

The Old Tough

Newsletter of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association
(Registered Charity No 20038816)



Issue 11: Autumn 2023

Editorial

Welcome to the Autumn 2023 edition of *The Old Tough*!

The Dublin Festival of History has just ended. For the first time, your Association was represented among the speakers in the person of our President, Tom Burke MBE, who spoke on the theme of WW1 remembrance. His talk, *From Shoebox to Window Box: Remembrance of WW1 in Ireland*, charted the difficulties surrounding such activity in the early years of the Irish Free State, the later decline in such remembrance practices and the resurgent interest since the 1990s in finding out about the participation of Irishmen and women in WW1. A summary of Tom's comments is provided in this newsletter.

The Festival often offers interesting and informative talks about areas of neglected history. This year we learnt about a research project which is seeking to recover and map the locations of the British Army's permanent barracks on the island of Ireland during the 230 years before Independence. An article on this interesting project is included in this newsletter.

Our memorial article in this edition relates to St David's Church of Ireland Church in Naas, Co Kildare, where the Depot of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers was located over 100 years ago. There are three memorials of relevance to the Regiment in the Church, and the article provides information on these memorials. We also plan to include in our 2023 journal, *The Blue Cap*, an essay on the RDF and Naas.

Other articles in this edition include the following:

- the latest Dubs' News which outlines the highlights of a busy Autumn period and
- information on forthcoming events.

We hope that you find these articles informative and interesting. As ever, we welcome feedback from members on the articles in *The Old Tough* and on the work of the Association. Similarly, we would like to receive suggestions and contributions from members for future editions of this newsletter or *The Blue Cap*. All such communications can be sent to rdfa1918@gmail.com.

The Editorial Committee

Paul Appleby, David Buckley, Philip Lecane, Thomas Murphy and John F Sheehan

The Royal Dublin Fusilier Memorials in St David's Church, Naas, Co Kildare

Paul Appleby

It is reputed that St Patrick passed through Naas in the 5th century and that a wooden church was built on the site now occupied by St David's Church of Ireland Church at 28 North Main Street in Naas. After the Normans invaded Ireland, King Henry II granted the Barony of Naas to William Fitzmaurice in 1176. The Normans rebuilt the church in stone and re-dedicated it to St David, the patron saint of Wales. In 1212 the Church was listed as one of the possessions of the Knights Hospitaller.

Edward Bruce ransacked the Church in 1316 as did Rory Óg O'Moore in 1577. After being rebuilt each time on the present site, the Church was also substantially modified and improved in more recent times. For instance, a gallery was added in the mid-19th century and stained glass windows of German origin installed in the following decades. During restoration work 30 years ago, a crypt was found which had lain undisturbed for 300 years.

When the Royal Dublin Fusiliers' Depot was in Naas over 100 years ago, St David's was a focal point for the religious needs of the officers and men of a Protestant persuasion. It is understood that the time of Sunday Service was changed to 11 am to accommodate the local military and that part of the Church was reserved for use by them and their families. There also used to be a school in the Church grounds serving the town.



