reputed to have been buried in November, 1799.<sup>44</sup> Apparently an ardent anticatholic, he remains one of the greatest mythical heroes of Irish nationalism. A founder member of the United Irishmen he subsequently claimed, that from an early stage he recognised that the sole problem of Ireland was its connection to Great Britain, though this probably was only fully developed later in the decade. Tone's mythical status was confirmed by Pearse, in his eulogy which is inscribed on Tone's monument.

Ní Síochain Gan Saoirse  
Thinker And Doer,

Dreamer of the Immortal Dream And Doer Of The Deed,  
We Owe To This Dead Man More Than We Can Ever Repay Him ...  
To His Teaching We Owe It That There Is Such A Thing As Irish Nationalism  
And To His Memory Of The Deed He Nerved His Generation To Do,  
To the Memory Of 98,  
We Owe It That There Is Any Manhood Left In Ireland.<sup>45</sup>

Whatever we make of the myth, his political aspirations or policies, the diligence and perseverance of the man, in France as a United Irish emissary very nearly changed the course of Irish History.<sup>46</sup> The context of his patriotism should not be misunderstood in relation to its content, the content in relation to its context. The ideals of the United Irishmen in 1791, may have been ill-timed and high minded, even a little naive but certainly they were just and well intentioned, if not a little altruistic. Tone's response in 1798 cost him his life, but must be seen in the context of his devotion to republican separatism at this time.

Kildare is instantly remembered in 1798 as the home of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, 'that idolized favourite of the Defenders of Leinster'.<sup>47</sup> Military commander of the United Irish forces, for



a colonel of these forces in county Kildare, he seemed to possess the talent and persona to raise an effective military force against the government. Albeit his traitorous activities, eloquent epitaphs were provided by men like Lord Holland, Lord Byron and General Sir John Doyle, for this romanticised hero of the rebellion.<sup>48</sup> When the justice of a Bill of Attainder, passed after his death to disinherit his heirs of his estates, was questioned, a petition to the King on their behalf was signed by such notables as the Duke of Richmond, Charles James Fox and Lord Holland.<sup>49</sup> His brother was the Duke of Leinster, one of the most powerful men in the country. He was also related to the Conolly's, Lady Louisa and Thomas, 'the greatest commoner in Ireland'.<sup>50</sup> Such connections and his own aristocratic title simultaneously designated him an ally or adversary of major consequence.

Married to Pamela, the supposed illegitimate daughter of Phillippe Égalité, the Duke of Orleans, his support for French democratic principles, his handsome appearance and his dress in revolutionary fashion, earned him a reputation in United Irish circles well before his active involvement in 1796.<sup>51</sup> Much of the praise for his edification must go to Moore's romantic biography, which in turn provoked a reaction portraying Lord Edward as a sort of idealistic fop. Lecky said 'he was not a man of serious or well-reasoned convictions and he had all the temperament of a sentimentalist and an enthusiast. To such men the new lights which had arisen in France were as fatally attractive as the candle to the moth'.<sup>52</sup> However Lord Edward's failure to harness his emotions, particularly in his correspondence need not totally undermine his courage, conviction or resolution.

His correspondence during his journeys to America in 1781 (where he saw active service), the West Indies in 1782-3 and Canada in 1788 could indeed substantiate Lecky's remarks particularly in relation to his recklessness where affairs of the heart were concerned. So also his membership of the Bear Tribe, his rush to France to experience events at first hand and his lodging with Citizen Paine. The renunciation of his title, his subsequent cashing from the army and his marriage to the supposed daughter of Philippe Égalité can likewise be misconstrued. In separating the man from the myth and the myth from the man, we must embrace this frivolous side of his nature in combination with his inherent strengths and abilities.

His politics extended beyond the French Revolution. In 1787 he criticised his uncle, Thomas Conolly, for his support of the Castle on the Riot Bill, describing it as 'shabby behaviour'.<sup>53</sup> Lord Edward was

determined to resist the Government intention to bring in some very violent measures concerning the Whiteboy business.<sup>54</sup> In the same letter that had denounced Conolly's behaviour he had prescribed the necessary level of personal commitment: 'When one has any great object to carry, one must expect disappointments and not be diverted from one's object by them, or even appear to mind them'.<sup>55</sup> His step-father, Ogilvie, secretly visited him in Moore's public house in Thomas Street, while he was on the run, to try and persuade him to leave Ireland. Edward gave him a ring as a remembrance and said 'I am too deeply pledged to these men to be able to withdraw with honour'.<sup>56</sup>

Before he went to France in 1792, it seems Richmond, Pitt and Dundas the Home Secretary, offered him command of a proposed expedition against Cadiz which certainly testified to his military ability. He was deprived of the post because of his refusal to support the government as a member of Kildare.<sup>57</sup> While in London he became friends with Fox and Sheridan, was it any wonder he should meet with Paine in London and Paris.

It was Paine the man that impressed Lord Edward; he possessed a, 'simplicity of manner, a goodness of heart and a strength of mind in him, that I never knew a man before possess', but he did begin to think of himself in terms of 'Le Citoyen Edouard Fitzgerald'.<sup>58</sup> He continued in Irish radical circles even in Paris. Present at the banquet when he renounced his title were John and Henry Sheares, who on their return to Dublin were to join the United Irishmen, which would cost them their lives in 1798.<sup>59</sup> These politics were not so popular in Dublin where he struggled to keep his cool due to 'differing so very much in opinion with the people that one is unavoidably obliged to live with. ... It is rather hard that when, with a wish to avoid disputing, one sees and talks to a few people of one's own way of thinking, we are, at once set down as a nest of traitors'.<sup>60</sup>

This was probably why he enjoyed Kildare so much. Having described the Lord Lieutenant and the majority of the House as 'the worst subjects the King has',<sup>61</sup> in January 1793, he had clearly indicated his political beliefs and while he still remained aloof from the United organisation, he had the confidence of its leadership.

In Kildare with a portrait of Citizen 'Tom Paine over the mantel-piece', the Fitzgeralds, Edward, Pamela and his sister Lucy shared time with Arthur O'Connor. They enjoyed 'democratic' talks, dancing to Irish jigs, (sometimes with the servants and maids), but most of all each others company.<sup>62</sup> The democratic walks and rides over

the Curragh plains were probably used to recruit new members and to pass on new information and orders, as was the case when he attended handball games.<sup>63</sup> Here in his little lodge he met and played chess with George Cummins 'a great democrat', the Kildare apothecary arrested in March 1798 as the Kildare delegate to the Leinster Directory.<sup>64</sup> Lady Lucy recorded in her Journal how 'democrats, that is to say, rebels came from Dublin to see them, and the two friends make a tour of some days in the West of Ireland' in order to recruit members.<sup>65</sup> Clearly Lord Edward fulfilled his duties at local and national level.

Late in 1797 J. Pollack, a clerk of the crown, gave an account of the Kildare assizes, recommending more troops be committed. He perceived to exist 'in that County a most decided and unequivocal determination to subvert the King's Government'. He found persons charged with 'Murder, Burglary and Arson', 'with administering oaths to be true to the French and the United Irishmen for they were always coupled'. And in every crime they were supported by 'Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Mr. Lawless, Mr. Ryan and Mr. Cummins of Kildare boldly and manifestly shown by their appearance in court and their conduct in the streets as by every man on the Grand Jury of the Catholic persuasion'. Cummins, who he described as 'the Agent and Confidential friend of Lord Edward', acted as Treasurer and employed and paid the solicitors and council for the prisoners. He 'appeared the executive officer of Sedition and Rebellion'.<sup>66</sup>

While the United movement was feeling the effects of the Insurrection and Indemnity Acts the leaders were rallying their supporters. Edward Fitzgerald was not worried about title or appearance but actively involved in the United movement and flaunted the law. On more than one occasion Lucy and Pamela expressed concern for the future. Lucy wrote in her Journal on 28 December, 1796, of Lord Edwards reaction to the news (unconfirmed) of a French landing in the south - 'Dear Eddy came over from Kildare. I never saw him with such pleasure. Heaven protect him.'<sup>67</sup>

Lord Edward and O'Connor were soon in Belfast, on United business, in January 1797. Early in February, back in the south, O'Connor was arrested for his Address to the County of Antrim, the die had been cast. Lord Charles Fitzgerald, told his sister Lucy, that 'Camden had information against him, (i.e. Edward), and that he must leave the country'.<sup>68</sup> This was even before O'Connor's arrest. It only seemed to strengthen his resolve:

Every day the violent measures of our Irish Tyrants increase, and every day throughout the Country they lose strength and make enemies, while they in the true spirit and ignorance of Despots revenge on Individuals as if the movements or indignation of a whole people depended on men and not causes - foolish madmen. I don't know whether to impute their conduct to Blindness and folly or wickedness, I rather think it is the first for there are certainly good men among them and well meaning. They themselves see what must be the issue yet on they rush perhaps from an Idea they are right'.<sup>69</sup>

The immediate object of his anger was obviously the incarceration of his friend O'Connor, but there is a subliminal determination to resist no matter what the cost. His resolution in the face of 'tyranny' (his word) can hardly be depicted as romantic regardless of the innate emotional fragility of many nineteenth century histories, memoirs and biographies.

Barras, who believed O'Connor was an opportunist, said in his memoirs that 'Fitzgerald was a sincere patriot, whose devotion to liberty had alone drawn him to the attempt he was making at that moment and in which he had everything to lose'.<sup>70</sup> While patriotism is an emotion rather than an aesthetic contribution, Lord Edward's convivial character, military training and aristocratic connections could have commanded him a prestigious position within the United organisation. It was however the grim determination of the man himself, which made him see it through to the end, that earned him the title of patriot even without Moore's character building anecdotes.<sup>71</sup>

The recall of Fitzwilliam and the failure of the emancipation issue marked a major change in the 1790s. Politicisation developed more ominous overtones with the unification of Defender and United Irish interests and the abandonment of constitutional methods. This sinister combination was legitimised in later years, by the testimonies of confessional United Irishmen who laid the blame for the rebellion on government reaction and its repressive measures. Even before Fitzwilliams recall, parliamentary opposition was on the wane. Lord Edward had indeed hoped Fitzwilliam would not come 'as perhaps it might make some of our opposition act with more spirit and determination'.<sup>72</sup>

As early as July 1794 Lord Edward had sensed the political inertia evident in Ireland, which even a new ministry would do little to

change. It seemed his brother, Leinster would support such a ministry but he would not, 'for my obstinacy or perseverance grows stronger every day, and all the events that have passed and are passing, but convince me more and more, that these two countries must see very strong changes, and *cannot* come to good unless they do'.<sup>73</sup> After the implementation of the Insurrection Act in 1796, he told his constituents he would not stand again as M.P. for Kildare, as free elections were impossible under martial law.<sup>74</sup> He was by now resolved to other means.

With the collapse of the emancipation issue and the recall of Fitzwilliam, Lord Edward and others made up their minds for a bloody conflict. Although respected by, and previously associated with, the United Irishmen, he only became an official member sometime in late 1796.<sup>75</sup> He and O'Connor travelled (independently) to Hamburg and Basle to convey United Irish intentions to the French Directory. Subsequently in 1798 he was to quarrel with moderates like Thomas Addis Emmet and Richard McCormick who shrank from rebellion and at all costs a rebellion without sufficient French aid.

Despite the apparent collapse of the movement in the early months of 1798, he remained firm. The only other survivor of the Bridge Street arrests, McCormick fled abroad soon after. A wanted man with £1,000. on his head, Lord Edward remained at large for almost two months though carelessly negligent about safety precautions. His capture (and death) added to the drama surrounding this enigmatic figure and probably strengthened the resolve of those who had pledged themselves to the cause.

My intention is not to tear down one myth and erect another, but merely to prove that this was a man of conviction and not merely a pawn of others, like O'Connor.<sup>76</sup> The reason for spending so much time on Lord Edward, is because he was the military commander of the United Irishmen and a United leader in Kildare until he relinquished his colonelcy to Reynolds in January. His personal involvement at local events, and particularly his presence at the trials, must greatly have enhanced the prestige of the movement and partly explain its strength in Kildare. Similarly the United organisation in County Kildare greatly benefited from the wealth of connections formed around Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

As we have seen he was closely affiliated to George Cummins an active member in Kildare until his arrest at Bond's house in March. Cummins was replaced as provincial delegate, by Michael Reynolds

a respectable farmer who 'belonged to one of the young Farmers' groups whom Lord Edward had sponsored, these were rustics he was reported to have gathered for republican sing songs around the bonfire'.<sup>77</sup> Michael Reynolds was to lead the attack on Naas in the Rebellion. Tenants of Lord Edward such as Patrick and John Finerty of Kilrush also featured on the rebel side in 1798. Lord Edward gave a sword and cutlass to Pdraig O'Beirne in 1797 as a token of trust, which proved well founded: O'Beirne led the attack on Monasterevin. Similarly the commander in chief of the United forces was the friend of William Aylmer. Formerly a lieutenant of the Kildare Militia, Aylmer commanded the northern army of Kildare at Timahoe. Another friend was Valentine Browne Lawless who was an active member of the United Irish executive in Dublin and London in 1797 and 1798.

Based on the events of the rebellion, the strength of the movement seemed to be in the northern Baronies – the home of Aylmer and Lawless and other rebel leaders. These included George Luby, Aylmer's brother-in-law and Hugh Ware his neighbour. Osberstown was the home of another accomplice, one of the leaders of the attack on Prosperous, Dr. John Esmond. In earlier days County Kildare had been the home of Wolfe Tone and Archibald Hamilton Rowan, a prominent United Irishman, who had fled to France and then America, after his imprisonment for sedition.

Politically then it was one of the most disaffected areas which accounts for the involvement of its young radicals but curiously there is a marked absence of Protestant militants at least at local level. Lord Edward, Tone and Lawless were protestants (the latter's father had conformed); but Aylmer, Luby, Esmond and Michael Reynolds were Catholic as indeed was the case throughout the county. Suspected liberals like Colonel Keating of Narraghmore, Wogan Browne of Castle Browne and Thomas Fitzgerald of Geraldine remained aloof from the United Irishmen. Whether it was due to friendship, family ties or religion, these young men bound together in their ambition for change. Because of their wealth, education and military training, they were natural leaders of the rebels in Kildare.<sup>78</sup>

By the time of the rebellion, Hamilton Rowan had completely turned his back on revolution. In April 1796 he wrote to his wife dreading 'the moment when ignorance and despair, without any one to appear or keep down the storm, may burst from their shackles'.<sup>79</sup> Rowan had been a reformer not a revolutionary and had

often said to Wolfe Tone, of the government 'that instead of prosecution and persecution if they had a mind to destroy the United Irishmen, Volunteers etc, they had only to do justice to the Irish Catholics'.<sup>80a</sup> In his journal, on his way to America, he wrote that his 'ideas of reform and of another word which begins with the same letter, are very much altered by living for twelve months in France; and that I never wish to see either the one or the other procured by force'.<sup>80b</sup>

This last remark of Rowan's could probably provide us with the key to the treachery of one of Lord Edwards acquaintances Thomas Reynolds of Kilkea. It was he who betrayed the Leinster Directory in March in Bridge Street, The villain of the United Irishmen, the man who supposedly measured his value 'by the coffins of his victims',<sup>81</sup> Reynolds had also witnessed the mob in Paris at first hand. His revulsion to this experience led him to his decision to give information to the government which shattered the United organisation.

An extensive silk manufacturer in Dublin, Reynolds leased Kilkea Castle, just outside Athy, from the Duke of Leinster on the word of his brother Lord Edward. He was related to Wolfe Tone by marriage and had been a member of the Catholic convention in 1792, but had resigned, 'when cautious counsels began to prevail'.<sup>82</sup>

In his evidence, at the trial of John McCann, Reynolds said, he became a United Irishman shortly after the French left Bantry, when indeed there was 'a huge accession in confidence and in membership'.<sup>83</sup> There is little correlation between his entry into the movement at this late stage, and his apparently naive belief that its 'aims were limited to its published programme Catholic emancipation and Parliamentary reform', Pakenham does point out that at this stage however his membership appeared little more than nominal.<sup>84</sup> The Society, however, had been suppressed by the government as a seditious organisation, and a French invasionary force had just been swept off the Irish coast. such a combination could hardly be construed to behave constitutionally.

When government suspicions became difficult to bear Lord Edward asked Reynolds to take over as colonel for the barony of Kilkea and Moone. Reynolds said he was persuaded by Lord Edward in late 1797 and by mid February 1798 he had been elected treasurer of the Leinster Directory. He was present at a dinner at Castlejordan where politics and the state of the country were discussed. The next day, on his way home with William Cope, a Dublin merchant, the conversation about the horrors of revolution, murder

and the overthrow of religion, government and property was renewed.<sup>85</sup> Reynolds decided to furnish the government with the plans of the United Irishmen, though he preserved his anonymity. He was able to deliver the latest returns of men and money, as well as the minutes of the last meeting, from documents copied from Lord Edwards hand.

By now the government was losing patience and anxious to act decisively against the Society but Reynolds could not be induced to appear in court. He was however able to give them the date, time, address and passwords of the next provincial meeting in Dublin. On 12 March, at Oliver Bond's house, in Bridge Street, two members of the executive and ten provincial delegates were seized. Others such as Thomas Addis Emmet, and Henry Jackson were taken at home or at work. Only Richard McCormick, (who soon fled abroad) and Lord Edward escaped.

In July Reynolds testimony led a jury to return a guilty verdict on John McCann, after just two minutes deliberation despite a brilliant defence by Curran which cast aspersions on Reynolds character. William Michael Byrne was sentenced to death after five minutes deliberation. Both McCann and Byrne were executed and Oliver Bond, who was also convicted, died in prison.<sup>86</sup> Curran's exposé of Reynolds credentials and untrustworthy veracity combined with Reynolds duplicity in McCann's home to degrade his reputation but the government were well satisfied. By this time the remaining leaders had signed an agreement with the government implicating themselves and exposing their intentions as United Irishmen. In return the government agreed they would not have to inform on other members and granted them voluntary transportation.

Earlier in the year Reynolds was ironically incarcerated by the Kings troops for being a United leader. Because his identity was secret Colonel Campbell in Athy did not know he was an informer. At the time Reynolds was under summons to stand trial at the county meeting of the United Irishmen, (at Bell's on the Curragh) accused of betraying those arrested at Bond's.

He was preparing to go abroad, once his wife had recovered from an illness, and had organised a banquet to mark his departure. That day Captain Erskine of the 9th Dragoons took possession of Kilkea and ravished the estate at free-quarters for almost ten days.

The terrified Reynolds was arrested shortly after at Castledermot and lodged in Athy gaol, on the testimony of his own United captains and men.<sup>87</sup> He appealed to Cope for help and revealed his



identity to the government, his bargaining position now greatly reduced. Reynolds made a deal for protection and money in return for which he agreed to testify against those arrested on 12 March.<sup>88</sup> He subsequently worked in government service in Lisbon, Ireland, Copenhagen and finally Paris where he died.<sup>89</sup>

Hamilton Rowan was a prominent United Irishman who had fled to France for self-preservation and had witnessed the extremes of the Terror. Men can often suggest using violence without understanding the horrors it possesses. This new power in France; this militant democracy, this flagellant mob that had turned upon its masters and in time upon itself, had struck terror into the heart of conservative, aristocratic, propertied Europe. The new lights of the Enlightenment which had realised its conception could do little to control it.

If the conservatives in Europe could find sanctity and comfort in the antirevolutionary rhetoric of Burke, the radicals were stirred by the simpleness of the democratic trinity exposed by Paine and the National Convention – The rights of Man, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Often liberals were confused. In Britain and Ireland many supported the revolution in the image of 1688, they protested against the war but found it difficult to justify the death of the King, the September massacres or the Terror.<sup>90</sup> Rowan experienced the chaos firsthand and like many, such as Dr. William Drennan, could not accept the militant republicanism of the second phase of the United movement. Reynolds testimony must be understood in this light although it warrants a little more scrutiny.

We must be careful not to pay too much attention to Curran's deformation of Reynolds' character, or Reynolds' acceptance of money for his services. Reynolds was definitely of rather dubious integrity in financial matters, as proved by Curran, but we must bear in mind the words of Mr. Baron Smith to the jury at the trial of McCann, July 1798 – 'whatever degree of turpitude might appear generally to have swayed the principles and conduct of Reynolds through life, the jury were not warranted to reject his testimony solely on that ground; and the most they were entitled to do was, to weigh his testimony with due consideration of the corroborating circumstances contrasted with the suspicion of his veracity which the witnesses' conduct or character might excite'.<sup>91</sup> In the wake of the rebellion (the Kildare army had not surrendered at that time) and the circumstances the jury took just two minutes to decide.

Concerning his financial arrangement, Boylan said that Cope

offered him £100,000 for the necessary information: Pakenham said a blank cheque.<sup>92</sup> Reynolds said his initial deal, however, only concerned 500 guineas, necessary if a quick escape was demanded. In a desperate situation his second demand was more substantial – £500 as a lump sum and a pension of £1,000 per year for life. Possibly in his initial arrangements, he thought he could remain above suspicion of the United Irishmen.

Whatever his reason for his decision, money does not seem to have been his initial object. The question remains – why did Reynolds decide to give evidence. If he was only a nominal member as Pakenham suggests, then he was only introduced to the depth and determination of the conspiracy, when he became a colonel of his barony and treasurer of the county and a delegate to the provincial committee. All this happened in a short space of time.

His election as colonel took place in early February 1798, though he had been standing in as such for Lord Edward since November, December 1797.<sup>93</sup> Lord Edward's confidence in Reynolds led to his enthusiastic reception and rapid promotion in the movement. His election as colonel was confirmed by the 15 February and at a county meeting he was chosen treasurer and introduced to George Cummins and Michael Reynolds. Because of this office he was delegated to the Leinster Executive.

Shortly after this, around 28 February, Reynolds disclosed the business to his friend Cope. Such a rapid immersion into the conspiracy, followed by the discussion of the state of the country, with Cope and other local gentry, probably dissuaded him from further involvement.<sup>94</sup> His later testimony of diabolical plans, like the assassination of eighty members of the government<sup>95</sup> was possibly, merely window dressing by a man who found himself quickly out of his depth. Reynolds testimony was of supreme importance for the government. The United system depended on secrecy and consequently on certain important figures acquainted with their plans. In one fell swoop the government virtually destroyed the Leinster Executive and had most of the active leaders in prison. Determinedly the United movement tried to revitalise and preparations were made for a rebellion. The arrest of Lord Edward on 19 May and the Sheares Brothers on 21 May<sup>96</sup> were death blows to an apparently dying movement. By this time the Executive had split and Lawless had fled but on the 24 May government started receiving 'Dreadful accounts from Naas, Clane and Prosperous'.<sup>97</sup> The people of Kildare had risen on the night of 23-24 May even without

their beloved Lord Edward, indeed any semblance of a competent national leadership.

Organised and encouraged by the United movement, goaded to resistance by repression they rose. For catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform; the abolition of tithes and protection from Orangemen; to avoid the excesses of the military; for revenge, liberty and nationality or simply a conglomeration of all these, harshly fused in the ignorance of an illiterate uneducated peasantry. Dr. William James McNevin was asked in August 1798 did the people 'care the value of this pen, or the drop of ink which it contains, for parliamentary reform or catholic emancipation'? He replied, 'I am sure they do not. But they wish much to be relieved from the payment of tithes'.<sup>98</sup> In the words of William Cope these, 'The wretches who form baronial meetings', were 'not those who direct the great machine of destruction ...' they are poor illiterate creatures, ... They come to be hanged, they can't tell for what'.<sup>99</sup>

This sense of a deluded people was borne out by many who witnessed the rebellion at first hand.<sup>100</sup> Perhaps we place too much an emphasis on this delusion for the obvious reason that these people knew little of United Irish plans and preparations. Their knowledge was vague and disjointed. In reality they combined the old defender jealousies and hatreds with the limited politicisation offered by the United Irishmen. Pakenham melodramatically pointed out that, 'In the space of a few weeks, 30,000 people – peasants armed with pikes and pitch forks, defenceless women and children – were cut down or shot or blown like chaff as they charged up to the mouth of the canon'.<sup>101</sup> All that delirium of the brave – combined with the reality of the violence of resistance and indiscriminate punishment for the insult of rebellion.

In Kildare it lasted for two months and left most of the county desolate. The rebels there were stirred not simply by political delusions but by the harsh realities of free-quarters and military excess. Here in Lord Edward's county the government forces were indeed largely responsible for the outcome. The organisation of the county by the United Irishmen did however account for the rising on the 24 May. The coordination of the several attacks, the plan of the attacks and the preparations necessary testify to the strength of that organisation. The resilience of the movement as indicated by their length of time in the field, was due to the abilities of their leaders to keep ahead of the military as well as the necessity of their situation but the fact remains that a rising took place on the 24 May was due to

United organisation. That the people were prepared to rise was due more to military excesses than the exigencies of the United movement. In clarifying the apparent anomalies contained within, it is obvious that the rebellion was caused by a fusion of many factors both inside and outside Ireland but the primary factor which dictated the participation of Kildaremen must be their reaction to military repression. The strength of the United Irishmen lay in their ability to harness this reaction, keep it under control and direct it to a specific point in time regardless of the condition of the movement as a whole.

44. Henry Boylan, *Wolfe Tone*, p.134; Tom Dunne ... *Colonial Outsider*, p. 13.

45. P. H. Pearse – Inscribed on Monument at Bodinstown, erected in 1971 by the National Graves Association. For Concise life see Henry Boylan, *A Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Dublin, 1988, 2nd ed.) p. 383-384; Also Tom Dunnes, provocative ... *Colonial Outsider*.

46. For the whole relationship of the United movement with France see Elliott's remarkable and very readable, *Partners in Revolution*.

47. *Reb. Pap.*, 620-39-10.

48. Moore, *The Life and Death ...*, p. 13; W. J. Fitzpatrick, *The Sham Squire, and the Informers of 1798* (Dublin, 1865), p. 107-108. For a more modern approach see Stella Tillyard, *Citizen Lord Edward Fitzgerald 1763-1798* (London, 1997).

49. Moore, *ibid.*, p. 277.

50. *P.R.O.N.I. Education Facsimile Series, The Act of Union*, No. 44. Lady Louisa was connected by marriage to Castlereagh and Camden.

51. Pamela was actually Nancy or Stephanie Caroline Anne Syms – taken from an English foundling hospital by Égalité in 1780. Elliott, *Partners in Revolution*, p. 25. Both Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty ...*, p. 45, and Peadar Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98* (Naas, 1978), p. 4, testify to the couple's popularity. Regarding Pamela's origins see Tillyard, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-149.

52. Lecky, *A History of Ireland ...*, vol. 3, pp. 190-191.

53. Moore, *The Life and Death ...*, p. 28-29.

54. Lord Ed – Lady Sophia (his sister), early 1787, Lucy Ellis and Joseph Turquan, *La Belle Pamela* (Lady Edward Fitzgerald), (London n.d.), p. 150-153.