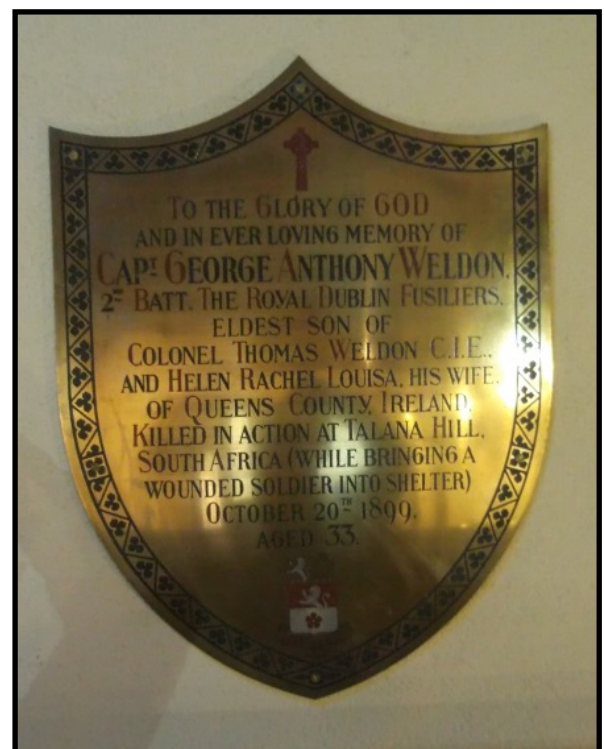
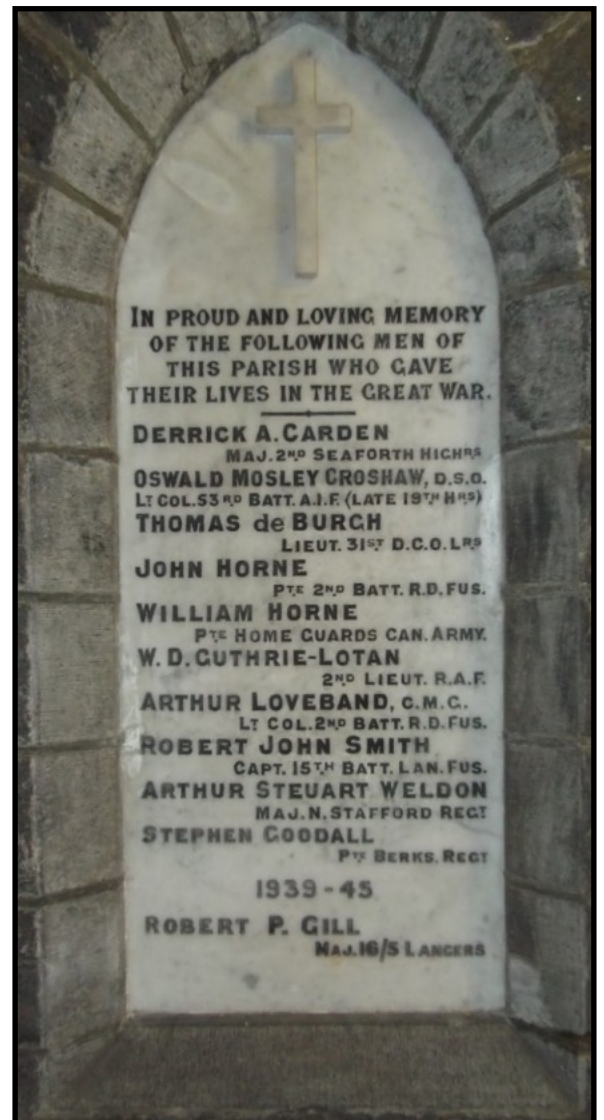
As expected, the present Church contains a number of memorials to prominent local families and individuals. However there are also three memorials remembering former Royal Dublin Fusiliers (RDF). The most prominent is situated in the entrance porch of the Church and remembers ten

parishioners who were killed in the Great War and one who died in World War 2. Two of the ten men were Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Loveband CMG, 2nd Battalion, RDF, was killed on 24 May 1915 during the German gas attack at Mouse Trap Farm in Belgium. More than 600 other men from the Battalion were casualties (dead, wounded and missing) after the events of that terrible day.

To date, it has not been possible to locate from the usual sources information about the listed Private John Horne, 2nd Battalion, RDF. A Private William Horne 6016, 1st Battalion, RDF, was killed in Gallipoli on 5 July 1915, but he may not have been a Church parishioner.

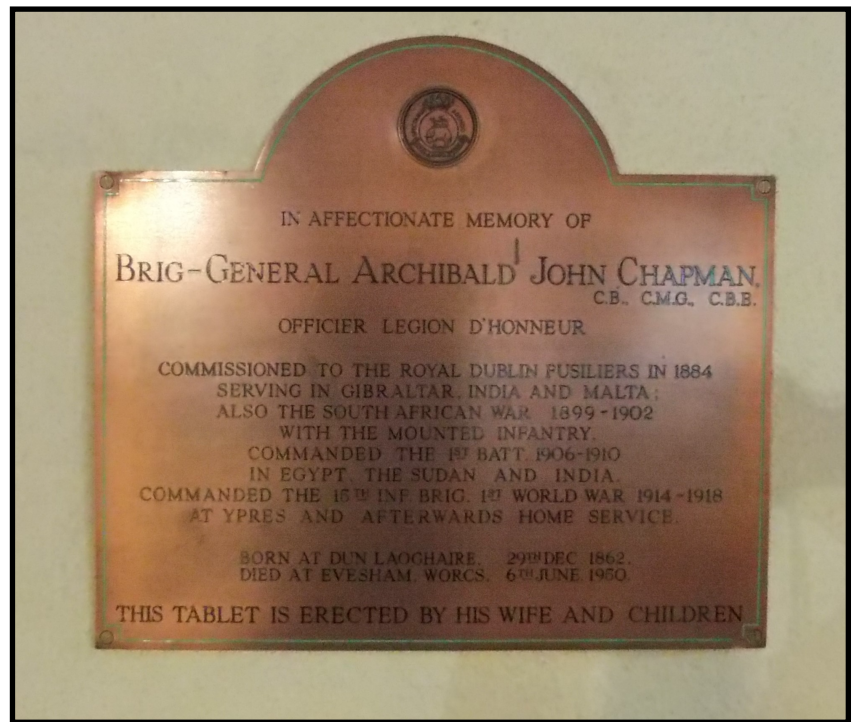
The other two RDF memorials are located in the gallery. One remembers the death of Captain George Anthony Weldon, 2nd Battalion, RDF, who was killed on 20 October 1899 in the first engagement of the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902. A grandson of Sir Anthony Weldon, Kilmoroney House, Athy, Co Kildare (sadly now derelict), he was the first British Army officer to die in the War. As the memorial indicates, he was fatally shot at Talana Hill (outside Dundee in KwaZulu-Natal) while trying to rescue a wounded soldier. Sources indicate that the soldier was his servant, but they disagree as to his name. Some suggest Private John Crotty 5933 while others say Private Christopher Gorman 5078.