55. Lord Ed – Mother, 26 Feb. 1787, Moore *op. cit.*, p. 28-29.

56. Ellis and Turquan, *op. cit.*, p. 341-344.

57. Moore, *The Life and Death ...*, p. 76-77.

58. Moore, *ibid.*, p. 81.

59. Ellis and Turquan, *La Belle Pamela*, notes, p. 250.

60. Lord Ed – Mother, April 1793, *ibid.*, p. 276.

61. 31 Jan. 1793 on occasion of Proclamation against (Volunteers) unlawful assemblies – Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

62. Ellis and Turquan, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

63. Michael Reynolds who led the attack on Naas was a celebrated handball player – Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, p. 6.

64. Ellis and Turquan, *op. cit.*, p. 302 and 318.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 302 – the two friends were of course Lord Edward and O'Connor.

66. Reb. Pap., 620-32-89.
67. Ellis and Turquan, *La Belle Pamela*, p. 306-308.
68. Lucy Fitzgerald: Journal in Ellis and Turquan, op. cit., p. 315. For information on Lord Edward and O'Connor in Belfast, O'Connor's arrest, see p. 313-320.
69. Lord Ed – Mother, end Feb. 1797, in Ellis and Turquan, op. cit., p. 324-325.
70. Ibid., p. 294.
71. In comparing the wounds he received at the battle of Eutaw Springs with those he received in Thomas Street, Lord Edward said 'Ah I was wounded then in a very different cause; that was in fighting against liberty – this in fighting for it' – in Moore, *The Life and Death ...*, p. 13.
72. Lord Ed – Mother, 4 Nov 1794 in Moore, *The Life and Death ...*, p. 117. Elliott in *Partners in Revolution ...* believed a major change occurred in 1793-94 with the offer of French help, p. 49-50.
73. Lord Ed – Mother, July 1794, Moore, *ibid.*, p. 115.
74. Henry Boylan, *A Dictionary of Irish Biography*, p. 114-115.
75. For his involvement in United Irishmen and his mission to France see, Elliott, op. cit., p. 98-103.
76. Elliott, *Partners in Revolution*, p. 99-100.
77. Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, p. 37.
78. For more on these men see Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, p. 37-47, and Con Costello, 'Looking Back' in *Leinster Leader*, 18 Aug. 1990 and 6 Feb. 1992.
79. Rowan – wife 16 April, 1796 Wilmington, America – W. H., Drummond (ed.), *The Autobiography of Archibald Hamilton Rowan* (Dublin 1840; Irish University Press, 1972) p. 292.
- 80a. Journal 21 July 1795, Drummond (ed.), *ibid.*, p. 279. Compare this to Lord Edward's statement in note 69 above.
- 80b. *Ibid.*, p. 266.
81. John Philpot Curran's (legal defender of the United Irishmen) harsh indictment of Reynolds taken from Fitzpatrick's, *The Sham Squire*, p. 149.
82. Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, p. 31-35. See also Boylan, *A Dictionary*, p.339; Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty*, p. 50-53. He claimed Lord Edward as a distant relative (i.e. Reynolds).
83. Quote is Elliott's – see *Partners in Revolution ...*, p. 123. For information on the trial see James McCormick, *The Black History of Ireland: The Irish Rebellion of 1798 with Numerous Historical Sketches never before published* (Dublin 1844) p. 151.
84. Pakenham, op. cit., p. 50.
85. James McCormick, *The Black History of Ireland*, p. 151-152.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 162-165.
87. *Ibid.*, p. 153; for the testimonies of these men see Reb. Pap. 620-37-25 (David Hardy); 620-37-48 (Patrick Germane); 620-37-48 (Philip Germane); 620-37-50 (Luke Brannick).
88. Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, p. 34-35.
89. Fitzpatrick, *The Sham Squire*, p. 233.
90. See C. B. Macpherson, *Burke, Past Masters Series* (Oxford University Press, 1980); B. W. Hill, *British Parliamentary Parties 1742-1832* (London, 1985), Part 4, Ch. 10, covers 1790-1801; Philip Anthony Brown, *The French Revolution in English History* (first published 1918; republished London, 1965), especially Ch. II-IV.
91. Walkers Hibernian Magazine quoted in McCormick, *The Black History ...*, p. 162.

92. Boylan, *A Dictionary ...*, p. 339; Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty*, p. 51.
93. Pakenham said he was solicited for the job in December at Kilkea while decorating the baronial hall, *The Year of Liberty*, p. 51; McCormick quoted Reynolds' testimony at McCann's trial – said 1797 at Reynolds' house in Park Street, *The Black History ...*, p. 151; similarly Moore quoted November in Park Street, *The Life and Death ...*, p. 161.
94. McCormick, op. cit., p. 151-153.
95. Pakenham, op. cit., p. 51.
96. Elliott is in error – she puts the arrest on May 20 – *Partners in Revolution ...*, p. 201; see Boylan, *A Dictionary ...*, p. 355; Pakenham, op. cit., p. 113.
97. Account from the Post Office, Maynooth, 24 May 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-37-142.
98. Dr. William James McNevin of the Supreme Executive examined before the House of Lords Select Committee – see *P.R.O.N.I.: Education Facsimile Series, The United Irishmen*, Introduction.
99. Fitzpatrick, *The Sham Squire ...*, p. 284.
100. For example, Dundas – Cooke, 16 May 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-37-90; Lady Louisa Conolly – William Ogilvie, 1 June 1798, in Moore, *The Life and Death ...*, p. 196.
101. Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty ...*, p. 17.

## Driving the Boar

'When you drive him hard, the Boar will surely turn upon the hunters.'

—Edmund Burke<sup>102</sup>

Warnings against Defenders and others, to the government in 1796/97, often described the plundering of houses for arms and money and attacks on Protestants. Although they raided Catholics also 'the latter they only rob; but the former they not only rob, but endeavour to murder and in some instances they have unfortunately succeeded'.<sup>103</sup> These conditions represented the state of the country and the psychological background against which the government introduced the Insurrection Act of 1796, proclaimed Ulster in 1797, and eventually declared martial law in March 1798. Local sources suggest, that rather than resolving the situation, these repressive measures only exasperated it.

In May 1797, Wogan Browne, a prominent magistrate and Kildare liberal wrote to Pelham to protest against proclaiming the barony of Carbury in county Kildare. Under the terms of the Insurrection Act the justices of the peace could meet to discuss the state of their area and if necessary, call on the governors and Lord Lieutenant to proclaim it.<sup>104</sup> Browne believed such a measure would be seen by the public, 'less a social regulation intended for the purpose of quieting this county than a political expedient used to prepare Leinster as Ulster has been for military proscription and Execution'. He realised 'the wound lies very deep and that means of conciliation as well as repression are necessary to heal it',<sup>105</sup> but of the thirty five magistrates who met to memorialize the government, only Browne and eleven others voted against the measure.

Many magistrates acted over-zealously and the yeomanry and militia often did little to ingratiate themselves with the local populace. Orangemen<sup>106</sup> and yeomen bore the brunt of peasant and rebel hatred which persisted long into the next century. A biographer of the Wicklow rebel Michael Dwyer, described the Orange yeomanry as 'fiends incarnate ... the absolute personification of everything foul, heartless, sensual and degrading in man'.<sup>107</sup> A poem in *The Nation* in 1855 described the yeomanry as an Irishman with an

'Orange English heart.'<sup>108</sup> Military heavy-handedness under Colonel Campbell could prevent a rebel attack on Athy in 1798. It could also dictate the popular frenzy that sealed the fate of the Prosperous garrison.

When examined before the Secret Committee of the House of Lords, in August 1798, Thomas Addis Emmet, was asked by the Lord Chancellor, what had caused the late rebellion. He replied, 'The free-quarters, the house burnings, the tortures, and the military executions, in the counties of Kildare, Carlow and Wicklow.'<sup>109</sup> The testimony of United Irish leaders in Newgate was probably more than a little qualified by their volatile position, but Emmet's view was substantiated by others, like Lady Louisa Conolly of Castletown in North Kildare.

In a letter to her brother, the Duke of Richmond, on the 18 June 1798 Lady Louisa remarked, 'The free-quarters, whipping the people, and burning the houses, have just been stopped, which rejoices me ... it was a dangerous measure in regard to the licentiousness it produced among the soldiers, the fury and madness it drove the insurgents to and the lukewarmness that it threw upon the well disposed persons, who found themselves equally aggrieved, by the free quarters as the rebels are.'<sup>110</sup>

In May she had witnessed the ferocity of free-quarters at first hand. She wrote to William Ogilvie, about part of a Scotch regiment at free quarters at Maynooth, Kilcock, Leixlip and Celbridge. They were threatening to fire all four towns unless arms were delivered up and had already burnt houses in Celbridge.<sup>111</sup>

Over a month after the outbreak of the rebellion, Lady Sarah Napier wrote to Richmond from Castletown, lamenting the desolate state of the countryside and raving against the cruelty of the military towards the Duke of Leinster's tenants who 'join the insurgents saying, "It's better to die with a pike in my hand than be shot like a dog at my work, or see my children faint for want of food before my eyes".'<sup>112</sup>

Cornwallis testified to the over-exertions of the military and their supporters when he replaced Camden as Lord Lieutenant. He complained of, 'The violence of our friends and their folly in endeavouring to make it a religious war added to the ferocity of our troops, who delight in murder, most powerfully counteract all plans of conciliation.'<sup>113</sup> That same evening he lamented that, 'The conversation even at my table ... always turns on hanging, shooting, burning, etc. and if a priest had been put to death, the greatest joy is expressed

by the whole company. So much for Ireland and my wretched situation.<sup>114</sup>

Lecky understood the difficulties that Camden faced and pointed out that Cornwallis had arrived when the rebellion was almost over, was ignorant of the long term tensions inherent in Ireland and underestimated the strength of the yeomanry and militia.<sup>115</sup> However, he did not discount the innuendo's in Cornwallis's statement, which decried the offensive zeal of some of his administration.

County Kildare had its share of zealots, particularly Captain Richard Longford Swayne<sup>116</sup> in Prosperous and Colonel Campbell, Captain Rawson, Captain Erskine and Cornet Love in Athy. These men appeared to pursue a personal vendetta against the system of disaffection.

O'Kelly in his *General History of the Rebellion* reckoned that, 'All the people around Prosperous were roused into resistance by the tyrannical sway of Captain Swayne, who with his North Cork, plundered and almost laid waste the entire district over which his authority extended.'<sup>117</sup> Swayne and his Cork Militia terrified the local inhabitants and often resorted to torture to acquire information or boost the return of arms. 'The pitch cap was frequently applied during the free-quarters, several cabins and farm houses were burned and the Catholic chapel ... was likewise consumed.'<sup>118</sup>

Swayne was noted for his use of the pitch cap. A picture of 'Captain Swayne Pitch Capping the people of Prosperous' was contained in Watty Cox's *Irish Magazine* for 1810, and is reproduced in Pakenhams *The Year of Liberty*.<sup>119</sup> The use of the pitch cap involved the placing of boiling pitch on the victims head, adding gunpowder and setting it alight. Men like Anthony Perry, the Wexford leader, who endured such ferocity can hardly be blamed for their resolute defiance.<sup>120</sup> Another favourite torture of Swayne was picketing, whereby the victim was left hanging, while standing on sharp pointed stakes, until he gave information.<sup>121</sup> Rebels under Andrew Farrell and Dr. John Esmond repaid Swayne for his exertions in May, 1798 – he was piked to death and his body burned in a tar barrel.

In Athy, Colonel Campbell of the 9th Dragoons commanded men who rigorously enforced the extremities of martial law.<sup>122</sup> They organised the free-quarters at Ballitore, Kilkea and the mansion of Fitzgerald of Geraldine, as well as the torturing of suspects on the triangles in Athy. The latter were triangular wooden scaffolds on which victims were tied and flogged. Some of the punishments were horrific. A con-

temporary account described how Captain Thomas James Rawson, 'of the lowest order, the offal of a dunghill had every person tortured and stripped, as his cannibal will directed. He would seat himself in a chair in the centre of a ring formed around the triangles, *the miserable victims kneeling under the triangle until they would be spotted over with the blood of the others*. People of the name of Cronin were thus treated. He made the father kneel under the son while flogging, the son under the father, until they were mutually covered with the blood of each other: this without any specific crime only what was termed 'speculation', to make them *whistle*. They gave an innocent man five hundred lashes.'<sup>123</sup> A captain of the local Athy Infantry (yeoman), Rawson was well remembered for his diligence. His house at Glashealy was burned to the ground in September 1798.<sup>124</sup> O'Kelly described how his yeomen were 'more loyal, vindictive and cruel than the Orangemen of the Armagh militia',<sup>125</sup> but even without a retrospective bias it would be hard to justify Rawson's acts of savagery, obviously condoned by Campbell.

The harsh indictment of Rawson's character expressed above was written by Thomas Fitzgerald of Geraldine, a liberal landlord who was second in command to the Duke of Leinster's Athy yeoman cavalry. He was arrested for the possession of seditious papers,<sup>126</sup> on 28 April 1798 though probably because of his Fitzgerald connections. As a distant relation of Lord Edward, Thomas Fitzgerald, like Thomas Reynolds of Kilkea, was roughly treated by Colonel Campbell who was intent on breaking the opposition. Thomas Fitzgerald was the maternal uncle of Thomas Reynolds and a suspected sympathiser.<sup>127</sup> He was however later found to be innocent and compensated for the damage to his property.

Fitzgerald was indignant having endured '100 Cavalry and Infantry, 40 Horses and Officers for 24 Days at free-quarters, My House, Provisions and Liquors of All Kinds seized, My Wife and Family, obliged to fly, My Character grossly caluminated, troop Horses turned into my Meadow and young Plantations, Hay, Oats, Wheat, Cattle of all Kinds not consumed by the Military taken from me, Good God, Sir; ought not this to appease my Caluminators, when they cannot bring a Charge against Me.'<sup>128</sup> Fitzgerald was bewildered, the military having shown scant regard for 'General Wilford's Protection in my Pocket, and the Night but One, before this extraordinary Outrage, I patrolled with My Yeomanry Corps and brought into Colonel Campbell 6 Guns, 5 Pistols, 6 Bayonets, 31 Pikes the first Arms recovered in that District.'<sup>129</sup>

His indignation was understandable when we consider that he remained under arrest for three months and his computed physical losses amounted to almost two thousand pounds.<sup>130</sup> This included 50 tons of hay, 150 barrels of Oats, 200 barrels of potatoes, 40 sheep, 4 pigs, 120 barrels of wheat, 10 bullocks, 10 cows, 30 dozen Claret, 30 dozen Port, white wine, different Liguers and nearly a hogshead of spirits; hung beef, bacon, ham, tongues etc. etc., and a mare taken by Captain Erskine worth twenty five pounds.<sup>131</sup> This amounted to a very large mistake by the government forces.

The reality, of trying to distinguish between the loyal and the disaffected was one of the reasons Camden rather quickly countermanded Abercrombys licence for free-quarters. While there existed a great fear of the effect on discipline, the real reason as Pakenham pointed out was the 'howl of rage from the Irish gentry when they discovered their own property might be injured directly or indirectly'.<sup>132</sup>

Free-Quarters had not produced the desired effect in Kildare as 'few arms were given in and such as are do not meet the approbation of the officer (that is pikes without poles)'.<sup>133</sup> The new commander in chief<sup>134</sup> General Lake, received rather opaque instruction from Dublin Castle urging stronger measures. Colonel Campbell had discovered a similar need in Athy and introduced the triangles around 1 May, to dragoon the countryside for information. Generally those most open to suspicion were blacksmiths and publicans. The destruction of the liquor shops in Athy was to protect Campbell's troops from the temptation, but publicans were suspected of complicity as meetings were often held at their stores. Such a desire to protect the troops from intemperance was hardly borne out by the sack of Kilkea (and the subsequent drinking spree on the lawns), and Geraldine, although confiscated whiskey was ordered to be spilled in Ballitore. Here we are provided with an account of how blacksmiths were punished for their trade as well as a unique insight into the effect of the rebellion on a particular area.

Mary Leadbeater provides us with a melancholy account of a community under siege, from the proclamation of martial law through the free-quarters and the rebellion.<sup>135</sup> She mentioned the mysterious disappearances of 'victims of party rage', which had helped to provoke such government reaction and how under the terms of the proclamation, the names of all the inhabitants had to be posted to the doors of the houses and arms searches were common. An interesting anecdote described how the locals wept with

the departure of the well liked Kings County Militia 'an unconscious presentiment ... that if those men had remained here our village might have escaped its subsequent distresses'.

The Kings County Militia were replaced by the Tyrone Militia, 'composed of professed orangemen; wearing the ribband of their party'. They plundered the countryside for whiskey, arms and seditious papers. Protestations to Colonel Campbell in Athy prevented the plundering from escalating and some property was restored. They concentrated on foodstuffs after this despite pleas from Colonel Keating, and there was a real fear of scarcity.

Keating was a liberally minded landlord like Wogan Browne and Fitzgerald of Geraldine. He was a compassionate man and tried to persuade the people to remain loyal. When it was announced (by public notice) that the night patrols would be withdrawn, so arms could be surrendered, or the neighbourhood burned, he went in person to the Catholic Chapel to appeal to those 'misguided people to comply'. Soon after he left for England never to return. Campbell levelled his mansion at Narraghmore, during the rebellion, suspecting him of disaffection, though he had remained loyal.

'The clouds gathered darker and darker in our political horizon, though nothing could be sweeter, calmer or brighter, one should think, than our venal sky, with palmy gales',<sup>136</sup> lamented Mary Leadbeater, as many of the arms delivered up were broken. Ballitore 'once so peaceful, exhibited a scene of tumult and dismay, and the air rung with the shrieks of the sufferers, and the lamentations of those who beheld them suffer'. this was the treatment of Ballitore at the hands of the new arrivals, the Ancient Britons. They seized the blacksmiths and their tools in an effort to prevent pike making. Several of these were flogged in Athy for information. Captain Erskine and Cornet Love dealt out their own brand of law and order even (to Mary's horror) scourging a man with their own hands.

If free-quarters did not procure the desired result their new extremes of violence, 'caused a great many pikes to be brought in; the street was lined with the numbers who came to deliver in these instruments of death'. Some local prisoners were taken to Naas and six disaffected yeomen, with their coats turned out as a sign of their treachery, were taken to Dunlavin and shot. Mary Leadbeater and the other Quakers, because of their religion and aversion to violence, appeared to have suffered little although 'This excited jealousy of us, how ill founded! for who could expect us to rejoice at the misery and degradation of our fellow creatures and neighbours,

or even to behold them unmoved.<sup>137</sup> The Quakers may luckily have escaped the wrath of the military but the county did not.

In November 1797 John Wolfe of Balbriggan wrote to Cooke describing the murder of an informer at Rathbride in Kildare, and complained that 'not a night passes without some instance of Robbery about Kildare in particular ... *in this County* the scheme is to put down the protestant ... to make Terror the order of the day ... nothing but the more vigorous measures can put it down Viz ! by proclaiming the counties where it appears and exerting the powers of the insurrection Bills speedy trial and speedy execution than which nothing can strike greater terror in the common mind'.<sup>138</sup> By mid May 1798 the government had granted Wolfe his wish and, in Kildare, some success could be boasted.

On 14 May Colonel Campbell (rather matter of factly) praised the activities of his men - 'In consequence of burning a few houses in this town (Athy) and the neighbourhood together with a little military discipline we have a number of pikes and some information.'<sup>139</sup> He was very pleased with the results. Two days later, General Dundas told Cooke that his headquarters at Castlemartin was 'filled with the poor deluded people giving up their arms, receiving protections and declaring that moment to be the happiest in their lives'. He followed this with an embarrassingly premature reassurance to the Castle - 'the Head of the Hydra is cut off - and the County of Kildare will, for a long while, enjoy profound peace and quiet'.<sup>140</sup>

'All told, 5000 pikes and 5000 other pieces of arms were reckoned to have been surrendered 'through the humanity' of the Government.'<sup>141</sup> It was small wonder the military commanders felt secure, the spirit of rebellion indeed seemed to be broken, especially with the arrest of Lord Edward on 19 May in Thomas Street and the Sheares brothers just two days later. All the county's known leaders were in custody except Michael Reynolds who had fled, and there was a reward of 300 pounds for information as to his whereabouts.<sup>142</sup>

Despite the perseverance of the spies and informers and the exertions of the Military, the government could not destroy the United Irish movement in Kildare, whose membership, according to Reynold's figures, boasted almost 11,000 men in March. With the outbreak of rebellion the leadership fell to men like Aylmer, Luby, Esmond, O'Kelly and Doorly, as provision had been made to quickly replace any leader unable to continue. Due to their local prominence

as men of wealth, education, position and military training they were natural choices to lead the movement in their respective areas. The characterization of the movement was supremely important in its ability to counteract the repression of the government and rouse men into the field, in some instances for almost two months and long after resistance had been crushed elsewhere.

Two characters are instantly distinguishable - Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Thomas Reynolds of Kilkea. The connection of Lord Edward with the Kildare movement greatly enhanced its prestige and he remained active at a local level until a very late stage. If his great hope was to advance on Dublin in three columns, then he put great confidence in the resolution of Kildare men in the centre and the wings. The lack of concrete orders confused the situation but Lord Edwards main failing was surely his confidence in Reynolds.

One can hold very little sympathy for Reynolds but that does not mean his actions were ruthlessly mercenary or incomprehensible. His abandonment of the United cause may be compared to his abandonment of the Catholic Convention in 1792 and he was seen as a man of little conviction - a man who dabbled in reform politics but resisted revolutionary tactics. In his evidence he said his motive was not monetary and this is borne out by his reaction to the sack of Kilkea by Erskine. It would have been much easier to disclose his identity as a government informer than endure the destruction of his home. He only admitted his complicity after his arrest and confinement in Athy gaol, hemmed in between military incarceration and United Irish vengeance.

Reynolds figures and evidence testify to the strength of the United system but his testimony was more important in national terms with the arrest of the leaders at Bond's house in March. United organisation does not account completely for the rebellion in Kildare. The free-quarters, plundering, torturing and executions did more to keep the spirit of resistance alive than any words about emancipation, unity or French assistance for a national cause. One did not need to be educated to comprehend the primary tenets of the new democratic policies, of liberty and justice for all. Without being politically motivated Irishmen had resisted the oppression of tithes, catholic dues, enclosures, land jobbery etc., for decades. The fusion of a national politics and localized grievances created a formidable movement in the 1790's under the posthumously generic title United Irishmen. The contemporary reality was a patchwork system of allegiances and aspirations which remained (primarily)

fundamentally local. Any sense of its national character could only be derived amid the upper echelons, from amongst men who were 'politically conscious' and understood the necessity of a 'National' movement.

At the lower levels activities remained similar in character to those of the Defenders. The complaints of local landlords and magistrates in 1796 and 1797 revolved around the Defender tactics of stealing arms, burning houses, intimidation and attacks on Protestants. Conversely United Irish notices and orders constantly begged restraint on its members, to avoid drunkenness, rioting and stealing of arms.<sup>143</sup> There existed a great fear among the united Irish leaders that a premature rising would occur and destroy the movement before it was properly prepared.

The fear of torture, imprisonment or execution could stir men to resistance more easily than any political rhetoric but the movement in Kildare was a double edged blade. If the freequarters and military exertions could serve to rouse the men to resist, the United Irish system offered it the means, the justification and the organisational ability. At a time the local government commanders believed the movement to be destroyed news began to reach the capital that Kildare had risen and the contagion was spreading throughout the country. The boar had surely turned upon its hunters, but this boar was different than any other, it did not turn simply as a reflex action, it had been prepared to turn, for quite a while.

102. Edmund Burke, Speech on American Taxation; Commons 19 April, 1774, in Alan Bullock and F. W. Deakin (eds), *The British Political Tradition* (London, 1949), see Book 1, The Debate on the American Revolution 1761-1783, edited by Max Beloff, pp. 146-147.

103. Rev. Thomas Frederick Knipe, Clonard - T. Pelham, 23 Feb. 1797, Reb. Pap. 620-28-292; see also Note 41 above: The sectarian bias was borne out in the dealings of the rebels with loyalists during the rebellion: Catholic loyalists were often spared while Protestant loyalists were put to death: See Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty*, pp. 153-154.

104. Insurrection Act of 1796; An act more effectually to suppress insurrections, and prevent the disturbance of public peace - section xvi in Edmund Curtis and R. B. McDowell (eds), *Irish Historical Documents 1172-1922* (1943) pp. 204-8.

105. Wogan Browne - T. Pelham, 9 May 1797, Reb. Pap. 620-30-46.

106. It seems Orange men 'were all who were not United Irishmen', see Lord Aldborough - William Elliott, 27 May 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-37-182; For the existence of an Orange Society in Naas see Reb. Pap. 620-36-1.

107. John Thomas Campion, *Michael Dwyer or The Insurgent Captain of the Wicklow Mountains: A Tale of the Rising in 98* (Dublin, 1910), p. 11.

108. Ibid., p. 92: see Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, for accounts of yeomanry with Orange insignia (quoted from Mary Leadbeater) p. 99.

109. Substance of Thomas Addis Emmet's examination before the Secret Committee of the House of Lords, Dublin, 10 Aug. 1798, in J. T. Gilbert, *Documents Relating to Ireland 1795-1804* (Irish University Press, 1970), p. 180.

110. Lady Louisa Conolly - Duke of Richmond, 18 June 1798, in Lecky, *A History of Ireland ...*, vol. 5, pp. 17-18.

111. Lady Louisa Conolly - William Ogilvie, 21 May 1798, in Moore, *The Life and Death ...*, p. 189.

112. Lady Sarah Napier - Richmond, 27 June, 1798, Moore *ibid.*, p. 220.

113. Quoted from the Cornwallis Correspondence - Lecky, *A History of Ireland ...*, vol. 5, p. 14.

114. Ibid. p. 15.

115. Ibid., p. 14.

116. For his full name see Reb. Pap. 620-35-1.

117. Patrick O'Kelly quoted in Rev. Patrick F. Kavanagh, *A Popular History of the Insurrection of 1798* (4th ed. Dublin 1884), p. 263. O'Kelly erred on the subject of Swayne's command. He commanded men of the City of Cork Militia and not the North Cork.

118. Ibid: While Swayne may have threatened to burn the chapel at Staplestown (the nearest to Prosperous) it was only burned after his death by way of reprisal - see Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, p.60.

119. Illustration in Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty ...*, the sixth as listed on p. 9, List of Illustrations.

120. For Perry's torture see Pakenham, *ibid.*, p. 166.

121. Picketing in Prosperous - Mac Suibhne, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

122. Martial law was proclaimed on 30 March 1798. On 3 April Abercromby issued orders (4,000 copies) from his H.Q. in Kildare, for the surrender of arms or free-quarters.

123. Thomas Fitzgerald - James Bernard Clinch, 20 Dec 1802, in Mac Suibhne, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-195.