The other memorial in the gallery remembers Brigadier-General Archibald John Chapman (see the picture on the following page). Born in Dún Laoghaire in 1862 and married in Newtownpark Church, Blackrock, in 1895, he had a distinguished career in the RDF before the Great War. He particularly came to notice when a mixed mounted infantry force of 300 men under his command (which included the RDF) repelled an attack by some 1,400 Boers at Mount Itala on 26 September 1901. Within weeks, Chapman had been promoted to Major and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel. In 1907 he attended the opening of Dublin's Fusiliers' Arch.



Chapman's memorial is noteworthy because it was placed there by his family after his death in 1950, long after he had left the Depot in Naas. Clearly Chapman and his family had retained fond memories of their time in Naas and of St David's Church in particular.

There was a fourth RDF memorial in the Church to Lieutenant Cecil Charles Arthur Cooper, 1st Battalion, RDF, who accidentally drowned on 12 August 1908 at Khartoum in Sudan. However no trace of the memorial is now to be found in the Church.



Principal Sources

Information on St David's Church provided by Stephanie Jones, the Rector's Church Warden.

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Tom Burke MBE, *The 2nd Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and the Tragedy of Mouse Trap Farm, April and May 1915*, The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, 2005, page 21.

Dublin Daily Express, 20 August 1907, page 5 (accessed from the Irish newspaper archive on the subscription website, <http://search.findmypast.ie/bna/>, on 25 March 2017).

Dr Jane Lyons, *St David's Church, Naas Gravestone Inscriptions, Co Kildare* at <https://www.from-ireland.net/full-gravestone-transcriptions/davids-naas-kildare/> (accessed on 15 August 2023).

Major CF Romer and Major AE Mainwaring, *The Second Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers in the South Africa War*, Uckfield, The Naval & Military Press Ltd, 2011, pages 9 and 10 (originally published in 1908).

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} October 2023.

Photographs, courtesy of Paul Appleby.

Research Project on our Shared Built Military Heritage

Paul Appleby

The Dublin Festival of History annually offers interesting and informative talks about areas of neglected history. This year the Festival heard about an ongoing project to recover and map the locations of the British Army's presence on the island of Ireland for the 230 years before Independence.

In a joint presentation in Richmond Barracks on 4 October 2023, Dr Suzanne Forbes, The Open University, and Dr Charles Ivar McGrath, UCD, indicated that the research is seeking to identify all permanent barracks with residential quarters between 1690 and 1921. They explained that after the conclusion of the Nine Years' War with France in 1697, there was a surfeit of soldiers in England, and it was decided to transfer them to Ireland where an increased military presence was welcomed by the nobility. In 1699 there were 12,000 soldiers in Ireland, compared with 7,000 in England and 4,000 in Scotland.

In order to mitigate drunkenness, debauchery and disease, the decision was taken to erect permanent barracks to accommodate the soldiers and their families instead of housing them in and around existing settlements. An ambitious building programme began, and one of the first barracks built was the Royal Barracks (now Collins Barracks) in Dublin. This remained the largest barracks in these islands for 150 years until it was surpassed by Aldershot in England in the 1850s.