124. Reb. Pap. 620-40-107; 620-40-112.

125. Thomas J. Rawson of Athy, in Con Costello 'Looking Back' series 455, *Leinster Leader*, 20 June 1991

126. Colonel Campbell - Lord Castlereagh, 29 April 1798 - Reb. Pap. 620-36-216.

127. Campbell was convinced of his complicity - Reb. Pap. 620-37-67; for evidence against Fitzgerald see Reb. Pap. 620-32-89 and 620-37-66.

128. Fitzgerald 21 May 1798. Reb. Pap. 620-37-118.

129. Ibid.

130. £1826.19s.7d. : Reb. Pap. 620-40-81.

131. *ibid.*

132. Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty ...*, p. 82.

133. Reb. Pap. 620-37-6.

134. Abercromby was pressured to resign after some tactless albeit truthful, comments on the state of the army: Pakenham, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-65.

135. Mary Leadbeater, *Ballitore in XCVIII* from the Unpublished Memoirs of the Late Mary Leadbeater, Authoress of 'Cottage Dialogues' etc., (n.d.) in U.C.D. Special Collections, pp. 420-430. It would be too tedious to footnote the quota-



tions individually and too pretentious to ignore the wealth of information. All the material cited comes from here.

136. Ibid.

137. Mary Leadbeater, *op. cit.*

138. John Wolfe (Balbriggan) – Mr. Cooke, 22 Nov. 1797, *Reb. Pap.* 620-33-82.

139. Col. Campbell (Athy) – 14 May 1798, *Reb. Pap.* 620-37-67.

140. General Dundas (Castlemartin) – Edward Cooke, 16 May 1798, *Reb. Pap.* 620-37-90.

141. Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty ...*, p. 128.

142. Pakenham, *op. cit.*, p. 128: *Freemans Journal*, Thurs., 24 May 1798, for reward for Reynolds.

143. See Appendix 2 – *Reb. Pap.* 620-35-35.

## 'A Species of Fugitive Warfare'<sup>144</sup>

Where will they pitch their camp? says the Shan Van Vocht.  
Where will they pitch their camp? says the Shan Van Vocht.  
On the Curragh of Kildare,  
And the boys will be all there,  
With their pikes in good repair,  
Says the Shan Van Vocht.

*Chorus*

To the Curragh of Kildare  
The boys will all repair  
And Lord Edward will be there  
Says the Shan Van Vocht.<sup>145</sup>

Initially the plan, according to Reynolds, was to rise in assistance to a strong French force, many being assimilated into the main French body and disciplined. For the most part however, 'all they would have to do would be to harass the escorts of ammunition, cut off detachments and foraging parties, and, in fine (*sic*), make the King's troops feel themselves in every respect in an enemy's country'.<sup>146</sup> Reynolds had, however, described the plans of early 1798 when hope of a French invasion remained a primary factor in rebellion plans, and before the arrest in Bridge Street in March.

This plan had changed by April and May. The Kildaremen would advance in three columns – the one in the centre, being the main force, to join rebels in the county of Dublin, to march on the city. On the left the northern column would join some of the Meath forces at Kilcock, a detachment would remain to seal off the Boyne at Clonard. The right column would join with the Wicklow forces and all would combine with the forces in county Dublin. Lord Edward had risked discovery in April, at Palmerstown, while reconnoitring the proposed march from Kildare.<sup>147</sup>

On Friday, 18 May, the plan was adopted by the Executive and plans were made to rise the following Wednesday night. It was far from unanimously accepted and had split the Executive. The Sheares brothers resigned to attempt a rising within Dublin which they believed would rouse the country and Lawless, disillusioned, fled the country.<sup>148</sup> Whether these events, or the subsequent arrests

## BULLETIN.

DUBLIN CASTLE, MAY 24th, 1798.

Extract of a Letter from Lord Viscount Gosford, Colonel of the Armagh Militia, and Major Wardle, of the Ancient British Light Dragoons, to Lieutenant General Lake, dated Naas, Thursday, Morning, 8 o'clock.

" This morning, about half past two o'clock, a dragoon, from an out-post, came in and informed Major Wardle, of the Ancient British, that a very considerable armed body were approaching rapidly upon the town. The whole garrison were instantly under arms, and took up their positions according to a plan previously formed in case of such an event happening. They made the attack upon our troops, posted near the gaol, with great violence, but were repulsed. They then made a general attack in almost every direction, as they had got possession of almost every avenue into the town. They continued to engage the troops for near three quarters of an hour, when they gave way, and fled on all sides. They eagerly immediately took advantage of their confusion, charged in almost every direction, and killed a great number of them. A great quantity of arms and pikes were taken, and within this half hour many hundred more were brought in, found in pits near the town, together with three men with green cockades, all of whom were hanged in the public street. We took another prisoner, whom we have spared, in consequence of his having given us information that will enable us to pursue these Rebels; and from this man we learn that they were above a thousand strong. They were commanded, as this man informs us, by Michael Reynolds, who was well mounted, and dressed in yeoman uniform, but unfortunately made his escape—his horse we have got.

" When we are able to collect further particulars, you shall be made acquainted with them. About 30 Rebels were killed in the streets; in the fields, we imagine, above a hundred; their bodies have not yet been brought together.

" It is impossible to say too much of the cavalry and infantry; their conduct was exemplary throughout."

Government Bulletin, 24 May 1798. Account of attack on Naas.

of Lord Edward and the Sheares brothers, affected these plans is uncertain. Whatever happened to the plans, the men who rose made little effort to combine the various forces within Kildare or join with those in Meath and Wicklow. Their actions resembled the initial plans to aid the French; what Teeling called, 'a species of fugitive warfare' and Lecky a 'predatory guerilla war',<sup>149</sup> involving a disjointed series of inconclusive hit and run defender type tactics rather than a serious attempt to engage the military.

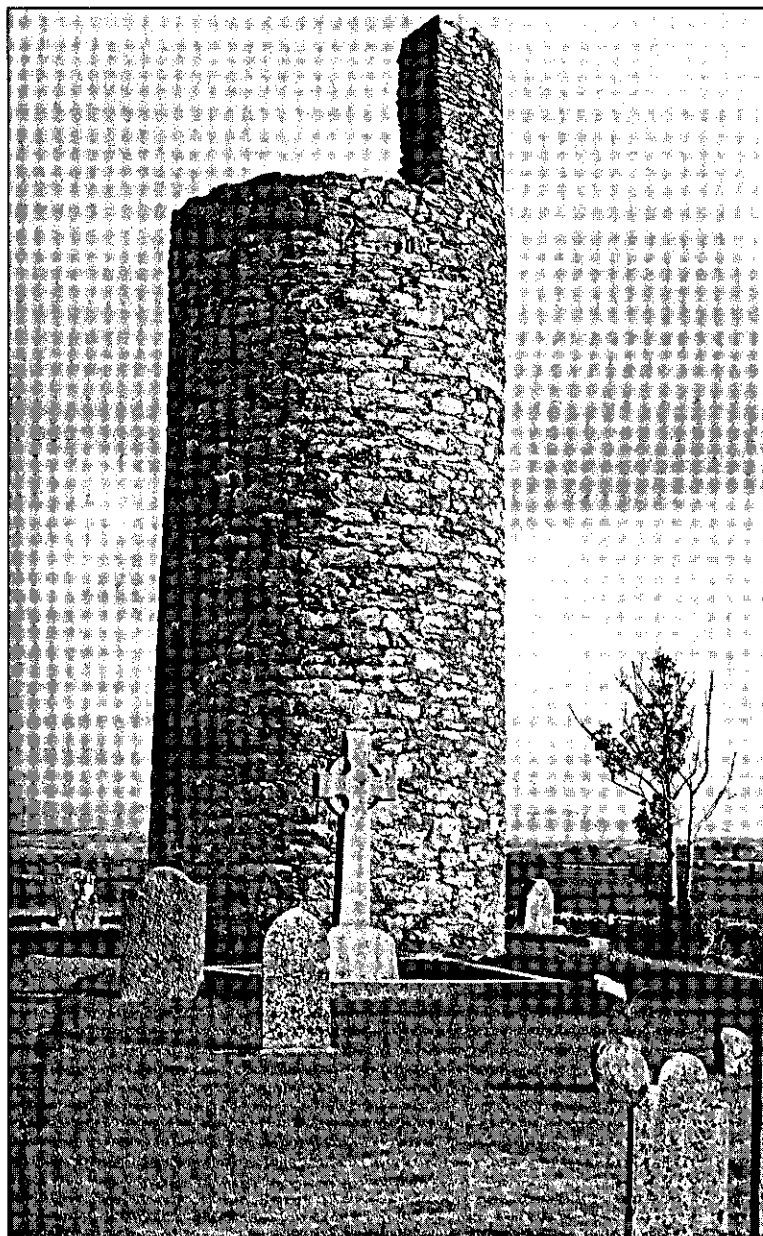
Dundas had believed on 16 May that the Head of the Hydra was cut off and that imminent danger had abated. Camden, admittedly in a more national frame of mind, was not confident. He reported on 24 May, to the Duke of Portland, on the outbreak of the rebellion, in which it seemed, he was obvious to the danger of a rising, from the necessity of the United Irishmen – 'the intelligence continued in my last despatches must have prepared your Grace to hear of some attempts being made by the Rebels to carry their traitorous designs into execution, before every possibility of success was destroyed by the vigorous measures which have lately been pursued.'<sup>150</sup>

Dublin had been on the alert since Sunday the 20 May, the day after the arrest of Lord Edward.<sup>151</sup> Camden seemed to imply that local commanders like Dundas were partly to blame. He told Portland, that on 23 May 'notice was sent to the General Officers in the neighbourhood and Dublin was put in a state of preparation. The measures taken in the metropolis prevented any movement whatsoever; but I am concerned to acquaint your Grace that acts of open Rebellion were committed in the counties of Dublin, Meath and Kildare.'<sup>152</sup>

Battered and broken, piece by piece, the organisation within the city had been effectively controlled. Military efforts had been successful in Kildare and huge amounts of arms had been surrendered. The spirit of disaffection indeed seemed broken. Then in the early morning of 24 May, the danger they had feared for so long, exploded into rebellion.

Neilson had devised the signal for the beginning of the rising - the mail coaches would be stopped and burned. The northern coach was attacked and burned at Santry and the Galway coach at Lucan, though it was saved and the rebels driven off. The Munster mail however made it as far as Naas where it was attacked and burned and the passengers hacked to death.

Michael Reynolds in his scarlet regimentals led an attack on Naas, once the signal had been given.<sup>153</sup> The United force consisted of



View from the top of the hill at Old Kilcullen – the top of the tower was damaged in the attack.

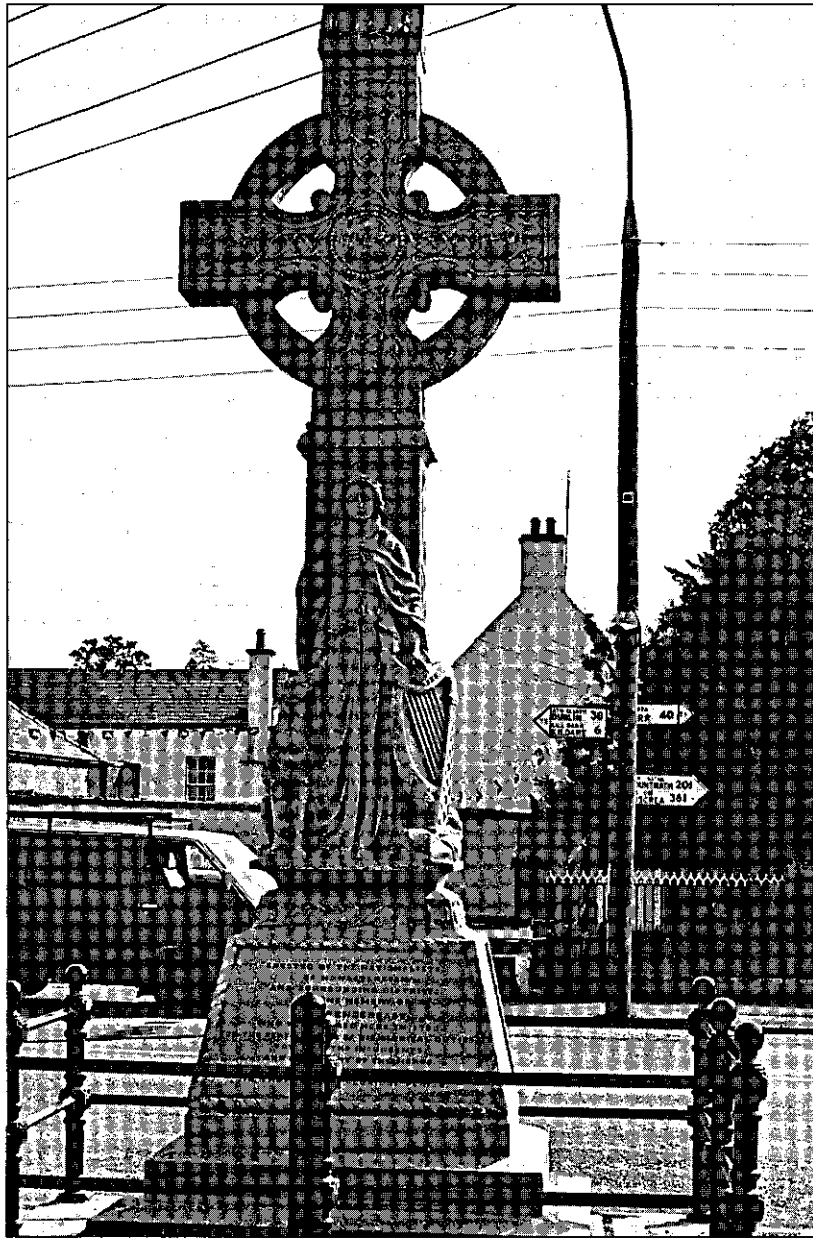
about 1000 men, mostly armed with pikes, and they put severe pressure on the forewarned garrison commanded by Lord Gosford. But Naas was not an outpost, it was one of the best protected garrisons in the country and the presence of canon did much to decide the outcome in favour of the government. Lord Gosford even had six cabins and six houses (including an Inn and an Alms house) destroyed to accommodate the canon fire.<sup>154</sup>

Typical of many of the United attacks in Kildare, Reynolds had his men attack at different points simultaneously. Although the engagement lasted almost one hour, the resistance of the military proved too great and the rebels were forced to withdraw. They lost about 130 men while government casualties amounted to 22 troops.<sup>155</sup> The troops pursued the fleeing rebels and many were cut down as troops took retribution on the town. This ceased with the arrival of Dundas later that day, and from then until the rebellion ended, very few were executed in Naas. About 800 pikes and 20-30 firelocks were captured, many of which were found in the Tipper quarries, the original rallying point of the rebels.<sup>156</sup>

Michael Reynolds escaped to the Wicklow Hills where he continued a rebel in arms until he was mortally wounded at the battle of Hacketstown on 25 June.<sup>157</sup> He died a few days later. An interesting part of Gosford's report to Lake, was his praise for the conduct of the cavalry and infantry; 'exemplary throughout', but he could not make a good report about the yeomanry.<sup>158</sup> Even though the yeomanry were a volunteer force they often behaved extremely efficiently and loyally.

In that same report, Gosford confirmed the reports of attacks on Prosperous and Clane. Naas had been attacked, according to him, at about half past two in the morning. In accordance with their plans the other towns were attacked about the same time. At Prosperous the rebels under Dr. John Esmond and Andrew Farrell (both yeomen) attacked the town in three places though notably concentrating their attack on Brooke's cotton mill and the barracks where the City of Cork Militia and the Ancient Britons were housed under the command of the infamous Captain Swayne. Some who were privately billeted were piked or shot in their beds. Thirty eight soldiers (as Pakenham points out, mainly Catholics from the south), were killed, only nineteen escaped or were spared.<sup>159</sup>

The rebels had gathered in the woods all day. They maintained complete surprise and passed the guards without alerting them.<sup>160</sup> To overcome the garrison the ground floor was set on fire by the insurgents thrusting lighted furze through the windows.



The monument to Father Edward Prendergast and the United Irishmen at Monasterevin.

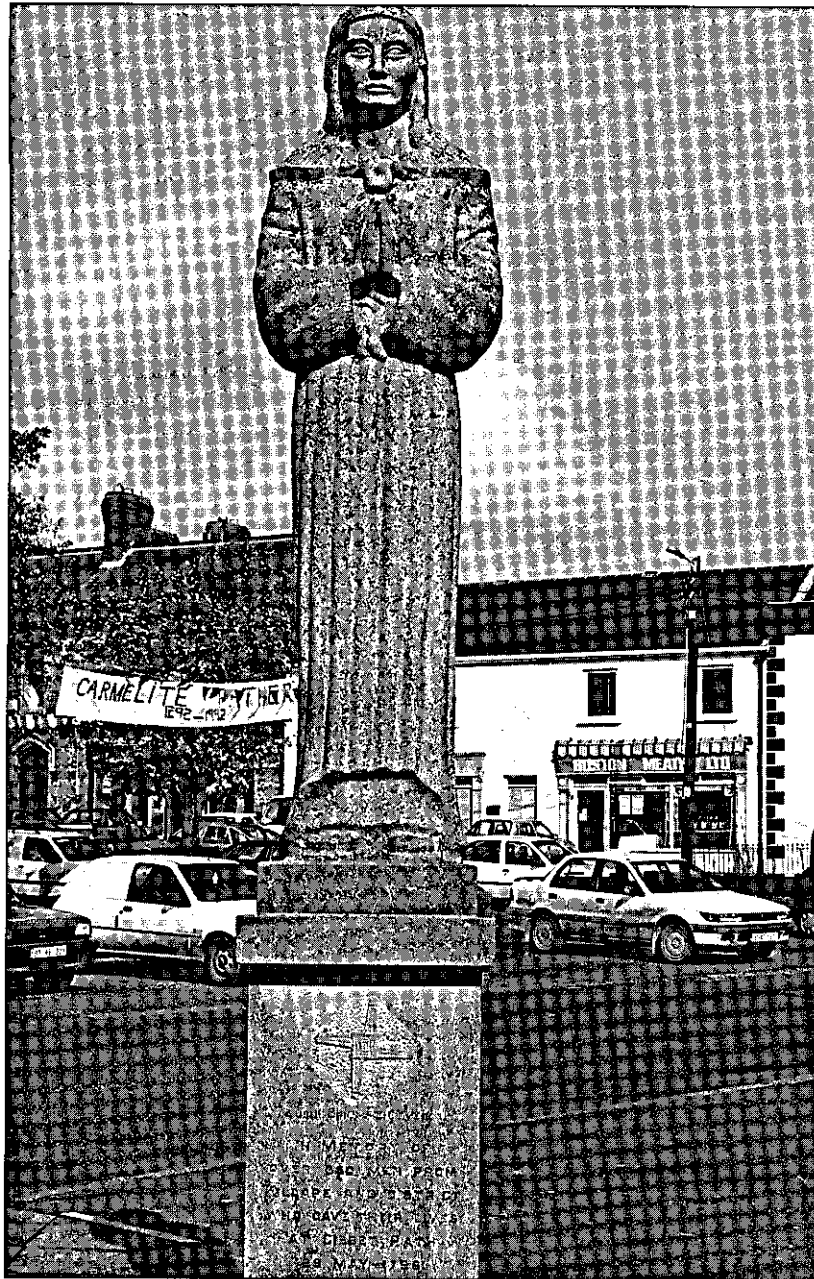
When the soldiers fled from the flames they were piked or shot in the streets. Captain Swayne was shot and piked and his body was later burned in a tar barrel. Witnesses later reported how the rebels 'parading and exulting', had filled the streets all with weapons in their hands.<sup>161</sup> The frenzied crowds ferocity was due to Swayne's excessive behaviour and his threat to burn the Catholic chapel with the priest in it, if arms were not surrendered.<sup>162</sup> The success at Prosperous served as a rebel icon and greatly encouraged the United men. Prosperous was not recovered until late June when Lieutenant Colonel Charles Stewart 'ransacked and burned this receptacle of rebellion'.<sup>163</sup>

Around an hour later, Clane was attacked by about 300 rebels.<sup>164</sup> Some of the Armagh Militia were piked to death in their private billets as in Prosperous. Richard Griffith commander of the Clane yeoman cavalry was woken at three in the morning and was quickly in command of the town. The combined militia and yeomanry drove the rebels from the town when reports started to come in about the massacre in Prosperous.

Six prisoners were put to death, four of whom were Griffiths' own tenants. To add to his dilemma, three of his corps had deserted with their arms and the arms of others. With many in the uniforms and helmets of the Cork Militia and Ancient Britons from Prosperous the rebels launched a second attack. Griffiths' men's sustained fire, dispersed them and he charged them down with his yeomen cavalry. He decided not to attempt an attack on Prosperous but returned to Clane and retreated as ordered to Naas.<sup>165</sup>

Dr. Esmond, a lieutenant in Griffiths' corps, had led the attack on Prosperous, and now, gallingly appeared, to take his position at the head of the troop on its retreat to Naas. Another yeoman, Philip Mite who had accompanied Esmond had told Griffith of Esmond's complicity, before his arrival. Griffith remained calm and cleverly allowed his Lieutenant to accompany him in his usual role, until they reached Naas jail whereupon Esmond was incarcerated. 'A man of great local influence', we are unsure of his exact role in Prosperous, though it appears he planned it.<sup>166</sup> The government was quick to set an example and he was hanged on Carlisle Bridge, with his coat turned out to identify him as a traitor.

Dundas heard news of the outbreak at breakfast, at Castlemartin on the morning of 24 May. A few miles away at Old Kilcullen, rebels began gathering in the old churchyard at the top of a steep hill. Dundas had only a small force at his command but moved to



The Gibbet Rath Memorial on the Square in Kildare.

engage the rebels who were about 300 strong and armed with pikes. Captain Erskine (the villain of Kilkea, Geraldine and Ballitore), of the Ninth Dragoons and Captain Cooke of the Romney Fencibles ludicrously charged the determined pikemen who held all the advantage of the ground. Both men were killed, in all almost 30 troops lost their lives.<sup>167</sup>

Dundas retreated to Kilcullen Bridge and augmented his force with about 100 yeomen under Captain LaTouche. The rebels had also greatly enlarged their force and had formed themselves on high ground, cutting off Dundas' retreat to Naas. He sent two parties forward with orders not to engage and drew the rebels down the hills into the sights of his muskets. The troops completely routed the United forces. Instead of consolidating his victory he retreated to Naas in accordance with the general orders from the Castle to concentrate in the towns.<sup>168</sup>

'It was now nearly twenty-four hours since the first rebel parties had assembled for the assault on the capital. Fourteen engagements had followed and in every single case, except two, the meanest little garrison of soldiers had managed to repulse the rebel army.'<sup>169</sup> Troops were drawn in from Kildare, Clane, Sallins, Ballitore, Monasterevin and Rathangan, although Athy remained secure, the messenger carrying the orders to Colonel Campbell was killed on the way. The rebels therefore were left in control of much of the country. It was however a transitory and transparent victory for the United forces and one not unmarked by extremes of violence. While Catholic loyalists were spared many Protestant loyalists were murdered, like Stamers at Prosperous, Yeates at Ballitore and the Crawfords at Kildare.<sup>170</sup>

Rebel attacks, were beaten off at Kilcock, Leixlip and Lucan. At Monasterevin nearly 1300 rebels under Captain Padraig O'Beirne were defeated by a small yeomanry force under Frederick Hoystead, fourteen of whom were Catholics.<sup>171</sup>

Many Kildaremen had joined the United forces on Tara Hill, only to witness the destruction and dispersion of the Meath organisation in that battle.<sup>172</sup> Others under Captain Doorly succeeded in capturing Rathangan although their success was marred by the killing of Captain Spenser (the aged agent of the Duke of Leinster), Moore his yeoman first Lieutenant and seventeen others.<sup>173</sup> Rebels also took Narraghmore where three yeomen were murdered. The retribution of the military proved equally severe. At Dunlavin and Carnew over 50 prisoners were summarily executed, though they had no part in the rising.<sup>174</sup>

The co-ordination of the times of the initial attacks and their similarity irrefutably attests to the strength of the United movement in Kildare. What is strongly absent is any attempt to march on Dublin or combine the various forces once they had appeared in the field. They had gathered in their own areas and concentrated their attacks on local garrisons and towns without any attempt to form a great midlands army. Whatever the military plans of the Directory were or should have been it seems clear that the concentrated action against local garrisons, in Kildare, was the accepted United plan in that county.

Pakenham noted that at one time there were four rebel camps serving Kildare – at Knockaulin Hill near Kilcullen, at the Gibbet on the Curragh, at Timahoe on the edge of the bog of Allen and Blackmore Hill on the border of the Wicklow Mountains.<sup>175</sup> Simultaneously he recognised that Dundas had almost abandoned the county to their mercy. Yet there was no attempt to unite these forces and little or no attempt to break out of the county even without a unified army.

We can only marvel that the leaders of these groups were able to keep them together at all and indeed retain any sort of control. Certainly the great hopes of a unified national mass rebellion entertained by the United Irishmen were dashed at this stage. Militarily in Kildare the rebellion proved to be a bit of a shambles despite its potential potency. It had indeed been a last throw desperate attempt to rouse the country but the arrests of Lord Edward, the Sheares Brothers and Neilson, and the disintegration of the Directory had turned confusion at national level into chaos at local level.

This was evident within the county itself. Around Athy men had gathered as ordered, ready to march on the town (again from different directions), but the expected reinforcements or new orders never arrived. They gathered a second time and marched to the colliery but the colliers refused to rise after the news of the massacre in Carlow and a local defeat on 25 May. The men could do little but return to their homes though some went north to fight with other groups.<sup>176</sup> In any event Athy was not attacked, which left the second strongest military post in the county still functioning against the rebels who inadvertently killed the messenger to Campbell with orders for him to withdraw his troops.

Kildare Town meanwhile had been occupied by 2000 rebels when General Wilford had evacuated his troops. Similarly Rathangan was taken on 26 May after Captain Langton had withdrawn the

militia in accordance with his orders. Unlike Kildare however, a yeomanry force under Captain Spenser existed in Rathangan to offer some defence of its loyal inhabitants. The evacuation of the militia demoralised this force and many subsequently deserted to the rebels.

The rebel commander Doorly posed quite a problem for historians. Lord Walter Fitzgerald and Sir Richard Musgrave said commander Doorly was captured, lodged in Longford Jail and hanged, some three years after the rebellion.<sup>177</sup> Mac Suibhne corrected them and pointed out 'he was hanged probably in Mullingar towards the end of 1798 or at the beginning of 1799'.<sup>178</sup> Pakenham judiciously made no mention of him while Marianne Elliott related how Michael Doorly remained at large from 1798 to 1803 when he went to Dublin to join Robert Emmet.<sup>179</sup>

The confusion stems from the fact that many accounts simply mention a Captain Doorly or even just Doorly. In his book on Rathangan, Mac Suibhne pointed out that there were two Doorly families in Lullymore in 1798. The family we are interested in was that of Thady Doorly who had at least three sons John, Michael and Thaddeus or young Thady. Inscribed on the family gravestone in Rathangan are their ages and the years the three senior Doorlys died – John Doorly died in 1798 aged 27; Michael in 1808 aged 36; and Thaddeus (the father) in 1821 aged 126 years. It was the slightly older (one year), John Doorly who commanded in Rathangan and he was captured at Clonard and hung in Mullingar. Since the stone was erected by his father before he died, we can assume that he died in late 1798. Michael who was nicknamed 'the Colonel', did turn out in 1803 but must not be confused as the leader of the rebel garrison of Rathangan during the rebellion.<sup>180</sup> The name Doorly however was well known, and even when talk of surrender was in the air in July, Lord Castlereagh refused such 'on any terms', 'to Doorly the Murderer of Mr. Spencer for whose Apprehension a Reward of 100 Pounds will be given'.<sup>181</sup>

By 29 May Rathangan and Ballitore had been recovered by the military and punishment applied to rebels and those suspected of disaffection.<sup>182</sup> Extremities were committed on both sides. Mary Leadbeater wondered at the ludicrousness of it all, when she had witnessed the innocent Dr. Johnson being hacked to death after a summary court martial and subsequently a soldier was tied to a cart and lashed, for shooting a pig – 'commanded to take the precious human life – punished for taking that of a brute'.<sup>183</sup>



Cruikshank's version of the death of Lt William Gifford, who was found on board the Munster mail by the rebels and piked to death.

The military were indeed frustrated. In Ballitore the initial column, from Carlow, was ordered to fire at any man in coloured clothes. This was only revoked when evidence of a parley, with Colonel Campbell in Athy, was produced.<sup>184</sup> Campbells' men wreaked vengeance on Narraghmore and Ballitore. In Rathangan, Lieutenant Colonel Longfield reported 'between 50 and 60 dead, I took no prisoners' though he complained, 'The troops are in want of everything the Rebels having destroyed everything in and near the town'.<sup>185</sup> Little did it matter to those caught up in the midst of it all, the title of those who plundered them.

When the towns were captured by the rebels barricades were erected to prevent a counter-attack. In Ballitore this consisted of carts and felled trees, in Rathangan carts, chains and even dead horses were used for cover during the fighting. Although the rebels in Ballitore fled with the appearance of the military the barricades proved successful in Rathangan when the rebels defeated the first two counter-attacks mainly by 'a sharp fire of small arms - of all kinds from the windows'.<sup>186</sup> Such tactics were successful under these conditions but Longfield simply bombarded the town from a distance, his battalion guns in front, supported by his infantry and both of these supported by his cavalry.<sup>187</sup> Similar tactics were used to the same effect in recapturing Prosperous on 19 June by Castlereagh's brother.<sup>188</sup> Without union the rebels were in a precarious position.

The force beaten by Dundas on Kilkullen Bridge had massed itself on the ancient hill at Knockaulin, and on 27 May they treated with Dundas for peace. Initial terms seem confused but the arrival of Lake on the command of Camden, set the tone of government policy. The rebels were given protections for their lives on the condition they would lay down their arms and return home, to abide by the peace and deliver up their leaders. Officially the rebel force was estimated to be about 4,000 strong, men whose 'sorrow and repentance seemed complete'.<sup>189</sup> The leaders were in this instance allowed to disperse with the rest of the rebel army when the treaty was concluded on 28 May, Whit Monday.

The peace was mainly due to Dundas's clemency and he had personally ascended the hill to accept the terms. Lake it seemed was prepared to blast the rebels into oblivion with the troops he had on hand near the avenue at Castlemartin.<sup>190</sup>

Despite his critics in Dublin Dundas achieved immediate results. He received news that another large rebel force, assembled on the Gibbet Rath, on the Curragh, were prepared to surrender on similar terms.

Negotiations were almost at an end when Major-General Sir James Duff arrived at the head of 150 dragoons, about 350 militia and seven field pieces in Kildare Town.<sup>191</sup> He had reached Monasterevin from Limerick by forced march, in only forty-eight hours. This was to re-open the lines of communication. The shambles that ensued left 350 rebels massacred on the Curragh plains with hardly any loss to the military.

In a letter to Lake begun in Monasterevin (the morning of 29 May), Duff said he was 'determined to make a dreadful example of the rebels ..., whose ... cruelties committed on some of the officers and men have exasperated them to a great degree'. He described the 'battle' in a postscript.

'P.S. - Kildare two o'clock p.m. - We found the rebels retiring from the town on our arrival, armed, we followed them with the dragoons. I sent some of the yeomen to tell them, on laying down their arms, they should not be hurt. Unfortunately, some of them fired on the troops; but from that moment they were attacked on all sides - nothing could stop the rage of the troops. I believe from two to three hundred of the rebels were killed. We have three men killed and several wounded.'<sup>192</sup>

On Tuesday 29 May possibly around four hundred rebels had gathered at the Rath without any topographical cover which must at least indicate their good intentions. Pakenham said that the negotiations were within minutes of being concluded when Duff marched upon them from the rear. If this is so we can only understand the fear of the rebels of a breach of fate and their uneasy situation. This would support the acceptable version of the reason for Duff's attack - i.e. that a shot or shots were fired into the air (possibly at the troops). But while this may provide the pretext for a military response it cannot provide a reason for the massacre of about 350 rebels apparently unarmed and in flight.

It was certain that by now the rebels knew 'that the Carlow men had been disastrously defeated on the 25th, that Dublin had failed to rise, that communications were open between Naas and Dublin for government reinforcements of men and munitions',<sup>193</sup> and about Knockaulin. On the other hand according to Duff's own affidavit the troops were hungry for blood. Some of those who had joined Duff in Monasterevin had defeated the rebels there some three days earlier. Lord Roden's foxhunters it seems were intent on slaughtering the croppies that day.<sup>194</sup> The most sinister account was provided by O'Kelly (who interviewed witnesses when he wrote his history in

1842) who described it as a premeditated act. Once the arms had been dumped the rebels were forced to kneel and beg the King's pardon, Duff then commanded his men to 'charge and spare no rebel',<sup>195</sup> an unconscionable act of brutality, but suggestive of a darker reason which Duff implied by his mention of the cruelties committed against the officers.

Confused stories of massacre and depredation were no doubt well versed at this time but one incident directly affected Duff's detachment. When Wilford had evacuated Kildare to the rebels, they had plundered the Limerick mail and piked to death, a seventeen year old officer, Lieutenant William Gifford. He was the son of a popular captain of Colonel Sanky's City of Dublin Militia, which constituted a large part of Duff's force.<sup>196</sup> Contiguous to this we must question Duff's ability to competently appraise the situation and his level of understanding of what had happened within the last six days between the beginning of the rising and the massacre on the 29 May.<sup>197</sup>

As the women were turning over the bodies on the Curragh, one by one,<sup>198</sup> Duff was hailed as a hero in Dublin in consequence of re-opening the lines of communications between Dublin and Limerick. The ultras were furious with Dundas - 'Great blame for holding any parley with them has been laid to the general officers. So much so that it was said it would occasion a Parliamentary inquiry'.<sup>199</sup> The realities were much more discomfiting - the conflict being undoubtedly lengthened with the dispersion of the rebels throughout and their loss of faith in government promises of protection.

Richard Griffith, whose actions had saved Clane on 24 May, wrote to Pelham in June. A mild critic of government policy he had realised that, 'From the first breaking out of the rebellion to this hour, I would have advised a continual attack upon the rebels, instead of which we have ... suffered the scoundrels to feed upon the fat of the land',<sup>200</sup> Castlereagh complained to Pelham how, 'In Kildare the rebellion has degenerated into a plundering banditti. They have left the gentlemen and rich farmers neither furniture or stock of any kind.'<sup>201</sup> Teeling called it a 'species of fugitive warfare, Lecky a predatory guerilla war: whatever the description, the rebels had adopted a hit and run campaign consistent with their military capabilities in consequence of the terrain and their arms.

The main rebel army had marshalled under William Aylmer in the north of the county. Rather than face a pitched battle, Aylmer harried the government forces and hid amongst the bogs. They had in





fact risen two days late and almost immediately retired to the bog at Timahoe disheartened by the failure of the country in general to rise. In the hope of such a rising they had delayed but finally felt compelled to join the rebellion.

If the rebels harassed the troops they were likewise harried by the military, though at this type of warfare they proved to have the upper hand. The military appeared more 'like a young dog in a rabbit warren, here and there, flying from spot to spot and catching little or nothing'.<sup>202</sup> Griffith complained that the government could not even offer protection to 'their own soldiers if they go half a mile out of their garrisons'.<sup>203</sup> Despite this 'they [i.e. the rebels] became utterly, dispirited, and perfectly ready to disband if they could obtain a pardon'.<sup>204</sup> Certainly this was true by July when they surrendered, the last United force in the field.

Even by early June the volatile position of the United army had clearly an unsettling effect. While many surrendered to the military in the hope of protections, others were press-ganged into service.<sup>205</sup> The main lines of communication through Naas, Kildare and Monasterevin were by now under military control, while Colonel Campbell still maintained control in the south around Athy, Narraghmore, Castledermot and Ballitore.<sup>206</sup> But while Dundas was 'highly pleased' and expected, 'in the course of one week to report the county in a state of quietness', the northern army remained a very real physical threat.<sup>207</sup>

The situation was greatly defused by the defeat of the rebels at Ovidstown on 19 June.<sup>208</sup> On 4 June they had stormed Kilcock, routed Sir Fenton Aylmer's yeomanry and burned the barracks and the courthouse. Two days after a military attack on Timahoe,, William Aylmer and five hundred rebels took Maynooth on 10 June.<sup>209</sup> These raids were not purely of a military nature. On 14 June they took a herd of cattle from Maynooth and the next day 800 sheep from Richard Griffith. While it certainly took a lot of food to keep thousands of men in the field one is sorely pressed not to be cynical. As Munroe's forces were routed in Ballynahinch and the Wexford men in Arklow; as the campaign ended in Ulster and neared its climax in Wexford, Aylmer's 'army' was capturing sheep and cattle, struggling to survive.

Lord Castlereagh's brother recaptured Prosperous on 19 June with a strong detachment and the familiar tactics of bombardment and rout. Stewart 'ransacked and burnt this receptacle of rebellion' regretting that his orders prevented him from pursuing the rebels

into the hills.<sup>210</sup> The same day the main rebel army 'supposed upwards of Three Thousand men' were attacked by Colonel Irwin at Ovidstown Hill between Clane and Kilcock.<sup>211</sup>

Irwin's force consisted of Highlanders, Dragoon Guards and Yeomen cavalry, and amounted to around 400 men. They surprised the rebels before breakfast and the rebel commanders barely had time to form their troops. Superiority of numbers again proved ineffective against canon and well directed musket fire, although it seems the battle was lost by the rebel pikemen who disobeyed orders to charge the enemy canon positions. Around 200 rebels were killed with the loss on the government side of only two officers, two sergeants and twenty privates.<sup>212</sup> After this defeat the rebel army began to disband.

Some of the sympathetic historians such as Kavanagh, O'Kelly, Ó Muirthile and Mac Suibhne,<sup>213</sup> maintained the tradition that Aylmer had gathered his men at Ovidstown, as a prelude to his march on Dublin while the government had concentrated its efforts in Wexford. In light of Aylmer's record preceding this battle, this tradition appears to be an effort to glamourise the rebel failure.

Whatever the effect of Ovidstown on Aylmer the destruction of the Wexford/Wicklow forces on Vinegar Hill two days later (21 June), must have quickened his efforts to seek peace. This he did around 5 July in a message to the Marquis of Buckingham an acquaintance of his fathers.<sup>214</sup> While arrangements were being made the remainder of the Wexford/Wicklow forces under Edward Fitzgerald, Anthony Perry and Father Kearns joined Aylmer on 10 July.<sup>215</sup>

The two forces did not agree and split almost immediately, Fitzgerald and some others stayed in Kildare but about 1600 including some Kildare militants marched north in an attempt to rouse Meath and Louth. These efforts proved as fruitless as those prior to their joining Aylmer – they were even beaten off at a fortified house in Clonard by twenty seven yeomen.<sup>216</sup> Constantly harried, they were defeated and dispersed by the military. Around 20 July, Perry and Kearns were back in Kildare but were captured and executed at Edenderry on 21 July. On the same day the Kildare forces officially surrendered.

On 5 July, Sir Fenton Aylmer made it clear, that the rebel leaders were prepared to sign a full confession of guilt before a magistrate and the people had undertaken to give up their arms in return for a pardon. The leaders were to be spared on the condition of voluntary self-transportation. Sir Fenton clearly expressed his personal views

separately in the letter – 'I would much rather they were attacked but to have them offer to surrender and all the others shall deliver their arms humanity must interfere',<sup>217</sup> The value William Aylmer placed on those proceedings and his wish to have an end to it all were indicated by his refusal to join the Wexford/Wicklow men in their quest.

Buckingham wrote a letter to William's father, with the permission of Cornwallis the Lord Lieutenant. A truce was arranged, and with two officers of the Armagh Militia as hostage in the rebel camp near Prosperous, Aylmer and his officers surrendered.<sup>218</sup> The principal officers including Aylmer and Fitzgerald were taken to Dublin and lodged in the Royal Exchange, for examination. They blamed their involvement on the United Irish Directory 'who induced them to rise under the assurance that all Ireland was to rise on the 23 May'.<sup>219</sup>

Aylmer's surrender effectively ended the rebellion which had begun almost two months previously, in May, except for bands of desperadoes under Holt and Dwyer in the Wicklow mountains. The arrival of the French at Killala in August failed to stir Kildare to action, as Perry and Kearns had failed in July. Their rebellion had ended long before. Some like Michael Dooly followed in the footsteps of Holt and Dwyer and continued a bandit campaign. Considering the fate of his brother John and the hardships endured by himself and his family this was understandable. He retained a sense of commitment and marched to Emmet's aid in 1803.<sup>220</sup>

Violence continued into the autumn months as the county began to rebuild itself, blessed with a fabulous harvest.<sup>221</sup> Despite the ultras indignation at a negotiated settlement many believed Cornwallis had saved Ireland from a more terrible fate. The unexpected support of Lord Clare had helped push the amnesty through Parliament and rebels not guilty of murder or outrage could take advantage of its protection. With the 'retirement of the Kildare troops from the field the military force of the Union ceased to be operative',<sup>222</sup> and that was as important for Cornwallis as his humanitarianism.

The intended mass, national rising did not happen and in Kildare the rebellion quickly degenerated into a plundering, Defenderist, bandit war, though more ominous and potent than the scavenger tactics of the previous year. Thousands of Kildaremen had risen, goaded to rebellion by military repression and the fear of Orange retribution. Personal and local grievances and loyalties bore the mark of the politicised dream, of United organisation inspired by

French republicanism, but the reality was a military shambles. For the masses of pikemen who knew the realities of the King's canon, political rhetoric was cold comfort and any such delirium quickly faded.

Loyalist reasoning that the masses were deluded was substantiated by many of those examined but the actuality of the pikes and other arms proved the perfidy of those involved. A closer examination of the rebellion papers provides a greater understanding of this collage of Defenders and United men.

144. Teeling, ... *A Personal Narrative*, p. 95.

145. Quoted from Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, p. 159. See Appendix 3, p. 113.

146. Reynolds evidence quoted in Moore, *The Life and Death*, p. 163; see Note 29 above.

147. Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty*, pp. 106-107; also *P.R.O.N.I. The '98 Rebellion*, Education Facsimile, No. 81.

148. Pakenham, *ibid.*

149. Lecky, *A History of Ireland ...*, vol. 5, p. 13; Teeling, *op. cit.* note 144.

150. Camden – Portland, 24 May, 1798 contained in the Stephen Rynne collection in Newbridge Library; Buckingham recognised 'that the measures of the rebels have been precipitated from the apprehensions of losing ground by every day's delay' – Buckingham-Grenville, 29 May 1798. Fortescue MSS iv, p. 222.

151. Diary of Colonel Robert Ross – P.R.O.N.I. The '98 Rebellion, Education Facsimile, No. 81.

152. Camden – Portland, *op. cit.*: See also James Smyth, *Dublin's Political Underground in the 1790's* – 'There was no rebellion on the streets of Dublin in 1798 because the measures adopted by the government prevented it' – in O'Brien (ed), *Parliament, Politics and People ...*, p. 147.

153. For the attack on Naas see Camden-Portland, *op. cit.*; Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, p. 82; Con Costello, 'Horrible scenes in Naas following battle in 1798', Looking Back Series (476) *Leinster Leader*, 14-11-91. As well as the enclosed bulletin see Gosford – Lake 24 May 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-37-152 – it is more detailed than the bulletin.

154. Subsequently compensation was paid for their destruction – Con Costello, *op. cit.*; Mac Suibhne reproduces an letter from the Rev. P. Dunne, P.P. of Naas, to the Most Rev. Dr. Troy the Archbishop of Dublin, which was meant to correct Musgrave on a few points one of which concerned a Captain Davis. Dunne said no Captain Davis was wounded since none was there at the time but arrived later. Gosford in his report to Lake, however, mentions a Cornet Davis who was dangerously wounded in the belly, see Mac Suibhne *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83, and Gosford-Lake 24 May 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-37-152.

155. The military consisted of 150 Lord Gosford's Armagh Militia; 59 cavalry of 4th Dragoons and Ancient Britons and 16 yeomen under Captain Richard Neville. See Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty*, p. 134; for Rebel losses see Gosford – Lake, 24 May 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-37-152.

156. Gosford – Lt.-Gen. Craig, 15 July 1798; Reb. Pap. 620-39-76 – since 24 May only around 150 pikes and 8-10 firelocks taken.

157. Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, misdates Hacketstown on 24 June on p. 37 and incorrectly places it on 4 July on p. 69. The battle in which Reynolds took part took place on 25 June 1798.

158. Gosford – Lake, op. cit.

159. Pakenham, op.cit., p. 134; Mac Suibhne, op. cit., pp. 56-66.

160. They had the password to the garrison – Pakenham, op. cit., p. 128.

161. Roger North – Edward Cooke, 27 May 1798; includes lists of men of Prosperous and surrounding areas who were involved - Reb. Pap. 620-37-176.

162. There are various traditions and versions of the story – see Mac Suibhne, op. cit., pp.59-60; Con Costello, Looking Back (437) *Leinster Leader*, 14-2-91.

163. Col. Charles Stewart – Lord?, 19 June 1798. Reb. Pap. 620-38-182.

164. Prosperous was attacked around two, Naas around two-thirty and Clane around three: Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty*, pp. 132-134; Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, p. 58.

165. Pakenham, op. cit.

166. Mac Suibhne, op. cit., pp. 63-64; Pakenham, op. cit., pp. 133-134; Mac Suibhne quoted Maxwell's account of Esmond's falsity with Swayne, p. 57; Kavanagh in his, *A Popular History ...*, said they disliked each other, p. 24.

167. For accounts of both engagements see Pakenham, op. cit., pp. 136-138; Kavanagh, op. cit., pp. 264-5, and Rawson, *A Statistical Survey*, Introduction, pp. ix-x.

168. Pakenham, op. cit., p. 119.

169. Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty*, p. 137.

170. Pakenham, op. cit., pp. 145-146, Leadbeater, *Ballitore in XCVIII*, pp. 422-424; Con Costello, 'Kildare's outrage and tragedy in 1798', Looking Back Series 512, *Leinster Leader*, 23 July 1992.

171. Monasterevin, see Rawson, *A Statistical Survey*, Introduction, p. xvi; Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, pp. 85-86; Kavanagh, *A Popular History ...*, p. 28.

172. The Tara Hill forces were lead by a Kildare Militia man – Pakenham, op. cit., pp. 181-182.

173. Pakenham, op. cit., p. 153; Peadar Mac Suibhne, *Rathangan* (Naas, 1975), pp. 118-124.

174. These executions and tales of success in Kildare spurred the Wexford men to follow suit. Nine of those executed at Dunlavin were yeomen from Narraghmore.

175. Pakenham, p. 184. Notice the Curragh and Kilcullen are in the centre, Timahoe near the border with Meath and Blackmore Hill in Wicklow.

176. Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, pp. 13-14 and 190-192; he considers Patrick O'Kelly a historian of the rising to have been their commander; see the examination of John Chambers of Athy, 17 May 1798, he had heard a Patrick Kelly was the proper person to be elected Colonel though he was unsure whether he was elected or sworn in. He did mention him as a captain, possibly the same person, see Reb. Pap. 620-37-98.

177. Lord Walter Fitzgerald in *J.K.A.S.*, V, 1906, p. 157, and Sir Richard Musgrave in *Memoirs of the Different Rebellion in Ireland* – both cited in Mac Suibhne, op. cit., pp. 138-139.

178. Mac Suibhne, *ibid.*

179. Elliott, *Partners in Revolution*, p. 245 and 305.

180. Compare the information of B. Senior and James Nagle in Mac Suibhne. Senior said it was not John who was hanged at Mullingar but a nephew William but

Nagle spoke of the elder Thady having lost a son, Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, pp. 226-227; for the information on the family and the gravestone see Mac Suibhne, *Rathangan*, pp. 6, 137-138 and 152.

181. It was possible Michael was partly responsible for Mr. Spenser's murder, John seemed excused by many. Castlereagh makes no distinction: Castlereagh wrote the note on 5 July 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-39-23: For claims John Doorly was not present. See Mac Suibhne, *Rathangan*, p. 117.

182. For Ballitore and rebellion see Mary Leadbeater, *Ballitore in XCVIII*, pp. 422-430; Recapture of Rathangan, see Reb. Pap. 620-37-208/209.

183. Leadbeater, op.cit., pp. 427-428.

184. *Ibid.*, p. 426.

185. Lt.-Col. Longfield-Dundas, 29 May 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-37-208: Pakenham pointed out that the commander of the City of Cork Militia at the recapture of Rathangan was a relation of Swayne who had been killed in Prosperous, *The Year of Liberty*, p. 191.

186. Lt.-Col. Dunne – Gen. Lake, 29 May 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-37-209.

187. Lt.-Col. Longfield – Dundas, op. cit., Rep. Pap. 620-37-208.

188. Lt. Col. Charles Stewart – Lord ?, 19 June 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-38-182.

189. Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, p. 16. For the surrender see Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty*, pp. 184-5; Mac Suibhne, op.cit., pp. 8-17; Mac Suibhne quotes O'Kelly as one of the principal negotiators present. Curiously he and Pakenham skirt around the events without mentioning the date. See also Mrs. Maria H – Mrs. Helen Clarke, 31 May 1798, for the reaction of those in Dublin to the treaty (she misdated it to the 29th); *The 98 Rebellion P.R.O.N.I.* Education Fascimile No. 82; also Beresford quoted in Teeling ... pp. 237-8.

190. Mac Suibhne, op.cit., p. 17.

191. Numbers from Kavanagh, *A Popular History ...*, p. 39; Pakenham quoted the numbers when it left Limerick – 60, dragoons, 350 militia and 6 field pieces, but he had increased his strength on the way particularly with the addition of yeomanry in Monasterevan from Bagot's and Hoysteads Corps: Pakenham, op. cit., p. 185.

192. Kavanagh, op. cit., p. 39-40; Mac Suibhne, op. cit., pp. 163-166; Pakenham, op. cit., pp. 185-187.

193. Fr. Seosamh Ó Muirthile in Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, pp. 161-162.

194. This relies a lot on oral tradition – Mac Suibhne, op. cit., p. 173.

195. *Ibid.* pp.164-166.

196. See Cruickshank's version enclosed, p. 58. Mac Suibhne quoted O'Kelly to say he was Duff's nephew – op. cit., p. 165: see Pakenham *The Year of Liberty*, p. 186.

197. Mac Suibhne corroborated his evidence for the date of the massacre with local tombstones; we know however the massacre took place on Tue. the day after Whit Monday at Knockaulin – if the rising began early Thurs. 24, Tue. had to be 29 May – Mac Suibhne, op. cit., p. 175.

198. Reckoned to be 85 widows in Claregate Street in Kildare Town the next day – Mac Suibhne, op.cit.p.167.

199. Mrs Maria H – Mrs. Helen Clarke – commenting on the mood of the city – see above note 189; also Beresford – Auckland, 11 July 1798 – 'It is certain that several of those who were killed by Sir James Duff had protections in their pockets, obtained under the late proclamations of the generals; Sigerson said this proved the perfidy of the crime but in fact those with protections had no business there

whatsoever:- Sigerson, *The Last Independent Parliament*, p. 129.

200. Griffith-Pelham 4/25 June 1798, Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty*, p. 191.
201. Caltsereagh-Pelham, 16 June 1798 – said Griffith lost 800 sheep and everything of value he possessed: Gilbert, *Documents Relating to Ireland*, p. 140.
202. Lady Sarah Napier – Richmond, 27 June 1798. Moore, *The Life and Death*, p. 221.
203. Griffith – Pelham, Pakenham, op. cit., p. 313.
204. Lecky, *A History of Ireland ...*, vol. 5, p. 13.
205. For surrendering see Reb. Pap. 620-38-23/58; for forced service see 620-38-93/95.
206. Only tenably for they were constantly under threat – Kildare town was burned seemingly by the rebels to disrupt military operations. Reb. Pap. 620-38-88; For Campbell see Reb. Pap. 620-38-23.
207. J. Johnson – ? 18 June 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-38-173.
208. Pakenham misdates this battle to 20 June, op. cit., p. 313.
209. Sir Fenton Aylmer was from the Protestant side of the family: For details of Kilcock, Timahoe and Maynooth see Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, pp. 68-9 and 183.
210. Lt.-Col. Charles Stewart -Lord ?, 19 June 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-38-182: See also 620-38-191 for a defeat of rebels near Kibeggan and Rathangan.
211. Report of Brigadier General Grose, 20 June 1798. Reb. Pap. 620-38-193.
212. Ibid.: Grose put the government loss at about twenty but with only one officer dead and no mention of the sergeants – it was probably an early estimate: Mac Suibhne, op. cit., pp 177-183; Kavanagh, *A Popular History ...*, pp. 266-267.
213. Mac Suibhne and Kavanagh, *ibid.*
214. Buckingham – Grenville, 23 July 1798, H.M.C. Fortescus MSS vol. IV, pp. 263-273. Aylmer's father was loyal.
215. Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty*, pp. 315-317.
216. Pakenham, op. cit.
217. Sir Fenton Aylmer – ? 5 July 1798. Reb. Pap. 620-39-23.
218. Castlereagh in unsigned note to Wickham seems to misdate the treaty to 25 July; he says Alymer, Fitzgerald and 13 others surrendered to General Wilford at Sallins – Reb. Pap. 620-39-113; Ó Muirthuille said Aylmer and 17 officers, and tradition was it was signed at Rathcoffey – Mac Suibhne, *Kildare in '98*, p. 197. Con Costello quoted Saunders News Letter 25 July – 14 rebel leaders taken in 4 carriages to Dublin – Looking Back, *Leinster Leader*, 18.8.1990; Pakenham gives no definite number but said 5 carriages, *The Year of Liberty*, p.317.
219. Buckingham – Grenville, see note 214 above. As evidence of their potential 5,000 pikes and firelocks were surrendered as well as quantities of cattle, horses, sheep and plunder.
220. Elliott, *Partners in Revolution ...*, pp. 245-305. Also chapter 24 of Mac Suibhne, op. cit., which contains evidence of B. Senior and James Nagle – a fascinating insight into the hardships of the rebels, pp. 225-240
221. For incidents of violence see Reb. Pap. 620-40-34 and 620-40-69, particularly the latter: Compensation claims for Kildare amounted to £97,090. Pakenham, op. cit., p. 392.
222. Teeling, *A Personal Narrative ...*, p. 290.