Nineteen lists of barracks were sourced from government and other files, and these had been compiled for differing purposes between 1704 and 1922. As research work is still ongoing, the following initial findings are subject to change. To date it has been established that 371 permanent barracks existed between 1690 and 1921. The distribution by province of these barracks was as follows: Munster (32%), Ulster (29%), Leinster (26%) and Connaught (13%). About two-thirds were purpose built new buildings, while another 20% were adapted from existing defensive structures such as Charles Fort in Co Cork and Ross Castle in Co Kerry. Exact barrack locations have been identified in about two-thirds of cases with only a general location known for another 20%. The sites of the remainder are unidentified at this time. Of course the number of operational barracks fluctuated over time as new barracks came on stream and others closed.

After Independence, many of the buildings erected for barrack use were abandoned or gradually re-purposed. The subsequent fate of these buildings has varied. Nenagh (pictured) is derelict, while Longford Barracks is intact and in public ownership although a new purpose has not yet been realised. The former Ebrington Barracks in Derry/Londonderry is a large community space,

while the sites of other barracks have been re-purposed for housing, museums, offices and colleges.



Nenagh Barracks, 2022. Photograph by CI McGrath.

This research is being funded through the North-South Research Programme, a collaborative scheme being delivered by the Higher Education Authority on behalf of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research Innovation and Science and the Shared Island Unit at the Department of the Taoiseach. Published research in 2024 will be an online map of barracks throughout Ireland with basic information available on each barracks location. A series of online heritage trails is also being planned which will include the cities of Dublin and Cork and the provinces of Connaught and Ulster. Information on the research project is available online at www.barracksireland.wordpress.com. The researchers invite the public to contact them via this website if they have information of relevance to the project.

Dubs' News

Centenary Community Day at Killester Garden Village, 26 August 2023

Killester Garden Village is the largest of the housing estates which were built for former WW1 military personnel by the Irish Soldiers and Sailors Trust between 1920 and 1923. To mark the 100th anniversary of the initial occupation of the Village in 1923, the Killester Garden Village Committee organised a fun family day event. This very active Committee is chaired by Mr Aaron Crampton, a direct descendant of an original occupier of the Village. Pictured is a selection of the large crowd who attended this event.

We in the RDFA were well represented at the event, led by our President, Mr Tom Burke MBE, who was one of the day's speakers. Other speakers included Mr Darragh O'Brien, TD, the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, who gave a very informed and interesting talk. Our member, David Buckley, displayed a variety of Dubs' and WW1 memorabilia which proved to be very popular with attendees.



The day's highlight was a book launch, *Killester Garden Village - the Lives of Great War Veterans and their Families*, by WW1 researchers, Nigel Henderson and Michael Nugent. It is a wonderful publication containing a brief history of the Village's development and a biography of all the original WW1 ex-servicemen and their families who lived on the Estate.

RDFA Field Trip to Ypres/leper, Belgium, 4-7 September 2023

25 members of the Association enjoyed a busy four days of sightseeing in glorious Belgian weather in early September. A highlight was the remembrance ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres/leper on our first evening. Members John O'Brien, Anthony Barnes and Seán Ryan participated and paraded the Standards of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association and the Machine Gun Corps Association. It was a proud moment for the RDFA as these were the only Standards present that evening for the large throng of visitors. Pictured are members Philip Lecane and Michael Lee relaxing after a busy day.



The next three days were packed with visits to Nimy Railway Bridge (the site of the VC awarded to Maurice Dease from Coole, Co Westmeath), the Mons Memorial Museum, St Symphorien Cemetery, Hill 60, Langemark German War Cemetery, Messines Peace Park, the grave of Willie Redmond MP in Loker, the trench defences around Kemmelberg, the wonderfully preserved Toc H (Talbot House) in Poperinge and the Canadian Memorial – the Brooding Soldier. At Buffs Road Cemetery adjacent to Mousetrap Farm, Anthony Barnes spoke movingly of his grandfather who was killed there. In April/May 1915, the German Army had used gas for the first time in the area resulting in the decimation of the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and a number of other units.

On the 100th anniversary of the Third Battle of Ypres/leper in August 2017, the Association installed a memorial at Frezenberg Ridge to the dead of the 16th (Irish) Division and the 36th (Ulster) Division who had fought side by side there for the last time. The dead included Fr Willie Doyle, the Dubs' Chaplain. On our return to the site this September, we met a local Council representative and discussed the re-location of the memorial to a more suitable position nearby. Afterwards we proceeded to Tyne Cot Cemetery where a large number of military personnel connected with Ireland are remembered. These include Fr Willie Doyle and six members of the Irish Guards, all volunteers from the Royal Irish Constabulary killed in one day. Pictured are some of our group at the Frezenberg Ridge memorial.