## CHAPTER V

# Defenders and United Men

'In one case, sedition speaks aloud and walks abroad. The demagogue goes forth; the public eye is upon him; he frets his busy hour upon the stage; but soon either weariness or bribe, or punishment, or disappointment bears him down or drives him off, and he appears no more. In the other case, how does the work of sedition go forward? Night after night the muffled rebel steals forth in the dark, and casts another and another brand upon the pile, to which, when the hour of fatal maturity shall arrive, he will apply the flame.'<sup>223</sup>

Curran made this distinction in 1794. By 1798 the government and loyal people of the countryside would more clearly have understood its ominous undertones. Forced by continual government repression and with the hope of French aid, the Defenders and United Irishmen merged, in a concerted subversive effort to pressurize the government. In late 1796 a cry against 'notorious Vagabonds, Defenders or as they call themselves Regulators ... who frequent each hair market and ale house threatening to knock out the brains of every Protestant and to regulate the price of labour, rents of land and value of Provisions',<sup>224</sup> confirmed the activities of Defenders in county Kildare but by early 1797 they seemed to acquire more dangerous attributes.

In the aftermath of the Bantry expedition and the renewed fervour of the United Irish movement as a whole, by early 1797 a 'spirit of insurrection'<sup>225</sup> was recognised as efforts were made to proclaim the county, though some believed this would only aggravate the situation. Wogan Browne believed, 'the Proclamation of a district within twenty miles of the Capital and seat of Government will feed the uneasiness which is then experienced and will rather rouse into activity than allay the discontents'.<sup>226</sup> As a liberal he believed in Catholic emancipation and reform and that some sort of conciliatory gesture should be made but the case against such conciliation was growing stronger every day with increased evidence of murder, sedition and disaffection.<sup>227</sup> By the end of May, Richard Neville at Naas reported to Pelham the Chief Secretary that, 'The gaol is filling fast.'<sup>228</sup>

Men like James Murphy were tendering unlawful oaths throughout the countryside and rumours of a general rising and Lord

Edward's participation began to circulate.<sup>229</sup> Magistrates like John Revell Walsh of Strawberry Lodge, near Naas were frustrated by the 'compassionate feelings and interferences' of some magistrates on the apprehension of suspects while their properties were being attacked and burned.<sup>230</sup> Walsh complained that this compassion made the loyalist magistrates 'the particular and marked object of resentment'.<sup>231</sup>

A meeting of the whole county had been called by the liberals but banned by the government as a dangerous measure. Efforts were then made to petition the King<sup>232</sup> against his present ministers in the hope of reform, which would prevent revolution. These efforts were viewed with suspicion and contempt by loyalists who watched the spread of the 'contagion of the County Kildare'.<sup>233</sup> The county did indeed appear to be most disturbed and not simply by Defender type attacks and intimidation but in a seditious way.

A clerk of the crown, J. Pollock reported on the Kildare Assizes and recommended more troops, possibly regiments of Fencible cavalry although the Ancient Britons would be a great asset to the small camp at the Curragh. He was disgusted by the presence of Lord Edward, Valentine Lawless and George Cummins at the trials of United Irishmen and believed 'a rooted and desperate rebellion', had been planted in Kildare, 'a most decided and unequivocal determination to subvert the King's Government'.<sup>234</sup> The conspiracy seemed to be very formidable and this accounted for the apparently paranoid reaction of some magistrates and landlords.

Behind the political facade (the traitorous, seditious conspiracy) lay the realities of Defenderism – terror and violence. In August Judge Rob Day described how the, 'Gentlemen ... in the County of Kildare have converted their Houses into Garrisons – their windows and doors barricaded with bullet proof plank, their walls pierced in various places for spike-holes and notwithstanding the present calm they have no idea of abandoning that defensive system, or relaxing their precautions till after the winter.'<sup>235</sup> This was the situation despite his praise for the good effect of the Insurrection Act. Those found guilty of offences were quickly dispatched. On his arrival in Naas the gaol had been crowded but prisoners found implicated in the same offence were tried in groups.<sup>236</sup> The terror inspired by Defenderist tactics was too often based on reality.

John Wolfe of Balbriggan described the murder of Patrick Nicholson at Rathbride on the Curragh in November 1797 to Edward Cooke the under-secretary of the civil department. Nicholson had

been responsible for Cummins of Kildare being lodged in gaol. To intimidate him, his house was burned but he received damages from the Grand Jury and so, it was necessary for him to be murdered, as an example no doubt to other potential witnesses. In traditional Defender fashion 'a number of savages with their faces blackened and shirts over their coats ... butchered him with more than savage barbarity', Wolfe was convinced like Pollock that, 'in this County the scheme is to put down the protestant establishment ... (and) ... to make Terror the order of the day'. He recommended it be proclaimed.<sup>237</sup>

These Defender tactics were often frowned upon by the higher echelons of the United Irishmen who believed they would disrupt and discredit the movement. A United handbill, which notably was hand-written, found on the streets of Athy warned its members against drunkenness and stealing arms, and urged them to maintain discipline and organisation, to be prepared to aid the French.<sup>238</sup> This was the situation early in 1798 as Ireland tumbled towards a rebellion. But despite such appeals local outrages continued.<sup>239</sup>

But these tactics were effective. In March, Rob Day reported again on the Naas Assizes, this time about the curious conviction of a 'rebel' there. He had been tried for administering an unlawful oath to a soldier of the Cork Militia, to be true to the French etc. The charge was not contradicted and the soldier apparently telling the truth, yet the jury was out for two hours. He was found guilty but the jury recommended he be allowed to enlist. Day found this completely ridiculous.<sup>240</sup> For some it was probably as dangerous to convict as to be convicted.

Early in April, Thomas Rawson of Athy indicated that there were seventy loyal men in Athy who wished to be yeomen or arm as freemen. 'They feel that the time is arrived when it is necessary for the well affected to get together to protect their lives.' Three men of the neighbourhood had disappeared and were presumed murdered.<sup>241</sup> Passes became necessary for travel on the canals in an effort to monitor and control seditious persons.<sup>242</sup>

Martial law had been proclaimed on 30 March and by mid-April suspects were rounded up. Captain Thomas Fitzgerald was detained for possessing seditious documents, one of which was an address of the United Irishmen of Dublin from 1793 with Henry Sheares as President and Edward Lewins as Secretary.<sup>243</sup> He was proved innocent later but at the time rumour alone could provide a pretext for arrest.<sup>244</sup> Similar occupations recur in the arrest of 'younighted men'

in different areas, and publicans and smiths were often principal suspects, and indeed principal members of the organisations.<sup>245</sup>

In May the United organisation around Athy was battered by Colonel Campbell and many active participants were arrested and gave evidence.<sup>246</sup> Militarily the meetings consisted of privates, corporals, sergeants, lieutenants and captains under the command of a baronial colonel although in some instances a joint colonelcy was mentioned (Thomas Reynolds the government informer was a colonel for Kilkea). At the local level treasurers were elected to gather the contributions of those who attended which seemed to be regulated to three pence per month, which was in accordance with the United Irish handbill found in Athy in January.<sup>247</sup> As well as initially swearing an oath to the organisation it seemed to be necessary at times, to swear to preserve the secrecy of the substance of the meetings. The returns of arms, ammunition and men were discussed and if necessary officers, military or civil, were elected. Many of those who attended were often related, directly or through marriage, and the familiar occupations of publicans, smiths and shopkeepers readily appear although farmers and labourers, were also prominent. Meetings were held in the houses of active members and publicans could obviously bestow advantage in this respect as gatherings would be less inclined to excite suspicion. The members would pay for their pikes regardless of their contribution – it was each man's responsibility to arm himself and the pikes it seemed cost a shilling.<sup>248</sup> Once this was paid the man would get his pike a few days later, it seemed they were made to order. These meetings concentrated for safety on immediate localities and members were often ignorant of other branches. The movement was still active in recruiting, although most of the men who gave evidence had been sworn in mid and late 1797.

At the baronial level the captains met to communicate intelligence to the various committees and received the reports of men and arms from them. The different captains handed over the contributions from their companies to the treasurer. Thomas Reynolds presided over his meetings and it seemed the captains under him swore an oath to be true to him as colonel as well as an oath to protect the secrecy of the meeting. At one such meeting he read an address from Lord Edward to the people of Kildare which told them to disregard what was said in the Dublin papers, to be steady and to prepare with pikes, but to resist plundering which was damaging to the cause. Some of the captains were, as in other areas, active in the yeomanry.

Regardless of this evidence, or possibly in consequence of the apparent success of their efforts and the surrendering of arms, both Campbell and Dundas seemed to believe, that the movement in county Kildare had been broken.<sup>249</sup> On the 22 May, Captain J. Hardy of Wicklow complained to Castlereagh that 'The rigour used in Kildare has driven many to our Mountains.'<sup>250</sup> Within two days the Kildaremen had been driven more directly into the field, as the news of rebellion broke upon the capital.<sup>251</sup>

In chapter four I examined the Rebellion Papers in relation to the rebellion and analysed the tactics of the rebels etc., but there are still interesting pieces to note. For instance, three days after the outbreak of rebellion, an exasperated Lord Aldborough wrote to one of the under secretaries William Elliott complaining of how his coachman, footman and groom as well as other labourers and cowherds and a petty constable had been sworn by James Doogan, a United captain who was presently in Athy gaol. Also sworn, he supposed, were 'the rest of the popish inhabitants of Rheban a few of whom were yeomen and came in to be armed and clothed and disciplined'. In doing so they had taken the oath of allegiance, but at the 'same time they had sworn to murder in the shortest notice all orange men' whom it seemed, 'were all who were not united Irishmen'. Aldborough could not believe their audacity, 'nor I believe this rebellion will be quashed, especially in the county of Kildare. while the principal promoters of it remain unpunished.'<sup>252</sup> The latter obviously referred to the United Irish leaders in gaol in Dublin and here he reflected the rage of the Protestant ultras in Parliament.

Concerning the recapture of Rathangan on 28 May, Lieutenant Colonel Longfield was particularly concerned, that of the fourteen or fifteen rebels killed in one attack, 'all those found dead are of the better kind of people'.<sup>253</sup> This contrasted sharply with loyalist images of the poor deluded masses. A chilling anecdote on that same event was delivered by Lieutenant Colonel Dunne when he described how 'the dead were hacked and torn – on the troops leaving the town with the most savage barbarity'.<sup>254</sup> Was it any wonder the military took no prisoners when they retook the town?<sup>255</sup>

On 30 May General Lake had a notice posted which declared that people not in the navy, army, militia or yeomanry found in uniform would be considered spies and treated accordingly.<sup>256</sup> The loyalty of the yeomanry and militia had always been a fear for loyalists especially with the amount of Catholics among the rank and file. During

- 1 James Doogan x like how hard the has been appointed  
in Athy Jail a Captain of his Troop in an antient year  
The following yeomen
- 2 Redmond Keatinge x
  - 3 Patrick Keatinge x
  - 4 James Newland x
  - 5 Mrs Golding x
  - 6 Thomas Butler x
  - 7 James Lawler x
  - 8 Cornelius Lawler x
  - 9 Daniel Lawler x
  - 10 Michael Lawler x
  - 11 Edward Lawler x
  - 12 Matthew Kellypatrick x
  - 13 Mrs. Curran x
  - 14 Mrs Curran x
  - 15 Tim Moore
  - 17 two Burgis x
  - 18 Pat Lawler x
  - 20 two of his sons x
  - 21 James Melan x
  - 22 John Melan his son x she went with the above Lawlers
  - 23 John Melan a relation
  - 24 Mrs Lane
  - 25 James Lane x
  - 26 James Murray x
  - 27 — Kinelagh x
  - 28 — Murray in Athy Jail x
  - 29 Pat Corrahan x
  - 30 Tho. Corrahan x
  - 31 — Byrne x
  - 32 — Graves x
  - 34 two Handers x
  - 36 two Beggles x
  - 39 Pat Rowton & 2 sons x
  - 41 John Lawler & Tho. his son x
- The above except three all of Melan  
some fled & joined the armies of other Rebels, some of them  
have since returned of it is supposed the rest with, but these  
are thirty two of the above still about Melan ready to rise  
to join any body of insurgents at a moments warning, of the  
barron Melan of charge the Domain  
Lord Aldborough therefore doubts that this business will  
may be attended to before his too late, the Country  
purged of such Villains

List of disaffected yeomen sent by Lord Aldborough to William Elliott, 5 June 1798.

1798, however, they performed well<sup>257</sup> although in County Kildare there were a few serious instances of disaffection. Colonel Campbell was forced to disarm a whole troop at Castledermot, when he found those who had not deserted were disaffected.<sup>258</sup>

Aldborough, as we have seen above, had realised that some of these who had joined the yeomanry had done so to be 'armed and clothed and disciplined'.<sup>259</sup> On 5 June he sent a list of thirty seven sworn yeomen to William Elliott recommending that 'the Country' be 'purged of such Villians'.<sup>260</sup> His own corps he believed were steadfast and loyal and they purged the neighbouring corps of Athy, Narraghmore and Castledermot.

A servant John Laffan had been compelled to join the rebel camp in the demesne of Hortlands in June. There he recognised, 'All members of Captain Nevill's Corps of Yeomen Cavalry'.<sup>261</sup> Richard Griffith's corps at Clane had suffered in similar fashion. Some of his men were among those who surrendered with Aylmer to Wilford in July.<sup>262</sup> Mostly the yeomen who deserted were active in the direction of rebel military affairs because of their training and knowledge and this was the reason their disaffection was treated so seriously. As we have seen before, Aylmer, Reynolds, Doorly and Esmond, to name some of the principal characters on the rebel side had all had military training in the militia or the yeomanry.

The main rebel force marshalled itself under Aylmer in the north of the county near Timahoe, although Aylmer was shrewd enough to move the camp around. John Mitchel a Dublin barber was forced to join at Timahoe in June and kept to shave the rebels. Organised militarily, he estimated the force to be 2-3,000 strong. There were six protestant prisoners there, two of whom were shot and it seems he luckily escaped a similar fate. Aylmer tipped him a shilling for a shave and he was able to escape on Tuesday 5 June with the help of another.<sup>263</sup> In their evidence on the rebel camp all the witnesses seem in fact to have been forced to join or die, and while some of this character building may have been for the benefit of their examiners, many were indeed forced into service.<sup>264</sup> The men were drilled and possessed a good number of firelocks. Aylmer wore his scarlet regimentals, military boots and helmet and sword and pistols, with a green sash and was the sole commander although he had many officers.<sup>265</sup>

One interesting note on the rebels was forwarded by Joseph Lyons, another 'pressed' recruit. He had been taken to Prosperous and put in the guard house, around 22 June.<sup>266</sup> A man asked him his

religion, to which he answered a protestant. He was told that there were loyal men among them of that religion and he would not be condemned for that, unless he was an orangeman.<sup>267</sup> While there were sectarian incidents on both sides, the conflict in Kildare, lacked the fanaticism of that in Wexford and as we have seen in Aylmer's camp, control was exercised over the ordinary men.

There are some clues as to the conditions the rebels had to endure if they survived capture. An employee of one John Russell wrote to his former master to help procure his release. He had been conscripted by rebels on his way to relations in Wexford and a short time later arrested by a party of the City of Cork Militia, whom he, believed would kill him. 'As I regarded the Army as the Wickedest of them.' Writing from the market house in Kildare it seemed to him that, 'by the treatment I as well as two others receive that our Punishment will be hunger, thirst, filth and Wretchedness', the small morsel of food divided between them being 'due to some charitable person'.<sup>268</sup>

Dundas complained to Castlereagh on the matter of prisoners sentenced to transportation, that 'The County Gaol at Naas is full – and the Grand Houses are Crowded, to the great inconvenience of the Troops.'<sup>269</sup> In Dublin and Cork conditions were little better and prison ships were used to facilitate the numbers. Lieutenant General Sir James Stewart and Admiral Kingsmill deplored the conditions on the 'Princess' in Cork Harbour. Of those aboard, 'many of them were detained without any regular committal, others against whom there were no charges, and there were also some recruits on board for his Majesty's service, likewise ... the ship was overcrowded and sickly.' They believed also, that a line should be drawn between convicts convicted of high offences and sentenced to transportation and those of lesser offences sentenced to serve, to avoid moral corruption.<sup>270</sup> This sharply contrasted with the polite, mannerly treatment of officers like Aylmer who were separately housed at the expense of government, although some officers were forced to pay for the amelioration of their conditions.<sup>271</sup>

With the surrender of Aylmer, Fitzgerald, Luby and their forces, hostilities were effectively brought to a close but much of the country remained at the mercy of bandits and ruffians. These deserters, murderers and thieves were well armed and lived off scared victims enforced generosity. If they were not well fed or bedded down they threatened to burn the cabins or shoot the inmates. On the other hand if the army found they had been there they would burn the

house – 'What can a defenceless man do?'<sup>272</sup> The mail coaches were robbed as were the wealthy houses. Some like Michael Doorly continued in this role until 1803 and caused headaches for the military who were unable to cope with them.

In some respects the actions of these men were to be preferred to those rotting in gaol (considering the conditions) like young Thomas Andoe who had fought at Naas and surrendered with Aylmer on 21 July. His mother was still begging for his release in October 1799, a boy 'not yet more than seventeen years', who had been in prison fourteen months unsure of his fate.<sup>273</sup> This scenario was often repeated and in many cases it was truly difficult to separate the innocent from the guilty, the deluded from the firm.<sup>274</sup>

These are all examples of the wealth of information to be gleaned from the state papers. While the co-ordination of the initial attacks on 24 May and the similarity in tactics throughout the county and national justification, descry the rebellion in terms of the United Irishmen, Defenderism remained a strong motivating force. The masses of rebels understood the realities of Defenderism only too well and these tactics were complimented, glamourised by the United Irish ideals and the embryonic politicisation at that level. They were stirred to life by middle and lower middle class shopkeepers, publicans and farmers but their leaders were higher middle class wealthy farmers, solicitors and doctors, for whom the French ideals were not just dreams. We can never separate or dissect this collage it must be understood in terms of the whole, no matter what aspect we are looking at, at a particular time.

223. John Philpot Curran at the trial of Hamilton Rowan, 1794, warning the court what they might expect if repression continued – Brian Inglis, *The Freedom of the Press, 1784-1841* (Pub. 1954), p. 108.

224. Lord Aldborough – Cooke, August 1796, Reb. Pap. 620-24-97.

225. Rev. Knipe – Pelham, 23 Feb. 1797, Reb. Pap. 620-28-292; see also Tyrrell – Pelham, 26 April 1797, Reb. Pap. 620-29-315.

226. Wogan Browne – Pelham, 9 May 1797, Reb. Pap. 620-30-46.

227. See Reb. Pap. 620-30-147/168 and 620-31-45.

228. Nevile – Pelham, 29 May 1797, Reb. Pap. 620-30-221.

229. For Murphy see warrant of Thomas Conolly for his arrest, 29 May 1797, Reb. Pap. 620-30-228; For the rumours of a rising and Lord Edward see Ceasar Colclough – ?, from Enniscorthy, 5 June 1797, Reb. Pap. 620-31-39.

230. Walsh reckoned the force that attacked his house numbered near 200; a neighbouring magistrate, Mr. Stammers near Prosperous had his haggard burned; Mr. John Revell Walsh – ? 6 June 1797, Reb. Pap. 620-31-45.

231. Ibid.

232. See Appendix 1, and Reb. Pap. 620-30-221 and 620-31-103.



233. Col O'Neale – ? 9 June 1797, Reb.Pap. 620-31-65
234. J. Pollock, Clerk of Crown – ? Aug 1797, Reb. Pap. 620-32-89.
235. R. Day – ?, 19 August 1797, enclosed in letter from Arthur Wolfe – Cooke, 24 August 1797 – Reb. Pap. 620-34-14.
236. R. Day, 16 August 1797 – *ibid.*
237. John Wolfe – Cooke, 22 November 1797, Reb. Pap.620-33-82; See also letter from Capt. Swayne – Maj.-Gen. Needham on the murder of a soldier, a sergeant of the Romney Fencibles – Reb.Pap. 620-35-1.
238. See Appendix 2.
239. C. Kelly, Monasterevin – John Carliton 2 May 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-37-6.
240. R. Day – Sir John Tydd, 21 March 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-36-104.
241. Thomas J. Rawson – ? 1 April 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-36-109
242. W. Pope – Green, 10 April 1798, Reb. Pap.620-36-156; also on travel of United men by canal see Reb. Pap. 620-35-94.
243. Col. Campbell – Castlereagh, 29 April 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-36-216.
244. See above note 234 – Pollock implicated Fitzgerald in his report in August, 1797; it was believed he was a member but in fact he was not.
245. Lewis Morgan (Monasterevin) – John Lees, 2 May 1798, on arrest of 3 men there and recovery of 150 stand of arms on a boat – Reb. Pap. 620-37-8.
246. The following information is taken from The Examination of David Hardy a Castledermot farmer, 5 May 1798. Reb. Pap. 620-37-25; the Evidence of Patrick and Philip Germane, near Castledermot, 10 May 1798. Reb. Pap. 620-37-48; the evidence of Luke Brannick of Castledermot, 10 May 1798, Reb. Pap.620-37-50; the evidence of James Kelly of Co. Kildare, 14 May 1798, Reb. Pap 620-37-66; the examination of John Chanders of Athy, 17 May 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-37-98.
247. Note 238 above – Appendix 2.
248. Confessions of Mathias Horan and Henry Geyn of King's county, 26 May 1798; Pikes ls. 1d. each, New Guns and Bayonets ½ a Guinea each and Pistols the same; gunpowder for £2.10s. a cask – Reb. Pap. 620-37-166
249. Co. Campbell Athy – ?, 14 May 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-37-67. Gen. Dundas, Castlemartin-Cooke, 16 May 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-37-90.
250. Capt.J. Hardy – Castlereagh, 22 May,1798, Reb. Pap.620-37-128.
251. W. Wilson, Post Office Maynooth ?, 24 May 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-37-142
252. Lord Aldborough – William Elliott, 27 May, 1798. Reb. Pap. 620-37-182.
253. Lt.-Col. Longfield – Dundas, 29 May 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-37-208.
254. Lt.-Col. Dunne – Gen. Lake, 29 May 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-37-209.
255. Longfield – Dundas, *op. cit.*
256. Lake's Notice, 30 May 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-37-220.
257. See David Dickson, *New Foundations*, p.188.
258. Col. Campbell – Dundas, 2 June 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-38-23.
259. See Note 252.
260. Lord Aldborough – William Elliott, 5 June 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-38-51 – see enclosed list, p. 74.
261. Examination of John Laffan, 4 July 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-39-19; this may have something to do with Gosford's beration of the Naas yeomanry after the battle of Naas on the 24 May – Gosford – Lake, 24 May 1798, Reb. Pap 620-37-152.
262. List of disaffected yeomen by Richard Griffith, 23 July 1798, Reb. Pap.620-39-104.
263. Information of John Mitchell, 8 June 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-38-93.

264. Examination of Patrick Delemar, 8 June 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-38-95; on Timahoe and Alymer – Examination of Martin Bella (?) a spinster, 23 June 1798, although much of it seems untrustworthy, Reb. Pap. 620-38-222.

265. Evidence of Bella, *ibid.*, also John Laffan 4 July 1798. Reb. Pap. 620-39-19.

266. Rebels had been driven out and town burnt on 19 June but obviously returned when the military left – Lt.Col. Charles Stewart – Lord ?, 19 June 1798. Reb. Pap. 620-38-182.

267. Ld. Gosford – Capt. Taylor, 11 July 1798. Reb. Pap. 620-39-52; There were fanatics however – see Thos. Fitzgerald – Sir J. Parnell, 10 Sept. 1798, on Doorly a brother to the Gen. of that name, '(presumably Michael so) and the cold blooded murder of Skottone at his own door', Reb. Pap. 620-40-34.

268. (Kildare Market house) – John Russell, 7 July 1798 Reb. Pap. 620-39-31.

269. Gen. Dundas – Ld. Castlereagh, 9 July 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-39-42<sup>1</sup>.

270. Lt. Gen. Sir James Stewart – Capt. Taylor, 7 July 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-39-33.

271. Felix Rorke – Dundas, 9 Sept 1798, enclosed in James Dalton (Gaoler Naas) – Ld?, 13 Sept. 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-40-46; see also Pádraig de Brún, 'Some Impressions of Kildare in 1801', *J.K.A.S.*, vol xvi, no. 4 (1983/84), for dismal conditions in Naas gaol even without rebellion, pp. 340-341.

272. Co. Kildare Farmer – Lord Lieutenant, 18 Sept. 1798, Reb. Pap. 620-40-69.

273. State Prisoners Petitions 424, especially that by his mother Mary to Cornwallis on 24 October 1799.

274. State Prisoners Petitions 626, 754, 756, especially 626 – Patrick Hanlon was one of the deserters from Griffith's corps – he said he did so because rebels threatened to burn his home and hurt his wife: Affidavits by Col. Vesey and Maj.-Gen. Wilford.

## CONCLUSION

### 'Poor Paddy'

'The peasantry of this county, having bled much in the Rebellion and suffered extremely by the two preceding seasons of scarcity, appear generally adverse to enter on new schemes of rapine and revolution. Conversing with a group of haymakers, mostly old men, women and children, a stout young fellow declared if Lord Edward Fitzgerald arose from the grave, he believed he would not prevail on 100 of the people of the county of Kildare to join him. He appeared sincere in his declaration and the surrounding people execrated those agitators who had seduced (t)hem from their industrious habits to the study of Politick(s).'<sup>275</sup>

Despite the decimation of the county by the Rebellion, when Archer visited the country in 1801 it seemed physically to be well on the mend. Property and wealth can be restored even if at great cost, but could not be reclaimed. When Yeats immortalised the patriot names of Tone and Fitzgerald in September 1913, he immortalised his own particular brand of nationalism, liberty, and patriotism. All that delirium of the brave, but what about poor paddy<sup>276</sup> who charged the canon with his ten foot pike, definitely delirious; definitely brave. As we have seen the real reason or rather the primary factor behind the rebellion in Kildare was the repressive policies of the military in the Spring. Yet no rebellion was possible without the level of organisation supplied by the United Irishmen, a Defender war perhaps but not a rebellion.

If we took Kildare in isolation, we might indeed declare that no rebellion took place and that it was only a Defender war on a grand scale. This however is false – Kildare was organised, motivated and prepared by the United Irishmen and its reliance on Defender tactics was the result of its peculiar position and the fact that in the last instance this organisation had failed it. The confusion amongst the executive and its rash decision to rise (rather than admit defeat) without French aid destroyed any chance for momentum. Insane reliance on a chosen few destroyed the movement with the arrests of the Sheares brothers and Lord Edward in May so close to the appointed date. Aylmer was not stupid enough to fight pitched battles against a disciplined well armed military, even at Ovidstown he

had been forced into a contest. He knew his only chance was to remain one step ahead and hope for a break in the deadlock.

In all of the clashes except a few, large quantities of rebels were defeated by small numbers of the military. Their only hope had been in French aid. If they had risen in a truly national rebellion in 1797 they would have caused the military no end of distress but even then complete victory was improbable without outside aid considering the proximity of Britain, unless you simply blew up the government in one stroke and then who knows?<sup>277</sup>

Those who ultimately led the rebels in Kildare understood the non-subversive politics of reform and emancipation which developed into the subversive politics of republicanism. Poor Paddy did not but it was better to die with a pike in hand than be shot like a dog in the field. Paddy was only waking to the political milieu that was thrashing the continent, and we must understand this context at all costs.

275. Revd. Fr. Archer – Inspector General of Prisons tour of Provinces in Pádraig de Brún, 'Some Impressions of Kildare in 1801', *J.K.A.S.*, pp. 340-341; op. cit. See Note 271.

276. 'Poor Paddy, never thought one was to be hanged for lying and is woefully discomposed' – Lady Sarah Napier to the Duke of Richmond, 2 Sept 1798, Moore, *The Life and Death ...*, Appendix, p. 253.

277. See Pakenham, op. cit., for a daring plan to capture the entire government in May, pp. 104-105.

# A Chronology of the Rebellion in County Kildare

(The principal engagements in the Rebellion in Ireland in 1798 are included in parentheses)

Through 1797 and from January 1798 until the outbreak of the Rebellion on the 24th May, reports were sent to Dublin Castle complaining of the state of the county of Kildare. While loyalists barracked the Government for its inability to deal with the upsurge in seditious and rebellious activities, the United Irishmen desperately tried to consolidate their organisation.

## 1798

**February 26:** The returns of men for Kildare (these returns were given by Lord Edward to Thomas Reynolds, who subsequently gave them to the Government), indicated 10,863 active United Irishmen in the county at this time. They had £110.17s.7d. at their disposal.

**March 12:** The majority of the members of the Leinster Directory were arrested at Oliver Bond's house in Bridge Street in Dublin. Papers confiscated there corroborated the above return of men in County Kildare.

**March 30:** Camden, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, proclaimed the country in an attempt to recover stolen arms and "disarm the Rebels".

**April 3:** General Sir Ralph Abercrombie issued a notice from his headquarters in Kildare which allowed ten days for arms to be handed in. If this was not complied with, the troops would visit the localities at free quarters.

**Mid-Late April:** United Irish returns for Kildare stood at 11,900 men on 19th April. Troops were now at free quarters particularly in the vicinity of Athy, Ballitore and Monasterevin. Kilkea Castle, home of Thomas Reynolds (the Government spy) was plundered, as was the estate of Thomas Fitzgerald at Geraldine. Fitzgerald was arrested on 28th April.

**Early May:** The Triangles appeared in Athy. Suspected United Irishmen were brutally flogged particularly blacksmiths, carpenters and publicans. The system of free quarters was extended through Kilcock, Celbridge and North Kildare.

**Thursday May 10th:** Captain Beevor arrived in Ballymore-Eustace with soldiers of the 9th Dragoons, the Tyrone, Antrim and Armagh Militias, at freequarters.

**Friday May 11th:** £1,000 was offered for the arrest of Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

**Wednesday May 16th:** General Sir Ralph Dundas reported to the Castle that – "The Head of the Hydra is cut off – and the County of Kildare will, for a long time, enjoy profound peace and quiet".

**Friday May 18th:** The militant faction of the United Irish Directory proposed a concerted attack on Dublin. The Kildaremen would march in three columns – the northern column to join with the Meath men at Kilcock, the southern column to join with the Wicklow forces and the centre column to march to the aid of the Dublin men. The plan was adopted and the date for the rising was set for Wednesday 23rd May.

**Saturday May 19th:** Lord Edward Fitzgerald was arrested and wounded in the house of Murphy the feather merchant in the Liberties.

**Sunday May 20th:** Captain Swayne and the City of Cork Militia, who continued actively at freequarters, arrived in Prosperous.

**Wednesday May 23rd:** Men began to gather at prearranged sites in support of the rising. The Mail Coach destined for Munster was attacked and destroyed near Naas. This was the planned signal for the rebellion.

**Thursday May 24th: The 1798 Rebellion began in Kildare (United Irish Prisoners shot in Dunlavin in Wicklow). Rebels in Kildare simultaneously attack Naas, Prosperous, Clane and Ballymore-Eustace.**

Ballymore-Eustace 1.00 – 2.00 a.m.: At Ballymore-Eustace Captain Beevor had sent around 120 of his men away so the garrison consisted of only 40-50 men of the 9th Dragoons and the Tyrone Militia who were quartered in eight different houses. Approximately 800 rebels attacked this force at Beevor's house for nearly two hours. Captain Beevor broke them with a charge losing about 13 men. The rebels lost two captains and 100 men.

Prosperous 2.00 a.m.: Prosperous was garrisoned by 35 of the City of Cork Militia under Captain Swayne (31 privates, 2 sergeants and 1 drummer) and 22 of the Ancient Britons (1 lieutenant, 1 quartermaster and 20 privates). Upwards of 500 rebels

attacked the town at different points, concentrating on the Militia barrack in the centre of town and Brooke's cotton mill. The militia were burned out, Swayne was shot, piked and his body burned in a tar barrel by the rebels under Andrew Farrell and Dr. John Esmond. Later Downings House was burned and a landlord's agent, Stammers, was killed. A cotton manufacturer Mr. Brewer was also murdered. Nearly 40 troops were killed.

Naas 2.30 a.m.: Naas was attacked from three different directions by around 1,000 rebels under the command of Michael Reynolds of Johnstown in his scarlet regimentals. The town was protected by Lord Gosford and 150 Armagh Militia with two field pieces; 24 of the Fourth Horse Dragoons and 16 of the North Naas Cavalry under Captain Neville. The battle lasted about one hour and the rebels were repulsed with the loss of about 130 men, most of whom were killed while attempting to escape. The government lost around 22 men, Reynolds escaped to the Wicklow Mountains and more than 800 pikes and 20 firelocks were recovered.

Clane 2.00-3.00 a.m.: At Clane a large body of rebels (c. 300) attacked a company of Armagh Militia under Captain Jephson but were beaten off with the help of some of the local Clane yeoman cavalry.

3.00-3.15 a.m.: Their commander Richard Griffith received news of the attack at his home at Millicent and rushed to the town to find the rebels routed, many being killed and some houses burned. Six prisoners were taken and one was executed.

5.00 a.m.: A second rebel attack was effected with the help of some of the rebels from Prosperous. Griffith and his men made a stand on the commons. With well directed fire his men dispersed and routed the rebels. The fleeing attackers were charged down by the 16 yeomen cavalry. Griffith decided the position was untenable and retreated to Naas. Joined by Dr. Esmond (his lieutenant) he learned of his treachery and on entering Naas he had Esmond arrested. The five prisoners taken in the first attack were hanged in Naas.

Old Kilcullen c. 7.00 a.m.: Around 300 rebels entrenched themselves in the old churchyard on the hill near Old Kilcullen. General Dundas was stationed nearby at Castlemartin with about 60 troops at his disposal (20 infantry of Suffolk Fencibles under Captain Beale and 40 cavalry of the 9th Dragoons under Captain Erskine and the Romney Fencibles under Captain

Cooke). The cavalry charged three times but were routed. Erskine and Cooke and around 21 of their men were killed with 10 more seriously wounded. Dundas cut his way to Kilcullen Bridge where he was joined by Captain La Touche's yeomanry.

Ballitore 8.00 a.m.: Reports of the Rising reach Ballitore.

Castledermot 9.00 a.m.: Reports of the Rising reach Castledermot.

Kilcullen: Dundas with his remaining force of 30 or so men and LaTouche's 100 or so yeomen faced a rebel force of nearly 1,000 at Turnpike Hill, astride the Kilcullen/Naas Road. A strategic feint drew the rebels forward to be decimated by well directed fire and routed by the cavalry as they forded the Liffey at Athgarvan. Dundas had ordered a general retreat to Naas to consolidate his troops.

Morning of 24th

Narraghmore: Nine loyalists under John Jefferies, a yeoman sergeant, repulsed an attack by rebels under James Murphy on Narraghmore Courthouse. They then proceeded to Jefferies home but were driven out when the rebels set it on fire. Jefferies escaped but three others were killed and six taken prisoner by the rebels who had rallied under Daniel Walsh.

Athy: Colonel Campbell of Athy ordered Major Montresor with a detachment of Suffolk Fencibles to Narraghmore (through Glassealy) but they arrived too late. Campbell marched to Mullaghmast.

Ballitore: The Suffolk Fencibles marched out of Ballitore. Nine men were left to secure the baggage. Lieutenant Eadie and 23 privates of the Tyrone Militia marched out of Ballitore to join their company at Calverstown. An attempted ambush was thwarted and a party of rebels routed. Rebels began to occupy the town.

Kildare Town 2.00 p.m.: General Wilford ordered his troops out of the town of Kildare, to go first to Kilcullen and then to Naas. Their baggage and rebel arms that had been recovered were lodged in the guard-house. He ordered Captain Winter and his troops (small parties of the Suffolk Fencibles and the 9th Dragoons) out of Monasterevin. Orders were left to burn the baggage etc but they ended up in rebel hands.

c. 3.00 p.m.: The bell was sounded in Kildare Town to rouse the United Irishmen. By nightfall there would be 2,000 rebels under Roger McGarry in the town.

Ballitore c. 3.00 p.m.: Rebels appeared on the bridge at Ballitore but were turned back by Dr. Johnson. A little later around 300

rebels under Malachi Delaney (on a white horse) possessed the town. Some of the Suffolk Fencibles left to protect the baggage were killed. Richard Yeates a young yeomanry lieutenant was killed. Ballitore was fortified by the rebels.

Glassealy, Narraghmore and Red Gap Hill: Major Montresor had reached Glassealy but the rebels under Captain Paddy Dowling and Terry Toole fled. Montresor made it to Narraghmore but was too late and pushed on to Red Gap Hill. He was joined by Captain Rudd (30 men) and Lieutenant Eadie. They were attacked by around 3,000 rebels. Seven of the Suffolk Fencibles were killed and about 200 rebels. Eighteen of the Narraghmore yeomanry who fought with the rebels were shot.

Eagle Hill (Rathangan) and Monasterevin: At Eagle Hill the house of Mr. Johnson Darragh was attacked by a party of rebels but they were beaten off. Skirmishes near Monasterevin.

Rathangan: Throughout the day and into the evening rebels gathered near Rathangan and some houses were attacked and burned. Captain Langton and the South Cork Militia were ordered to Sallins but persuaded by Mr. Spenser to stay.

Castledermot – Late Evening: A large party of rebels left Ballitore and by the time they reached Castledermot were approximately 1,200 strong. They were beaten by a small party of the 6th Regiment of Foot under Captain Mince, assisted by Sir Richard Butler's troop of yeomen cavalry. Many rebels were killed and two taken prisoner were hanged.

Kildare Town – Late Evening/Night: George Crawford (sergeant in Taylor's yeomanry) and his 14 year old granddaughter were murdered by rebels. Mrs. Crawford barely escaped with her life.

Kildare Town 11.00 p.m.: Limerick mail coach plundered in Kildare. A passenger, 17 year old Lieutenant William Gifford of the 82nd Regiment was shot and piked.

**Friday May 25th: (United Irish Prisoners shot at Carnew; Battles of Hacketstown and Carlow).**

Kildare Town 1.00 a.m.: Rebels marched in three columns from Kildare to attack Monasterevin.

Monasterevin 4.00-5.00 a.m.: Around 1,300 rebels under Captain Padraig O'Beirne from Nurney attacked Monasterevin. The rebels from Kildare, Nurney, Kildoon, Riverstown and Kildangan were opposed by a corps of yeoman cavalry under Captain Frederick Hoystead and infantry under Lieutenant

Bagot. They attacked in three different directions but after some serious fighting in the streets they fled. Around 63 rebels were killed as against 5 yeomen. Many rebels went on to Queens County.

Kilcock and Leixlip – Morning 25th May: Both Kilcock and Leixlip were attacked with no loss to the government troops but heavy loss to the rebels.

Naas – 25th May: John Andoe hanged in Naas for his part in the attack of the previous night.

Ballitore and Newpark near old Kilcullen: The rebels fortified Ballitore and the Quakers were unharmed. The house of the Reverend Annesley of Newpark was plundered and partly burned by rebels under Hetherington of Kildare.

Rathangan 3.00 p.m.: Captain Langton and the South Cork Militia marched out of Rathangan to reinforce Dundas in Naas. Mr. Spenser refused to go and the loyalists remained on alert through the day.

Lucan – Evening: Rebels driven off after attack on Lucan. Some of the north Kildare men marched northwards and reinforced the United army on the Hill of Tara with guns from the Lucan Ironworks. It seems the army on Tara was commanded by the son of a Lucan innkeeper, in the white uniform of the Kildare Militia.

**Saturday May 26th: (Battle on Hill of Tara; Rebellion breaks out in Wexford at Tincurry near Scarawalsh and the Harrow near Ferns).**

Castletown 3.00 a.m.: Lady Louisa Conolly witnessed around 200 rebels "quietly" crossing the lawn at Castletown in Celbridge. They marched to Tara.

Rathangan 3.00 p.m.: A huge rebel force (5,000) led by Captain John Doorly of Lullymore, entered Rathangan. Spenser's (a yeoman) house was surrounded and attacked. Spenser and three others who were promised their lives were killed on surrendering. Some of the leaders like Martin Hinds and Edward Molloy were disaffected yeomen. One yeomanry lieutenant, Mr. Moore, barricaded himself and others in a Quaker house – he and six other Protestants were killed – in all 19 loyalists died and the rebels fortified the town.

Ballitore 26th: Abraham Shackleton, a Quaker from Ballitore, mediated with Colonel Campbell in Athy to allow the Rebels to surrender (unconditionally) in return for protection. Campbell

agreed but their arms were to be surrendered by six o'clock. Some rebels wanted more talks and Campbell demanded six hostages and the arms to be surrendered by noon the next day. The rebels could not decide and Campbell's deadline passed.

Meath 6.00 p.m.: The rebels were routed at the Battle of Tara. Many of the stragglers crossed into Kildare to camp at Timahoe.

Athy 12.00 p.m.: Colonel Campbell marched his troops out of Athy leaving the town protected by Captain Rawson and the yeomanry.

Knockaulin – 26th: It is possible that the first overtures for peace and surrender were made by the rebels on Knockaulin Hill on Saturday.

#### **Sunday May 27th: (The Battle of Oulart).**

Narraghmore & Ballitore – Midnight – 3.00 a.m.: Colonel Campbell force marched his troops from Athy to Ballitore. On the way they used canon to destroy Colonel Keating's (a known liberal) mansion at Narraghmore.

Ballitore 3.00 a.m.: Intelligence reached Ballitore that the army was on its way (the rebels fled). Major Dennis commanded the detachment of 9th Dragoon Guards that arrived from Carlow. They were shortly joined by Colonel Campbell and his troops. Some loyalist prisoners were freed. The retribution of the troops was severe – suspects were shot and hanged, even Dr. Johnson. Mary Leadbeater and the Quakers were horrified. Having made an example of the town they returned to Athy. While the United Irish Movement was broken the spirit of disaffection remained in the Narraghmore, Ballitore and Athy area for the rest of the year.

Knockaulin 27th: Negotiations, through Captain Annesley of Ballysax, were opened between Dundas and the 4,000 strong rebel army on Knockaulin Hill, for terms for surrender. The date set for the surrender was Whit Monday 28th May. Dundas was favourable to terms but the government were not. General Lake, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, was sent to oversee the surrender at Castlemartin.

Limerick 27th: Major General Sir James Duff left Limerick at the head of 60 Dragoons, 350 Militia and 6 field pieces determined to open the lines of communication with Dublin. The path lay through Kildare.

#### **Monday May 28th: (Battle of Enniscorthy).**

Rathangan – morning: Lieutenant-Colonel Dunne at Tullamore ordered Lieutenant Colonel Mahon to recapture Rathangan.

Mahon marched from Tullamore with 80 of the 7th Dragoon Guards and some of the Tullamore Yeoman Cavalry in two columns. He encountered rebels outside the town and killed 14 – 16 of them. Mahon attacked the rebels in the town but was repulsed by their well directed fire and lost three men.

8.00 a.m.: Mahon was joined by some of the Edenderry Regiment and the Geashill Yeomanry for a second attack on the town. They could not dislodge the rebels from the houses and had four of their men killed and two wounded.

11.00 a.m.: Colonel Longfield arrived at Rathangan with the city of Cork Militia, a detachment of Dragoons and 2 field pieces. After the second discharge of the canon the rebels fled pursued by the cavalry who killed 50-60 of them. Longfield wrote to Dundas the next day to say "I took no prisoners. The troops are in want of everything, the Rebels having destroyed everything in and near the town". Rathangan and its environs were in ruins. One of the rebel leaders Edward Molloy was hanged.

Knockaulin 28th: Delegates from the rebel camp at Knockaulin met Dundas and Lake at Castlemartin (Patrick O'Kelly from Athy and Patrick and John Finnerty from Kilrush). The only acceptable terms for Lake and the government was unconditional surrender in return for the issue of protections – the rebels to return home. The rebels agreed but would only surrender their arms on the hill. Dundas and 2 dragoons accepted this surrender on Knockaulin and protections were given. Seemingly Lake had a large force nearby in case things had gone otherwise.

#### **Tuesday May 29th**

Monasterevin 7.00 a.m.

General Sir James Duff marched from Monasterevin to Kildare with 7 pieces of artillery, 150 dragoons and 350 infantry "determined to make a dreadful example of the rebels". The rebels camped at Gibbet Rath (an old prehistoric Danish fort) on the Curragh were in the process of seeking surrender.

Kildare Town 2.00 p.m. – Gibbet Rath (the Curragh): "P.S. Kildare two o'clock p.m. – we found the rebels retiring from the town on our arrival, armed, we followed them with the dragoons. I sent some of the yeomen to tell them, on laying down their arms, they should not be hurt. Unfortunately some of them fired on the troops; but from that moment they were attacked on all sides – nothing could stop the rage of the troops. I believe from two to three hundred of the rebels were killed.

We have three men killed and several wounded. I am too fatigued to enlarge" – General Duff to Dublin Castle May 29th.

**Wednesday May 30th: (Battle of Forth Mountain near Wexford; Wexford Town captured by the Rebels; Battle of Newtown Mount Kennedy).**

Blackmore Hill (near Blessington): General Duff dislodged the Rebel force encamped on Blackmore Hill with his artillery. He continued to Dublin where he was hailed as a hero by the loyalists.

Carbury: A large force of rebels (c. 2,000) burned the Protestant charter-school at Carbury.

Ballindrum (near the Moat of Ardsclull): Around 300 rebels from Ballitore etc. surrendered to Colonel Campbell of Athy.

**Thursday May 31st: (Committee set up in Wexford to supervise civil government).**

**Captain Ryan, who was wounded during the arrest of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, died of his wounds.**

**Friday June 1st: (Battle of Bunclody).**

Kilcock: William Aylmer led his men out of the camp at Timahoe and attacked Kilcock.

**Saturday June 2nd** – Athy, 3.00 a.m.: Colonel Campbell marched the troops out of Athy to confront the Rebels in the bogs near Cloney and Monasterevin and Ballintubbert in Queens County. With no loss to the troops 100 rebels were killed. In a letter to Dundas describing these attacks Campbell said that arms were being handed in and that he had disarmed certain disaffected yeomen.

**Monday June 4th: (Gorey captured; Battle of Tubberneering).**

**Lord Edward Fitzgerald died.**

Kilcock: From Timahoe William Aylmer led another attack on the town of Kilcock forcing the yeomanry to retreat.

**Tuesday June 5th: (Battle of New Ross; Massacre at Scullabogue).**

Timahoe: General Champagne met with Lieutenant Tyrrell (High Sheriff of Meath) of Clonard to devise a plan to attack the rebel camp at Timahoe.

**Wednesday June 6th: (Ulster Rises).**

**Thursday June 7th: (Carnew Captured; Battle of Antrim).**

Edenderry: Champagne marched the troops out of Edenderry to attack Aylmer's camp.

Kildare Town: Parts of Kildare Town burned by the rebels on the night of 7th/8th June. The fires were put out by the troops.

**Friday June 8th**

Monasterevin 7.00 a.m. and Kildare: General Duff marched from

Monasterevin to Kilcullen and found Kildare had been burned the previous night. On his return later that day he found the town had been burned once again. Duff was convinced that this was an attempt to oust the military from the town.

Timahoe: General Champagne marched with men of the Limerick Militia, the Coolestown Yeoman Cavalry, the Canal Legion, the Clonard Cavalry and the Ballina Cavalry to attack Aylmer's camp at Timahoe. The camp was dispersed temporarily.

**Saturday June 9th: (Battle of Arklow).**

**Sunday June 10th: (Rebels take possession of Saintfield, Co. Down).**

Maynooth c. 1.00 a.m.: Aylmer at the head of 500 rebels took Maynooth from the Carton Cavalry (20 men) under Lieutenants Richard Cane and Thomas Long. Eleven yeomen were captured, Cane escaped.

**Monday June 11th:** Monasterevin. Fr Prendergast executed after being found in the rebel camp at Barn Hill.

**Wednesday June 13th: (Battle of Ballynahinch, Co. Antrim).**

**Thursday June 14th:** The Rebels took Maynooth again, plundering some houses and they took a herd of cattle back to Timahoe.

**Friday June 15th:** Aylmer's men took a flock of 800 sheep from Richard Griffith at Millicent.

**Tuesday June 19th:** Lieutenant Colonel Charles Stewart (Lord Castle-reagh's brother) recaptured Prosperous with a force consisting of men of the City of Cork and the Armagh Militia, the Suffolk Fencibles, the Royal Irish and the 9th and North Naas Dragoons, with 2 curricule guns. He wrote "I ransacked and burnt this receptacle of rebellion". The rebels fled into the bogs and hills and Stewart regretted that his orders did not allow him to follow them.

Rathangan June 19th: Brigadier-General Dunn sent a patrol under Captain Pack of the 5th Dragoon Guards from Rathangan towards Prosperous. Pack encountered around 100 rebels well mounted and he attacked and killed from 20-30 of them and took 8 horses.

Ovidstown – Morning: 3,000-5,000 rebels were surprised at Ovidstown which is about 3 miles from Kilcock. The government troops under Colonel Irwin numbered around 400 men and consisted of Highlanders, Dragoon Guards and Yeoman Cavalry. Aylmer's men fired well but his pikemen sought cover in a ditch which proved untenable against canon fire. The rebels were routed with more than 200 killed as against around 20 on the government side.

**Wednesday June 20th: (Battle of Foulksmills, Wexford).**

**Thursday June 21st: (Government forces recapture Wexford and Enniscorthy).**

**The Battle of Vinegar Hill.**

**Monday June 25th: (Battle of Hacketstown where Michael Reynolds of Johnstown was wounded and died a few days later).**

**Thursday July 4th:** Aylmer's men ambush government forces between Clongowes Woods and Clane.

**Friday July 5th:** Michael Quigley, a Captain in Aylmer's army, routed the enemy between Clongowes Wood and Clane. Sallins garrison was reinforced. The leaders of the Kildare army at Timahoe began to sue for peace.

**Saturday July 6th:** Sir Fenton Aylmer and 14 Dragoons were attacked near Clane and narrowly escaped.

**Monday July 8th:** Lieutenant Smith attacked rebels who were burning houses near Naas.

**Tuesday July 9th:** The remainder of the great Wicklow/Wexford army crossed the borders into Kildare. They captured a keg of gunpowder near Newbridge.

**Wednesday July 10th:** The Wicklow/Wexford men met Aylmer's men at Robertstown and William Aylmer himself near Prosperous. They spent the night in the camp at Timahoe. It was decided to attack Clonard with the help of the Kildare men.

**Thursday July 11th - 11.00 a.m.:** Lieutenant Tyrrell and twenty seven yeomen successfully defended a fortified house at Clonard for more than six hours against the rebel forces that had marched from Kildare. In the end the rebels began to retreat and camped that night at Carbury. Some left for the Wicklow mountains, some would return to Timahoe while more marched on northwards in desperation.

**Sunday July 21st: (The Leaders of the Wicklow/Wexford men Anthony Perry and Father Mogue Kearns were hanged at Edenderry).**

William Aylmer of Kildare, Edward Fitzgerald of Newpark and the principal officers of the Rebel army at Timahoe surrendered and were taken to Dublin. Protections were issued and men returned home. The Rebellion in Kildare was over.

**August 22nd: (The French under Humbert landed at Killala).**

**August 26th: (The Races of Castlebar).**

**September 8th: (Humbert surrendered at Ballinamuck).**

**September 17th: (Napper Tandy landed in Donegal - left next day).**

**October 12th: (Wolfe Tone captured on board the Hoche).**

**November 11th: (Tone cut his own throat).**

**November 19th: (T. W. Tone died in prison).**

#### NOTES ON THE CHRONOLOGY

Figures for both sides differ radically from text to text. The figures I have arrived at are the ones that seem most likely in consideration of the data available to me.

Mac Suibhne (in his book on Rathangan) and Pakenham, mistakenly say the Battle of Ovidstown took place on the 20th June as does Sir Henry McNally in the Irish Militia (Dublin 1949) when in fact it took place on the 19th. It seems that Alymer and his men attacked Kilcock on the 4th June but Fenton Alymer writing that very day (Reb. Pap. 620-38-44) said that Aylmer had been positively identified leading the rebels in the attack on Kilcock on Friday which was 1st June. This means that there were either two attacks on the town in quick succession or that the dating of the attack on 4th June is incorrect.

In Pakenham's account of the destruction of Colonel Keatings mansion at Narraghmore the attack is credited to the Carlow soldiers. Mary Leadbeater and Sir Richard Musgrave (*Memoirs of the Different Rebellions in Ireland ...*, Dublin 1801), however, say that Colonel Campbell's men were responsible. Pakenham mentions that it was bombarded and in Mary Leadbeaters account of both parties only Campbell's men had canon. Mac Suibhne (Rathangan) says the 7th Dragoon Guards who rode to recapture Rathangan on the 28th May were under the command of Colonel Malone but it was in fact Lt. Colonel Mahon.

Musgrave seems to suggest that General Wilford withdrew from Kildare on the 23rd of May but if this was in response to Dundas order to retreat to Naas then he left Kildare on the 24th May bearing in mind the rebellion only began on this day. There seems to be some confusion as to Swayne's detachment - he commanded a body of the City of Cork Militia not the North Corks. Colonel Longfield retook Rathangan with men of the City of Cork but the town had previously been garrisoned by Captain Langton and his South Cork Militia.

Mac Suibhne dates the battle of Hacketstown to 25th June and 4th July - it was 25th June. Lastly, in arranging a chronology, some action or place must be placed out at the top of the list. By the times given in the various accounts it appears that Ballymore was attacked around 1 o'clock which gives it precedence, though I am sure it is not beyond dispute.



## Who Fears to Speak of '98?

*Leinster Leader*, Jan. 1st – Dec. 31st 1898  
Kildare and the Centenary Celebrations.

“ ... All – all are gone – but still lives on  
The fame of those who died –  
All true men, like you, men,  
Remember them with pride.”

First published in April 1843, John Kells Ingram's poem, "The Memory of the Dead" (more popularly known by its first line - "Who fears to speak of Ninety-Eight?"), dared anyone to forget the sacrifice of the United Irishmen. This challenge was proudly taken up in Kildare, and by nationalists all over Ireland, in 1898 in commemoration of the Rebellion. Nationalists throughout the county ensured that the people of Kildare did not "fear to speak of ninety-eight" during the centenary celebrations. Various battles and heroes of the Rebellion were commemorated in a series of fiercely nationalistic local rallies and outings to other parts. In national terms the celebrations culminated on the 15th of August, as 100,000 people thronged Stephen's Green to witness the foundation stone of the Wolfe Tone memorial being laid. Over 2,000 people from Kildare made the trek to Dublin on that historic occasion. But this event simply marked the pinnacle of the centenary celebrations, in essence it was almost a year long affair. In Kildare the celebrations were diligently covered by a heavily nationalistic local paper the *Leinster Leader*.

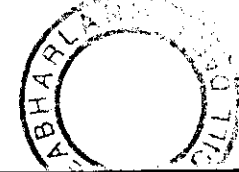
National news centred that year on the passing of the new Local Government Act through the Commons and the Lords, the new councils to be elected in 1899. On the international front, the item of most interest was the outbreak of war in April 1898 between America and Spain which centred on Cuba. Regular features such as "Market Intelligence", "Civil Service Appointments" and reports on a multitude of sporting events and fixtures as well as "Military Gems" formed the backbone of this essentially "local" paper. The advertisements which almost covered the first three pages ranged from the mundane to the cleverly entertaining such as the manure company that boasted "Over Half a Century's reputation for Excellence in the Field", the "Painless Dentist", "Chilled Ploughs"

and the Undertaker who offered, "Funerals fully supplied with Hearse, Coaches and Coffins of all sorts and sizes in stock or to order." And yet the *Leader*, through its editorials, regular news columns and local notes devoted a considerable proportion of its time and energy to the '98 centenary movement in Kildare. It affords us a fabulous insight into the workings of the local '98 clubs and the commemoration of events specific to the county, as well as the participation of the county in the greater scheme of celebrations for that year.

On a national basis the celebrations, to be co-ordinated from Dublin, were ultimately organised and controlled by the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood or I.R.B. Since the defeat and death of Parnell the nationalist movement had segregated in the 1890's. This resulted in the establishment of two separate '98 committees, "The '98 Centenary Committee" established at City Hall in 1897, and "The United Irishmen's Centennial Association" established in 1898. They subsequently joined together in a show of national unity in May 1898 which prevented the degeneration of the centenary movement into party politics, at least in Kildare.

The Kildare '98 clubs were, it seems, affiliated as branches to the committee at City Hall although some communicated with the Centennial association as well. Possibly some of the Kildare branches were established in 1897 but the *Leader* articles suggest that most of the preliminary meetings took place early in 1898. Committees were appointed, the officers normally being the President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Honorary Secretary or Secretaries. Meetings were usually held on Sundays at noon or early in the afternoon on a fortnightly basis.

Regular business began with the election of a person to chair the meeting, the enrolment of new members, the collection of subscriptions and the issuing of membership cards to those who had joined at the previous meeting. Much of the agenda was obviously devoted to the discussion of preparations for centenary celebrations or outings to other venues. As with the election of officers and committee members, proposals were forwarded, seconded and put to the meeting to be carried or rejected. The meetings were well attended, indeed many of the meeting places often overflowed, to leave enthusiastic supporters outside. A fervent nationalism pervaded and sometimes meetings included lectures on local and Irish history (with an emphasis on the continuation of the Irish struggle for freedom) and concluded with recitations and songs like "The



Memory of the Dead", "The Boys of Wexford" or "The Shan Van Vocht". Existing bands were drafted into the centenary movement, (e.g. The O'Connell Band at Kilcock became the "Lord Edward '98 Centenary Band of Kilcock"), and these proved immensely popular. Prominent United Irishmen were adopted posthumously as patrons of the various '98 clubs in Kildare - The Lord Edward Branch of Kildare, The Wolfe Tone Branch of Clane, The Captain Doorly Branch of Rathangan, The Lord Edward Branch of Kilcock, The Hamilton Rowan Branch of Leixlip etc. The aims of these branches were to celebrate the centenary locally as part of a nation-wide commemoration of the 1798 rebellion and to do this links were maintained with Dublin.

Rules and regulations and membership cards were obtained from the Executive Committee at City Hall. Occasionally speakers from the Executive addressed a local meeting and they were prominent at many of the celebrations in Kildare. Contact was also maintained by some of the branches with the Kildaremen's Club in Dublin which met in Forrester's Hall, 9 Merchants Quay, Dublin. Indeed they all marched together under the banner of Kildare, in Dublin (in August) at the laying of the foundation stone to the Tone Memorial. A semi-regular column in the *Leinster Leader* entitled "Our Exiled Kin" often contained letters concerning the Kildaremen's Association in New York which urged the people of County Kildare to take a prominent part in the centenary. Their hopes were not disappointed. The following list demonstrates the enthusiasm of the County during the centenary year of 1898.

Thursday, May 19: A demonstration took place in Kilcock to commemorate the arrest of Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

Monday, May 23: The date set for national celebration of the outbreak of the Rebellion of 1798. Celebrations in Kildare, Rathangan, Kilcock, Clane, Leixlip, Athy and Naas (the latter demonstration was seemingly small). These consisted generally of torchlight processions, bonfires, bands, parades, the illumination of houses, speeches, songs, etc. etc.

Tuesday, May 24: Similar celebrations in Prosperous and Ballymore Eustace.

Saturday, May 28: Large, enthusiastic demonstration in Rathangan to commemorate the battle there on that day in 1798.

Sunday, June 12: Huge demonstration in Kildare Town.

Sunday, June 19: "One of the greatest demonstrations seen in

Ireland for a decade" (*Leader*) in Bodenstown to honour Wolfe Tone's birthday (from all over Kildare and thousands from Dublin etc.).

Sunday, July 10: Around 1,000 people gathered at Ovidstown Hill.

Sunday, July 17: Members from Kilcock, Rathangan and Carbury attended a huge demonstration at Edenderry at the graves of Anthony Perry and Father Kearns the Wexford leaders hanged there in 1798.

Sunday, July 24: A large Kildare contingent was present at the unveiling of a large Celtic Cross at Croppy Hole just outside Carlow.

Sunday, August 7: An "immense procession" (*Leader*) from Monasterevin to Harristown cemetery to commemorate Father Prendergast who was hanged in Monasterevin during the Rebellion.

Monday, August 15: Dublin, St Stephen's Green. The highlight of the centenary celebrations in Ireland as 100,000 people gathered to watch the veteran Fenian John O'Leary lay the foundation stone of the Wolfe Tone Memorial. Speeches by John Dillon, John Redmond and W. B. Yeats among others.

Sunday, September 4: Around 3,500 people attended a demonstration on the Hill of Carbury which was organised by the Edenderry '98 Club.

Sunday, September 25: Large meeting at Rathcoffey the former residence of Archibald Hamilton Rowan.

These centenary demonstrations were a huge success for the nationalists in County Kildare. We must also remember the continuous regular meeting of the local branches throughout the year which helped to maintain the momentum achieved in the celebrations of the 23rd and 24th of May. Let us hope that Kildare men do justice to these efforts during the commemoration of the bicentennial in 1998.

APPENDIX 1

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY  
THE HUMBLE  
PETITION OF THE  
GOVERNOR, MAGISTRATES, FREEHOLDERS and  
INHABITANTS of the COUNTY of KILDARE

Sire,

Debarred by the rash and presumptuous threat of Military force, denounced by your Majesty's minister in this country, from the exercise of our ancient and undoubted right of meeting to petition the King, a right so dear to the subject so useful to the Sovereign, as to be asserted and confirmed at the period of that Revolution which settled in your Majesty's family the crown of these realms; undismayed by the ill success of our last approach to your Majesty's throne, when in the departure of Earl Fitzwilliam from the government of this country, we stated to your Majesty that we foresaw the return of a system of rapine, disunion and contempt of the people and expressed to your Majesty our fears for its consequences. We, the undersigned Governor, Magistrates, Freeholders and Inhabitants of the County of Kildare, impelled by the awful appearance of public affairs, by a sense of the highest respect and truest affection for your Majesty's person and illustrious house, of attachment, yet unbroken, for the mixed forms of our Constitution, of regard for ourselves, our children, our posterity, we venture once more to approach that throne – with zeal, but with respect – with warmth, but with temper – with freedom, but with allegiance, we will state our manifold grievances – to entreat justice is to ask redress.

Sire, Since that period, many events have passed on the theatre of Europe not unnoticed by the Irish Public. Momentous as they may appear by the changes they have wrought on the political existence of nations, of far more serious and durable consequence is the direction they have given to human enquiry, and the modification which they have given to the opinion of man on the subject – Government, Information, ripened into knowledge, has taught that unanimity will correct abuses, and Ireland can no longer lie supine under the heap which ages have accumulated; – of these, the most flagitious are resorted to us precedents of Government by your Ministers here. To you, Sire, the common father of the people in contradiction from those who carry on your Government, we fly for redress.

Since that period a war of ambition has terminated on the Continent of Europe, by the neutralisation or subjugation of the greater part of it, and by a more extended diffusion of the opinions it was meant to destroy. Since that period we have been successively abandoned by every ally – our subsidies have been refused by the mercenaries who were wont to court them – the flower of our youth has been wasted in the conquest of dependencies which can but ill be held – our commerce has been trammelled by the enemy's privateers – our manufacturers languish, shut out from their best market, Europe – our gold and silver, exported or buried, have disappeared; and that never failing resource, built on the hitherto inviolate faith and commercial constitution of our country, our credit, has been annihilated. Of these evils there are few which do not reach private life, and touch individual existence. Such have been the events of a war which, not yet ended, has cost the country millions; the empire now groaning under the heavy pressure of that debt, contracted improvidently, expended with profligacy, is now left unfriended and unpitied to defend itself against a powerful foe; but still able, and still willing, if redressed and united to meet and to repel his most daring effort. Since that period, under an administration the most inauspicious, and which never had for a moment the confidence of this country, the mischiefs which we foresaw and which we deprecated have come to pass. The system of public plunder has exceeded all former bounds; taxes of the most oppressive nature have been levied on your Majesty's people of Ireland; the naked and defenceless state of the country evinces their misapplication. – They have been squandered to increase the influence of your Majesty's ministers, which, by a profligate corruption long openly practiced and shamefully avowed, has been the great spring and acknowledged cause of all these grievances by which your Majesty's government is shaken to its foundation. Yet, Sire, in December last, when the Generals of our powerful foe appeared on our coast, bearing in one hand the olive branch of peace, in the other the scourge of war, Ireland unprotected through the negligence and incapacity of those to whom the administration is confided without an army, without a fleet, without artillery, without ammunition, without soldiery to act, without talent to direct, without plan of defence, poured forth its treasure, its only treasure, its people. The men of Ireland, neither dreading threats, nor allured by promises, faithful and steady to a connection with Great Britain which they prize, to their allegiance to your Majesty, and to the

sentiment, that their fate and happiness are closely linked with that of your Majesty's government, advanced as a man offering all the means of resistance possessed by a people systematically disarmed, and had it been possible systematically debased; Protestant, Catholic, Dissenter, claimed an equal right to die in defiance of unequal liberty.

Then occurred the golden moment, when concession, not to be construed into fear or weakness, would have excited new gratitude, by the restoration of these rights which your Majesty's justice will not refuse. But your Majesty's Ministers, obstinate, perverse and ignorant, seem to have yet to learn that concessions wrung from their embarrassment, beget no affection, and only invite to the establishment of new claims; and having overlooked that favourable opportunity, seem now to wait the alternative of peace with France, or a continuation of the war, either to reform and emancipate, or to new rivet the chains of the Catholic, and build military despotism, or perhaps an union of Legislatures, upon the subversion of the constitution and independence of Ireland.

Sire, in support of your Majesty's crown, of your dignity, of our laws and of our constitution, united Ireland wished to deserve and to earn its freedom, and with your present ministers the crime of Ireland is that it is united; – yes, Sire, the men of Ireland are united, not by oaths, but in a common cause, and by a common interest, – not in a wish, much less an attempt to establish, as imputed, a Republic – but in a determination to uphold and to correct the mixed forms of our constitution; not in rebellion to your Majesty, but in abhorrence of your ministers ...

... We are united to state to your Majesty, that your Majesty's Catholic subjects have experienced in the northern parts of the kingdom a persecution unparalleled ... But, the mischief has recoiled upon its contrivers, when the law, ill administered, yielded no safety, men resorted to a bond of Union ... united to obtain Reform and Emancipation... If their views, Sire, go beyond the avowed purposes of Reform and Emancipation, we are not with them; but with them we consider those concessions as necessary to the salvation of this State. We wish to interfere between an administration which has driven the people to those measures, and the evil consequences which would follow a misdirection of their physical force. Yes, Sire, we are united to state that the utmost contempt for your people, for their lives and for their rights, seems to be the only fixed principle of conduct in the mind of your Majesty's ministers here. For four years they

have waged a war of law against justice – of statute against right – of persecution against opinion. We now taste the bitter fruits of moral reaction; a Convention bill has generated clandestine combination, instead of open petition: disarmed by statute of that which secured their property, men have invaded the property of others to arm themselves: an Insurrection Bill has taught them to organise means of resistance to oppressions before unheard of; deprived of every constitutional security for fair and open trial, the murder of informers has followed proclaimed rewards for approvers, and the penalty of transportation inflicted without confrontation, without trial, without conviction; a solemn but lamentable engagement to absolute secrecy has followed the arbitrary creation of new felonies, and the unconstitutional doctrines of constructive treason. In fine, the most unconstitutional dispensing power exercised by the magistracy, setting at once aside all the forms of law and justice, in the expectation and certainty of indemnity, has engendered a similar, but more extravagant and more dangerous contempt for those laws, in the minds of part of your Majesty's people.

Sire, we are united to state, that these evils, so obvious as to be denied by neither party, are not misrepresented or exaggerated ... the sources of the evil ... lie in the possibility of again dividing a people, among which still exists a difference of political rights, grounded on a difference of religious opinions, and in the unequal and inadequate representation of the people of Ireland in the Parliament of the nation ... constructed for the purpose of upholding a protestant monopoly of power, against national claims and national population, – the interests and privileges of the few, against the rights of the many ...

... They are misinformed and deluded if they think, that to an administration which has alienated the Protestant, disgusted the Catholic, enraged the Dissenter – to a junta of delegated clerks, coupled with desperate adventurers in politics in this Country- Ireland will yield a constitution and an independence ... Sire we value our connection with England as it secures – we should scorn it if it infringed on – our national independence.

... We adjure to your Majesty to prevent the rashness of those men who seem to provoke a contest, which after immense effusion of English and Irish blood, might terminate in an alienation of affection and a separation of Empire; or in its utmost success, could only leave your Majesty to reign over a despoiled Country, and an ill-conquered people.

... May your Majesty's parental care restore to us peace abroad, to ease our burdens and vivify our commerce, but the far more exalted benefit of peace at home, and by wise and timely attention to our grievances, prevent by Reform the evils of Revolution.

And we will pray.

Petition enclosed in letter from

Stephen S. (Carbery Clonard) – Mr. Pelham.

15 June 1797.

He found the petition on the door of Carbery Church – did not believe it genuine but only posted to encourage the system of disaffection.

Reb. Pap. 620-31-103

## APPENDIX 2

### UNITED MEN OF IRELAND

Your Numbers are increased to such a Degree, that you may with truth be called the People of Ireland. But your Organisation should keep pace with your Numbers, for without Organisation, how can your Numbers or your Strength be brought to act. Consider the present moment, a moment when France after conquering the Armies of the Despots of Europe is marching her Soldiers to her Coasts, a moment when France collecting the Navies of Spain, Holland, Venice and her own is preparing 170 Ships of the line to transport those conquerors of the Despots of the Continent, that they may pour them on England, Scotland and Ireland filled with Millions United in the Glorious cause of Freedom, anxious to receive them. In a Moment when Despotism founded on the Usurpation of every popular right, and supported by Corruption and Tyranny is ready to fall to pieces into a Gulf of Bankruptcy and Ruin. Is this a moment for You to be Unprepared? Is this a time for you to abate your Perseverance, Your Patience or your Spirit, Consult Your Reason, it will tell you, that Your Strength consists in your being a cordially United and thoroughly well organised Body – Do not then hearken to those Men who will tell You to discontinue your Organisation or from choosing your Representatives. Let Sobriety, let good Character, let Courage, let Talents be the Qualities which shall direct Your choice, Purge Your Societys of all suspicions or Doubtfulness. No Doubt at this Instant those you elect will have to fill Posts of Danger, but 'ere long they will be Posts of Honour and Safety, Above all Be mindful of the solemn Oath you have taken to promote Union amongst Irishmen of every Sect and Religion. Disunion has been the means by which Ireland has been enslaved for the Centuries that are past, In Union only can Ireland find her Salvation. Be discreet and avoid Drunkenness, Be firm but patient and avoid Riots. In a word Unite and Organise and rely on it 'ere long You must be free.

Resolved That it is ordered that each Barony do pay unto the Nation three pence per month each man, at the least, whilst those who are rich do pay according to their abilities.

Resolved that no man do pay except to his own Treasurer. Resolved that the taking of Arms by Force from Houses is attended with great Evil and no Good and therefore any man imprisoned therefore, shall not be maintained by their Societies.

Resolved that United Men are strictly forbidden to attend to any Orders which do not come regularly through their Representatives.

Sir, I beg leave to trouble you with the enclosed which is a copy of a printed handbill found in the Streets of Athy – My reason for sending it to you is that it appears to me to be most explicit avowal of the Objects of the United Irishmen that has yet been seen.

I have the Honour to be

Your most obedient humble servant

Stewart Weldon

14 Jan. 98

Stewart Weldon – M. Wilson, 14th January 1798,

Rebellion Papers, 620/35/35

### APPENDIX 3

#### POEMS AND SONGS OF KILDARE IN '98

The Irish have for generations handed down their history in song and verse. The fervent nationalism inspired by the United Irishmen enshrined the 1798 Rebellion in Irish mythology. From the United Irishmen's own propagandist offerings in the 1790's, through their glorification in 1840 by the Young Irelanders, to the resurgence in Irish Nationalism in the 1880's and 1890's, the Rebellion became synonymous with the struggle for Irish freedom in the minds of poets and balladeers. Kildare and the events of the Rebellion there were recorded in many poems and songs, some of which are recorded as follows:

#### *Song*

On the twenty-fourth of May,  
At the dawning of the day,  
Our boys went under arms Prosperous to invade:  
With hand and heart we marched,  
Under Captain Farrells orders,  
It's in the town we halted and set it in a blaze.

There were re-hot balls a-flying,  
The groans of soldiers dying,  
Flames in the air were flying, and swains expiring there,  
To retreat our Colonel gave orders,  
But we never faltered,  
Until killed, wounded and slaughtered, we won the battle there.

Next morning Naas was tattered,  
And all our brethren slaughtered,  
Many a valiant hero lay bleeding on the green.  
Our Colonel he forsook us,  
And cursed Griffith took him,  
He immediately was detected and ordered into jail.

Phil Might, the informer cruel,  
He robbed us of our jewel,  
May the heavens vengeance on him pour down,

God and his holy angels  
May forever hate him,  
May he be afflicted with the heavenly frown.

The boys we have forsaken,  
Kilcock town have taken,  
Leixlip, Johnstown and Maynooth, with all its cavalry,  
And home we then returned,  
Sparks's house we burned,  
In recompense for Kennedy, that died there on a tree.

Our Captain's they combined,  
And all together joined,  
Straight we marched that night in camp on Wiley's Hill.  
Disciplined and well armed,  
But soon we were alarmed,  
All by a point of war beat by the Highlandman.

Three hours we gave battle,  
Where cannon balls did rattle,  
Like hail and claps of thunder they flew about our ears;  
Our powder and ball did fly,  
Tremendous through the sky,  
Three hundred of their soldiers we left lying there.

The cowards from us flew,  
In ambush themselves threw,  
The army them all slew when we were fled away;  
By the terror of that day,  
Our captains run away,  
To Newtown bog we returned, the informer Gaitly killed.

Colonel Aylmer bold,  
A valiant heart of gold,  
He never was controlled, but fought most manfully.  
He was general-in-chief commander,  
Over the Irish banner,  
Maintaining Erin's rights and sweet liberty.

The bloody adulterous crew,  
They thought us to subdue,  
But well we made them rue the day they did begin,

Whipping and destroying;  
But our brave Irish boys,  
Soon they let them know we were united men.

If Ireland had behaved  
Like Wicklow, Wexford and Kildare,  
The green flag would be hoisted through town and country.  
To conclude and make an end,  
Here's a health to united men,  
Long may they live and reign over bloody tyranny.

This song is taken from R.R. Madden, *Literary Remains of The United Irishmen of 1798* (Dublin, 1887) pp. 31-35.

Captain Farrell refers to Andrew Farrell a leader of the attack on Prosperous. The Colonel mentioned is Dr. Esmond and it is suggested in the song (and by Madden in his footnotes) that he fled when the first attack failed and this may explain why he unaccountably rejoined his yeomanry unit later in the morning. On information supplied by a yeoman Philip Mite he was arrested for his part in the attack on Prosperous and subsequently hanged. Griffith mentioned is Richard Griffith the commander of Esmonds yeomanry unit from Millicent near Clane.

Sparks was Stephen Sparks from Carbury whose Protestant charter school was burned during the rebellion. It seems Kennedy was a rebel who was hanged on his way home after the battle of Ovidstown.

Wileys Hill a mile below Donadea Castle is at Hortland and the battle described is the battle of Ovidstown.

## THE BATTLE OF PROSPEROUS

The Chapel bell at Prosperous was pealing loud and high;  
The weavers and the artisans in groups have gathered nigh;  
From Blackwood and from Downings, from Longtown and Donore;  
From Curryhills and Landenstown, those sturdy peasants pour;  
And matrons from Mylerstown and maids from Currabell;  
The dread doing's of those yeomen in shuddering horror tell;  
For those monsters of oppression and dark dishonour reign  
In that district long abandoned to the tyrant rule of Swayne.  
The bell had ceased its tolling and the echoes scarce have died,  
When from the Clane direction see you spurring horseman ride;  
Like a fairy wind from Allen comes the horse with flowing mane;  
And seated in the saddle is brave Esmonde from Clane.  
He reigned before the chapel gate, and as his friends drew near  
With choking voice he asked them: "Boys, is Edmond Laidir here?"  
Then as the stalwart figure of O'Hanlon met his view,  
He sobbed out "Edmond Laidir, I have dreadful news for you.  
Edmond, pray for patience, for your home is burned down  
And your aged parents butchered by forces of the Crown;  
And your sweet gentle Maire, your fair young blooming bride,  
With her infant in her arms by their bloody bayonets died.  
Ah, men of old Cill Dara, do we call on you in vain?  
Can the offspring of such fathers tamely wear a slavish chain?  
Can the sons they've left behind be so unmindful of their fate,  
That any true Kildare man fears to speak of '98.  
So, Edmond, pray for patience, and be quick, make no delay;  
For we'll meet the brutes in open fight on the 23rd of May.  
No word did Edmond utter, but towards the Chapel faced,  
And solemnly that strong right hand upon his heart he placed.  
While he bowed his head in reverence and swore an oath that he  
For all those deeds of slaughter yet would well avenged be.  
At Hatter's Cross at midnight of the appointed day.  
Four hundred brave United men assembled for the fray;  
They had guns and blunderbusses with many a trusty pike;  
With knives and even pitch forks, and the sharp-edge blades  
of scythes.  
From Killabegs and Ballinafagh, from Newtown and elsewhere,  
There came the finest fighters in the County of Kildare.  
Captain Andrew Farrell, boys, is marching at their head,  
A braver man to battle ne'er his trusted forces led.

And Edmond, too, with sledge and pike is marching by his side.  
He is thinking of his parents dear, sweet infant and fair bride,  
Now they have reached the Blackstick on Blackwood's bleak  
highway,  
The night was dark, not e'en one star shot down a guiding ray  
When nine of those valiant heroes quick scaled the barrack wall  
And slew the sentries at their posts ere they could warning call.  
Then with one well-directed blow O'Hanlon burst the door,  
And up the stairs to Swayne's bedroom in frenzied wrath he tore;  
And there his Maire's murderer sat, half dressed upon the bed;  
The ready pike quick found his heart, the tyrant dropped back dead.  
And now, at doors and windows, alarmed yeos appear,  
With shaking limbs and shivering hands and features blanched with  
fear;  
For around that doomed barracks was piled the well-dried hay;  
And soon a thousand tongues of flame made night as bright as day.  
And now the peasants muskets and pikes and pitch forks plied;  
And if the yeos escaped the fire, on vengeful steel they died.  
When the morning sun on Prosperous shot down its pallid light,  
That hated yeoman barracks stood on longer there in sight.  
The vow that Edmond Laidir made he had fulfilled it well;  
But five of all that hated band escaped, the tale to tell  
Some fell at Old Kilcullen, at Clane and Naas some died,  
But the spirits from the graveyards for a century have cried,  
Ye men and boys of Prosperous such is my simple lay,  
Of your fathers fight for freedom, on that 23rd of May.

This account of the victory at Prosperous is recorded in An tAthair Seosamh Ó Muirtille, *Kildare 1798 Commemoration*, produced by the Co. Kildare National Graves Association in 1948 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Rebellion. It was written sometime in the late 1800's. See also Mac Suibhne, op. cit., for this poem and poems on Edward Molloy of Rathangan and Captain John Doorly of Lullymore.



THE BATTLE OF OVIDSTOWN  
(Air – *The Dawning of the Day*)

Oh Mary, get my coat of green,  
It's near the break of day,  
On a retreat my name shall be,  
It's not at home I'll stay,  
The ancient race unto disgrace,  
Shall ne'er be brought by me,  
Oh, I'm away to Ovidstown to fight for liberty.

*Chorus*  
With pike so keen, and sash of green,  
That emblem dear to me;  
Oh, I'm away to Ovidstown to fight for liberty.

Captain Farrell, he has gone,  
He was in Donadea,  
The moon is up and Hanlon's troops,  
From home are gone away.  
Before we dull tomorrow's sun,  
A glorious sight you'll see,  
On all Dara's plains, we'll break our chains,  
And set old Ireland free.

*Chorus*

There is Captain Burke from Barrettstown,  
He's gone with his brave band,  
Of full three-hundred green clad youths,  
He has at his command,  
And Cox's Corps has left Donore;  
I fear that late I'll be,  
To reach the ground where the trumpet sounds,  
To set old Ireland free.

*Chorus*

Oh, Mary, get my coat of green,  
It's near our parting time,  
On the old hill of Ballinafagh,  
We will fall into line;  
Oh! There's the shout, the boys are out,

Hurrah! Ghradh gheal mo chroidhe,  
With that brave band I'll join my hand,  
And set old Ireland free.

*Chorus*

An tAthair Seosamh Ó Muirtille, *Kildare 1798 Commemoration*, op.  
cit.

THE SUMMER-MORNING'S DESTRUCTION

Now falls the thick-descending rain,  
Where late the hostile squadron stood;  
Ye show'rs, ye have not wash'd the stain,  
Of lost Horatio's precious blood.

The earth, which drank his blood so dear;  
The earth, his murder will not hide,  
And torn Maria's streaming tear:-  
O shall these tears be ever dried?

The tender pledges of their love  
In life's first dawn feel sorrow's smart;  
And, whilst a parent's loss they prove,  
Keen anguish wrings the infant heart.

Her trumpet dire Bellona blows;  
The echoing hills repeat the sound;  
With blood the blighted valley flows;  
And death and horror rage around.

And where is now the peaceful scene,  
Where the soft muse attun'd her lay;  
The tranquil bow'r, the cheerful green,  
The rural sports at closing day?

The bow'rs were wrapped in ruthless fires,  
Prone on their fields the peasants bled;  
The muses dropp'd their golden lyres,  
And from the scene of slaughter fled.

Yet ere they bled, one sacred tear,  
Horatio, on thy grave must fall;  
To thee the muse's song was dear;  
Thy soul awoke at Pity's call.

Thine was the voice, whose cheering sound  
Spoke comfort to the couch of pain:-  
And were these gentle accents found  
To plead for life - and plead in vain?

High flash'd the brandish'd swords in air;  
Brave, though unarm'd, their victim stood:  
Descending deaths remorseless tear  
That breast, which thirsted not for blood.

O hide the melancholy hour;  
O veil it deep in shades of night:  
Yet the broad sun display's its power  
And shone in morning-glories bright.

Sweet smil'd the war-devoted vale,  
In summer's radiant robes array'd,  
How soon did sorrow load the gale!  
How soon did ev'ry beauty fade!

Where are thy simple village pleasures,  
Sweet employment's, guiltless leisure's?-  
Where thy joys, which charm'd when o'er?  
Fled are thy joys, O Ballitore!

1798

This is just one of the many poems written by Mary Leadbeater of Ballitore about the events there during the Rebellion. It is taken from *Poems by Mary Leadbeater*, pp. 285 - 287 (London, 1808) and recounts the death of Dr. Johnson (Horatio) at the hands of the military. Other poems specifically mentioning the Rebellion in this volume are:

*The Ruined Cottage*, pp. 259 - 263  
*The Triumph of Terror*, pp. 309 - 311

*Ballitore*, pp. 325 - 350

*View of Ballitore, Taken from Mount Bleak*, pp. 351 - 361

#### THE SHAN VAN VOCHT

Oh! The French are on the sea,  
Says the Shan Van Vocht;  
The French are on the sea,  
Says the Shan Van Vocht;  
Oh! The French are in the bay,  
They'll be here without delay,  
And the orange will decay,  
Says the Shan Van Vocht.  
Oh! The French are in the bay,  
They'll be here by break of day,  
And the orange will decay,  
Says the Shan Van Vocht.

And where will they have their camp?  
Says the Shan Van Vocht;  
Where will they have their camp?  
Says the Shan Van Vocht;  
On the Curragh of Kildare,  
The boys they will be there,  
With their pikes in good repair,  
And Lord Edward will be there,  
Says the Shan Van Vocht.

Then what will the yeomen do?  
Says the Shan Van Vocht;  
What will the yeomen do?  
Says the Shan Van Vocht;  
What should the yeomen do  
But throw off the Red and Blue,  
And swear that they'll be true,  
To the Shan Van Vocht?  
What should the yeomen do  
But throw off the Red and Blue  
And swear that they'll be true,  
To the Shan Van Vocht?

Taken from David M. Green (ed.) *An Anthology of Irish Literature* (New York, 1954).

The Shan Van Vocht (Shean Bhean Bhocht) or Old Woman represented Ireland. It was a traditional lament for Ireland and was adapted here in support of the United Irishmen. The importance of Kildare being Lord Edwards county, was emphasised in the second stanza.

#### THE REBELLION OF 1798

The ruthless Fitzgerald stepp'd forward to rule,  
His principles formed in the Orleans school,  
The torch of Rebellion he waved in the air,  
And massacre spread thro' the plains of Kildare;  
The weakness of L...r abetted his crime,  
He fell like a Ruffian and died in his prime.  
Down, down, croppies lie down.

In Dublin the traitors were ready to rise,  
And murder was seen in their lowering eyes,  
With poison, like cowards, they aim'd to succeed,  
And thousands were doom'd by assassins to bleed;  
But the yeomen advanced, of rebels the dread,  
And each croppy soon hid his dastardly head.  
Down, down, croppies lie down.

The innocent rebels of Ballynahinch,  
With tears in their eyes when they thought of the Prince,  
To treason's head-quarters their thousands they bring,  
To pay no more rents and to pull down the King,  
But soon as bold Nugent advanced to attack,  
The innocent croppies were thrown on their back.  
Down, down, croppies lie down.

In Wexford they made a most desperate stand,  
And with fire and rapine disfigured the land,  
Their massacred captives they cast to the flood,  
The Slaney ran crimson with Protestants blood!  
But vengeance pursued them with death and despair,  
And the carcass of Harvey soon tainted the air.  
Down, down, croppies lie down.

Defeated by Lake, they rallied their force,  
And into Kilkenny directed their course,  
By Murphy led on, o'er the Barrow they pour,  
But hundreds were fated to pass it no more,  
For Asgill attacked them again and again,  
And three times five hundred lay dead on the plain.  
Down, down, croppies lie down.

Priest Murphy declared to the fanatic crew,  
Who believed all his words as the Gospel were true,  
No bullet could hurt a true son of the Church,  
But the devil soon left the poor saint in the lurch;  
For by some sad mistake, through a hole in his skin,  
A heretic bullet just chanced to pop in.  
So down, down, the croppies lie down.

The loyalist song (to the tune of "Croppies, lie down") was taken from *Faulkner's Dublin Journal* of 26th July 1798. This version is taken from Madden's, *Literary Remains of The United Irishmen of 1798*, op. cit., pp. 146-148.

In terms of the Rebellion in Kildare in 1798 it puts the start of the Rebellion fairly within its domain. The Orleans School is an obvious reference to the supposed father of Lady Pamela – Philip Egalite the Duc Orleans. L...r is probably Leinster – Lord Edward's brother the Duke of Leinster.

#### THE ANCIENT MEMORY OF MULLAGHMAST IN THE COUNTY OF KILDARE

You learned men that's wise,  
I tell you no lies,  
I'm a bard without either blot or blunder,  
And as stout as great St. Ruth,  
I tell you but the truth,  
And this world I'll make it for to wonder,  
In the Rath of Mullaghmast,  
That dreadful day is passed,  
When the Tories called us in for protection,  
Their slaughter they began,  
And they killed us everyman,  
Left our widows and poor orphans there crying.

The graves that you see here,  
Would make you shed a tear,  
Where your ancient Irish heroes they lay sleeping,  
Though their soul in heaven stand,  
Whilst murderers they are damned,  
As Dives poor Lazarus seen him,  
In the year of '98,  
Our lives they did take,  
We had but one noble commander,  
That was Dorely of great fame.  
That was reared in sweet Kildare,  
His name, boys, forever we'll record it.

At Aughrim and the Boyne,  
Some thousands they destroyed,  
Athlone we had lost it by invaders,  
Sarsfield to Limerick flew,  
Those men they were but few,  
The conditions that he gained they never gave it,  
Cromwells laws they did fulfil,  
And the Catholics they did kill,  
And our blessed Roman Clergy, did not spare them,  
Till god a man sent down  
That wears a laurel crown,  
And he'll conquer them, my boys, never fear him,

Four hundred men and more,  
Lay bleeding in their gore,  
On the Rath of Mullaghmast upon that morning,  
They had not time for to kneel down,  
For to pray for their poor souls,  
When they killed them all like lambs in a slaughter,  
By a most rebellious man,  
That was left upon our land,  
By Cromwell, the treacherous invader  
To Edenderry they did run,  
Where Father Kerns was hung,  
And Perry, our darling fine hero.

Brave Fitzgerald suffered sore,  
When he swam the Barrow o'er,  
And his father lay bleeding in the slaughter  
And the Byrnes of great fame,  
Their names shall remain,  
And the Farrells shall never be forgotten,  
It was on Carbury hill,  
Our precious blood they spilled,  
When Kennedy, our hero, they hung him;  
On the jail of Naas,  
O'Connor's head they placed,  
And they called us all both rebels and offenders.

The truth I'll not enlarge,  
And I will speak of old Clonard,  
Where the Ennises, our heroes, they were slaughtered,  
They were put upon their knees,  
By a most infernal breed,  
And as innocent as doves they have shot them,  
Upon Dunlaven green,  
When thirty-six fine heroes they lay bleeding,  
The Widow Ryan she cried full sore,  
When her child lay in his gore,  
It grieves me the truth for to mention.

My pen I will lay down,  
And that in Kildare town,  
Tho' in Drogheda this board he is residing,  
John Shields it is my name,  
And I think it is no shame,  
For liberty through Ireland will be shining,  
Our Union we will bring home,  
And free the Church of Rome,  
That suffered with this dreadful persecution,  
Good Christians let us pray,  
For the soul that's in the clay,  
And that God may give their children resolution.

Taken from Madden, op. cit., pp. 170-173. Read Doorly for Dorely, Kearns for Kerns and Dunlavin for Dunlaven. Doorly refers to Captain John Doorly at Lullymore who led the rebels at Rathangan.

The dreadful day mentioned refers to the massacre in 1577 of chiefs of Laois and Offaly by the Queens forces. Carbury hill refers to the battle of Ovidstown and Kennedy was hung by the yeomen after this battle.

The O'Connor mentioned is Lawrence O'Connor the defender/schoolmaster who was executed in 1795 and his head placed on a spike at Naas jail.

Clonard refers to the defeat of the rebels there attempting to capture a fortified house. The thirty-six heroes at Dunlavin refers to the execution of suspected United Irishmen on Dunlavin Green on 24th May 1798.

The Widow Ryan possibly refers to the Captain Ryan who was mortally wounded by Lord Edward Fitzgerald on his arrest in Dublin or possibly has a more local connotation.

#### A BALLAD

From Erin's shore, a light bark bore,  
Lord Edward far away;  
O'er waves to glide to countries wide,  
That lie beyond the sea.

There met his sight a lady bright,  
He wins her lily hand;  
But oh! The wile of woman's smile,  
Can't keep him in that land.

For now the Dane hath grown again,  
As hostile as before;  
And should he stay beyond the sea.  
What guard has Erin's shore?

But come not here, Lord Edward, dear!  
Oh rest beyond the sea;  
For death awaits, who hesitates  
To live in slavery.

And well I feel you'd never kneel,  
Though left in arms alone;  
In countries wide rove with your bride-  
Who'll cheer her when you're gone?

His native shore he sees once more,  
Yet sees with bitter sighs;  
And for a while, a brilliant smile  
Illuminated Erin's eyes.

But short the hour of hope's bright pow'r –  
The Chieftans valour vain –  
And freedom will shriek o'er her child  
And horror held his reign!

No sculptur'd tomb to speak his doom,  
In Erin's land appears-  
But oh! Brave Edward's grave  
Is water'd with her tears!

From Madden, op. cit., pp. 183-184. A mournful ballad on the death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald which emphasises his passion and conviction.

In this desecrated ground  
lies the body  
of  
THOMAS REYNOLDS  
The claims of his memory, on his country,  
are to be counted by  
His oaths;  
His services to it, estimated by the quantity  
of blood,  
That in consequence of his perfidy  
Was shed, of those, whom he called  
his bosom friends,  
While his merits, as a loyal man,  
Are to be "Measured by the Coffins  
of his Victims".  
He bargained with a menial of the British  
Government  
And sold his cause  
And his associates, for money.  
A dealer and chapman in broken vows,  
He huckstered and higgled,

With the buyers of his wares,  
 For the price of blood;  
 And the produce of his treachery  
 Enabled him to guzzle and gormandize away  
 The remainder of his days  
 In a foreign land.  
 In him the strange anomaly  
 Was exemplified of extraordinary baseness  
 Combined with signal boldness;  
 Coolness of judgement and presence of mind  
 In the midst of dangers.  
 This arch-traitor was a man of unquestionable  
 courage  
 Few villains  
 With the exception ever memorable of  
 John Warneford Armstrong  
 Have manifested greater talents for inveigling  
 Trusting friends into the toils of treason,  
 Or more brazen-faced audacity  
 In unmasking their own treachery,  
 Then the undaunted informer,  
 Thomas Reynolds  
 Widows and orphans,  
 Without remorse, were made by him,  
 Of the wives and children of those  
 With whom he lived  
 In amity.  
 And no sense of pity was ever shown by him,  
 For the sufferings he had inflicted on them;  
 On the contrary,  
 It was a title to distinction, and a proof,  
 In his conception, of heroic virtue,  
 That he had sworn away the lives  
 of  
 Bond, Byrne and McCann  
 And the patrimony of  
 The children of Lord Edward Fitzgerald,  
 To whom he owed obligations,  
 The magnitude of which was never  
 To be forgotten nor forgiven  
 by him.

Having betrayed all his friends,  
 Forsaken his principles,  
 Fled from his country,  
 Possessing nothing more except his creed,  
 To change, barter or desert,  
 He abandoned his religion.  
 With all the ability of this  
 – “Sly parent of revolts and lies,  
 The grand accuser of the Brethern”,  
 His skill to cog, to cheat, to cozen, and to gloze,  
 To circumvent confiding men,  
 “Of free undaunted minds, that knew not how to fear”,  
 Deceit,  
 The facility with which he gained,  
 Their confidence,  
 And was entrusted with secrets,  
 Involving many valuable lives,  
 And the destinies of a nation,  
 Plainly shows  
 How culpable, remiss and unmindful  
 Of their obvious duties  
 Were those who trusted in him;  
 Knowing as they did  
 His early history,  
 And the position,  
 In which he stood towards the living  
 And the dead.  
 Of his own kith and kindred  
 In the decline of life  
 He assumed a sanctimonious demeanour  
 And was supposed  
 To have “Put off the Old Man”.  
 He retained to the last, however,  
 The wages of the iniquity of his youth,  
 The Pension, which he did  
 Such deadly work to obtain in 1798.  
 He renounced none of his luxuries:  
 A pampered, full-gorged, gouty Epicurean  
 In his latter years,  
 He was daily to be seen,  
 Parading his unwieldy bulk

In all places of resort.  
He never winced under the fixed gaze  
Of public scorn,  
But met it with cool effrontery,  
And a truculent glance of lurking mischief,  
Blent with a sort of mildness,  
At which men shudder and recoil  
With deferential horror.  
He bore the Atlas burden  
Of contempt,  
On "The broad back of his strong,  
Scoundrel mind",  
As if he courted contumely,  
And deemed that all  
His murders  
Were meritorious acts,  
or  
Matters of State consequence.  
Thus lived and died  
The remorseless renegade

THOMAS REYNOLDS

Proditor, delator, et Sicarius Infamis,  
Perfidus, gulosus, avarus, avidissimus auri

Ierene.

Taken from Madden, op. cit., pp. 209-212. A lyrical indictment of the traitorous actions of Thomas Reynolds of Kilkea, the former United Irish Colonel turned government informer.

Ierene was the pseudonym of an anti-government writer of the early nineteenth century.

## A PASSAGE IN EPITOME OF IRISH HISTORY

"WHO KILLED COCK ROBIN?"

Who broached Reform?  
A democratic duke  
Of the school of Horne Tooke,  
Said he broached Reform.

Who Burked reform?  
A statesman heaven born,  
Who tried to hang John Horne,  
Said he Burked reform.

Who gulled the Irish?  
A juvenile patrician  
Who had dallied with sedition  
Said he gulled the Irish.

Who raised the nation?  
The rival Harries rose,  
Each pulled the other's nose,  
And said he roused the nation.

Who raised its hopes?  
The Irish Volunteers,  
Said the people with their cheers,  
They raised its hopes!

What did they perform?  
They mustered and paraded,  
Until their laurels faded  
All this they did perform.

What came of Eighty-two?  
The name of the free nation,  
A parchment Liberation,  
This came of Eighty-two.

Whence came the shout of Freedom?  
It came o'er the Atlantic  
And drove oppression frantic,  
Thence came the shout of Freedom!

Who became alarmed?  
The leaders of the masses  
Who dread the lower classes,  
They became alarmed.

How died the Volunteers?  
The death that's fit for slaves  
They slunk into their graves  
Thus died the Volunteers!

Who sung the "*De Profundis*?"  
Lord Charlemont thrice bowed  
To the courtiers, not the crowd,  
Then sang the "*De Profundis*!"

Who inscribed the tomb?  
One Theobald Wolfe Tone,  
Who was skilled in cutting stone  
He inscribed the tomb!

How did he inscribe it?  
"*Resurgam!*" was the word,  
The slabs to be restored,  
Thus did he inscribe it!

Did the grave give up its dead?  
It did in Ninety-eight,  
(I ought to know the date),  
The grave gave up its dead!

Did the old Reformers rise?  
Their spirit rose again,  
But enshrined in nobler men,  
Thus did their spirit rise!

Who drove the people mad?  
'Twas I, said Mr. Pitt,  
And the Union came of it,  
I drove the people mad!

Who did the work of Pitt?  
An apostate like his master,  
Whose whole life was a disaster,  
He did the work of Pitt!

Who supplied the dogs of war?  
Lord Condon yawning said,  
I believe, that I was lead,  
To ship the dogs of war.

Who advocated torture?  
'Twas I, said "Yellow Jack",  
Had the millions but one back,  
I'd have advised its torture!

Who scourged the people?  
John Claudius, grim and gory,  
Said, I must claim that glory,  
I scourged the people!

Who half hanged the peasants?  
A ruffian fierce and tall,  
Whose name was Hempenstall,  
Said - I half hanged the peasants.

Who picketed the Croppies?  
The valiant Captain Swayne  
From his ashes rose again,  
Said I picketed the Croppies!

Who burned the cabin?  
Hunter Gowan said, Oh d...n me,  
While the babe clung to his mammy,  
I burned the cabin!



Who shot down the father?  
'Twas I, said Hawtrey White,  
I pinked him in his flight,  
I shot down the father!

Who invented pitch caps?  
A man of the North Cork  
Claimed the merit of that work  
He invented pitch caps!

Who shot Lord Edward?  
The major said demurely,  
I took my aim securely  
I shot Lord Edward!

Who stole the brewer's mare?  
His worship turning round,  
The soft impeachment owned,  
He stole the brewer's mare!

Who crammed the Crown approvers?  
You will find in Madden's book,  
Said Mr. Edward Cooke!  
Who crammed the crown approver's!

Who plied the trade of blood?  
A host of traitors cried,  
Behold, our hands - we plied,  
The trade, you call of blood!

Who did the largest business?  
The multitude recoiled -,  
For Thomas Reynolds smiled,  
He claimed the largest business!

What was Reynolds' line?  
He dealt in trusting friends,  
And he kept a stock on hands,  
This was Reynolds' line!

Was he a wholesale trader?  
He sold his friends "En Gros," -  
In bond and warehouse too!  
He was a wholesale trader!

Did he sell his bosom friends?  
He sold McCann and Byrne,  
They were hanged - for he was sworn,  
He sold his dearest friend!

Do informers flourish still?  
Not quite as heretofore,  
They "stag" in secret more,  
Swear less but flourish still!

What followed the Rebellion?  
Universal consternation,  
Corruption, degradation,  
These followed the Rebellion!

How were these embodied?  
On a Union, which the robbers  
Of our rights, and our own jobbers  
Contrived, they were embodied!

By whom was it effected?  
By the Judas of his day,  
Patricidal Castlereagh,  
The Union was effected!

When shall it be repealed?  
When the people are united,  
And the Nation's vow is plighted,  
Then it be repealed!

These verses chronicle the latter decades of the eighteenth century in Ireland from the Volunteers, to the Rebellion of 1798 to the Act of Union. In piecing together the narrative, incidents deemed to be of great importance are highlighted in the various verses - in relation to Kildare these include a verse on the shooting of lord Edward; a verse on Captain Swayne's harsh treatment of suspected

united Irishmen, two verses on Wolfe Tone's call to Rebellion and five verses on Reynolds treachery. Taken from Madden, op. cit., pp. 245-250.

TONE'S GRAVE  
by Thomas Davis.

- I In Bodinstown Churchyard there is a green grave,  
And wildly along it the winter winds rave;  
Small shelter, I ween, are the ruin'd walls there,  
When the storm sweeps down on the plains of Kildare.
- II Once I lay on that sod - it lies over Wolfe Tone -  
And thought how he perished in prison alone,  
His friends unavenged, and his country unfreed -  
"Oh bitter," I said, "is the patriot's meed;
- III "For in him the heart of a woman combin'd  
With a heroic life, and a governing mind -  
A martyr for Ireland - his grave has no stone -  
His name seldom nam'd, and his virtues unknown."
- IV I was woke from my dream by the voices and tread  
Of a band, who came into the home of the dead;  
They carried no corpse, and they carried no stone,  
And they stopp'd when they came to the grave of Wolfe Tone.
- V There were students and peasants, the wise and the brave,  
And an old man who knew him from cradle to grave,  
And children who thought me hard - hearted; for they,  
On that sanctified sod, were forbidden to play.
- VI But the old man, who saw I was mourning there, said  
"We come, Sir, to weep where young Wolfe Tone is laid,  
And we're going to raise him a monument, too -  
A plain one, yet fit for the simple and true."
- VII My heart overflow'd, and I clasped his old hand  
And I bless'd him, and bless'd everyone of his band;  
"Sweet! Sweet! 'Tis to find that such faith can remain  
To the cause, and the man so long vanquish'd and slain."

VIII

IX

- X In Bodinstown Churchyard there is a green Grave,  
And freely around it let winter winds rave -  
Far better they suit him - the ruin and gloom,  
Till Ireland, a nation, can build him a tomb.

Taken from "The Spirit of the Nation", *Ballads and Songs by The Writers of "The Nation"* (new and revised edition, Dublin, 1855.). In another work no verses are listed missing but no extra verses are recorded either. Bodinstown, the resting place of Wolfe Tone, is still the place of an annual pilgrimage to honour his memory.

The following are the words of Pádraig Pearse immortalised on the monument to Tone at Bodinstown.

Ní Síocháin Gan Saoirse

Thinker and Doer  
Dreamer of the Immortal Dream and  
Doer of the immortal deed, we owe to  
This dead man more than we can ever repay  
him ... To his teaching we owe it that  
there is such a thing as Irish Nationalism  
and to his memory of the deed he nerved  
his generation to do, to the memory of 98,  
we owe it that there is any manhood left  
in Ireland.

P. H. Pearse.

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## GOVERNMENT BULLETIN.

DUBLIN CASTLE, 15th MAY, 1798.

The Lord Lieutenant and Privy Council of Ireland have issued a proclamation, declaring that they have received information upon oath, that Lord EDWARD FITZGERALD has been guilty of high treason, and offer a reward of £1000 sterling, to any person who shall discover, apprehend, or commit him to prison.

An unexpected event has taken place in this city; namely, a cession made by the Corporation for the improvement of Dublin Harbour, of their property in the Pigeon-house Dock; and the newly-constructed hotel, to Government, for the purpose of a place of arms and military post, if not for ever, at least during the present war. The part allotted for this place of arms is, we hear, to be insulated by strong redoubts, mounted with cannon.

Dublin, May 20th,

Yesterday evening information having been given of the place in which Lord Edward Fitzgerald had concealed himself, Mr. Justice Swan, Major Sirr, and Captain Ryan, with a small guard, went in two coaches to the house of one Murphy, a feather merchant, in Thomas-street. Major Sirr instantly proceeded to plant sentinels on the different doors of the house; Mr. Swan and Captain Ryan rushed in, and ran up to a room two pair of stairs backwards. Mr. Swan, having first reached the door, opened it, and told Lord Edward, who lay upon a bed in his dressing-gown and breeches, that he had a warrant against him; adding, "You know me, my Lord, and I know you: it will be in vain to resist." They approached each other: his Lordship, on their meeting, stabbed Mr. Swan, with a dagger; the latter fired: they struggled; Lord Edward in the struggle, wounded him a second time in the back; the dagger glanced upon his ribs: Mr. Swan staggered back, crying out that he was killed. Captain Ryan by this time arrived, and rushed in: he presented a pocket pistol, it missed fire, he drew a sword from his stick, the sword bent double upon the body of Lord Edward, the latter staggered, and fell backwards upon the bed, Captain Ryan threw himself upon him, Lord Edward plunged the dagger into Captain Ryan's side, they grappled with each other, Captain Ryan endeavouring to wrest the dagger, Lord Edward stabbing him and eluding his grasp. The whole business was so instantaneous, that Major Sirr had only time to reach the room-door, from hearing the discharge of the first shot, which had alarmed him, he rushed in, saw Captain Ryan and Lord Edward struggling and entwined upon the floor, Major Sirr discharged a pistol, and wounded Lord Edward in the shoulder, the latter then cried out for mercy, and was secured. Some of Captain Ryan's wounds are of the most alarming nature, he has received no less than 14 stabs in different parts of his body, of these, one is peculiarly alarming, it is situate under his left ribs, and, though there is every reason to hope that the intestines are uninjured, we cannot venture to pronounce him out of danger. Mr. Swan's wounds are not so serious, they are likely soon to heal, Lord Edward was sent from the Castle, after a short examination, to Newgate, his wounds are supposed to be but slight.