Overall, it was a fantastic trip which everyone enjoyed. Our sincere thanks go to Brian Moroney for all his hard work in making it an unqualified success. A more detailed report of the trip by Seamus Moriarty will be included in the next edition of *The Blue Cap*.

Dublin Festival of History – Talk by Tom Burke MBE, 30 September 2023

For the first time, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association participated in the Dublin Festival of History. In Pearse Street Library on 30 September last, our President, Mr Tom Burke MBE, spoke on the theme, *From Shoebox to Window Box: Remembrance of WW1 in Ireland*. About 40 members of the public attended including a number of Association members.

Tom gave an excellent review of the difficulties of WW1 remembrance in Ireland from 1919 to the present day. Initially many thousands of Irish people attended annual remembrance ceremonies throughout the island of Ireland in memory of their family members and friends who had died in the War. In the new Irish Free State, these ceremonies were at variance with the homage being given to those who had fought for Irish freedom, and over time public support for the ceremonies declined. This ebbing tide of sympathy was reflected in many families too as the memory of their loved ones' service in WW1 came to be suppressed.

The futility of war in Northern Ireland and the overwhelming need to secure peace and reconciliation created space in the 1990s for a wider assessment of longstanding beliefs and traditions. A re-awakening of the extent of Irish involvement in WW1 followed with new publications, exhibitions and memorials helping to create a more balanced understanding of our history. A physical manifestation of the changing mood over the last century was the development, decline and rebirth of the National War Memorial Gardens in Islandbridge in Dublin. This change in attitude led in turn to willingness amongst individual families to revisit their relatives' involvement in the War, to rehabilitate their memories and to acknowledge publicly their past service. Medals and mementoes which had previously been hidden in old 'shoe boxes' were now being placed in metaphorical 'window boxes' for public display and discussion.

Irish Guards Annual Dinner, 30 September 2023

For a number of years, the Association has attended the Annual Dinner of the Irish Guards in McKee Barracks, Dublin. On the evening of 30 September last, we were delighted to renew acquaintances with our associates in the Irish Guards and with some of our counterparts in the Disbanded Irish Regiments Association. Pictured are RDFA members Therese Moroney, Seamus Greene, John Sheehan, Miriam Sadlier and Brian Moroney with the Irish Guards mascot, Seamus, an Irish wolfhound. In October 2020, Seamus became the 17th regimental mascot of the Irish Guards.



RMS Leinster Commemoration, 10 October 2023

On the 105th anniversary of the sinking of the RMS Leinster by the German submarine, UB-123, a group of about 100 people gathered at the ship's salvaged anchor on Dún Laoghaire's seafront. The attendance included the relatives of some of the 571 people who were lost that day in what remains the largest loss of life in a single tragedy in the Irish Sea. Those who died included 40 crew, 21 postal workers, 146 civilians and over 350 military personnel. In a poignant ceremony, wreaths were laid on behalf of the Governments of Australia, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States among others.

Councillor Denis O'Callaghan, Cathaoirleach of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, gave the keynote address in which he expressed, as a former postal worker himself, particular sympathy for the relatives of the 21 postal workers who died that day. He hoped that in time the names of all those lost could be inscribed on a permanent memorial in Dún Laoghaire.

The presence of the Standards of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, the Royal British Legion and the Machine Gun Corps in the capable hands of Seán Ryan, Geoff Barry and John O'Brien respectively (pictured) added to the solemnity of the occasion. Seán represented the four Royal Dublin Fusiliers who were on the ship, all of whom were lost. In alphabetical order, they were Lieutenant Sydney Crawford, Private Philip O'Brien, Lance-Corporal William O'Mahony and Private Thomas Thompson. John represented the four members of the Machine Gun Corps who were on the ship, two of whom were lost. In alphabetical order, they were Lieutenant John Craig Carlisle (who survived), Private John Hayes, Private John McDonnell and Private J Moore (who survived). Lieutenant Carlisle had been on honeymoon with his wife Anna (née Ferguson) who also survived. Detailed information on the people can be found on www.rmsleinster.com. The "People on Board" section has all the information known about individual crew and passengers.

**Photographs**

Courtesy of Paul Appleby, Seamus Greene, Philip Lecane, Michael Lee and John F Sheehan.

RDFA and Other Events for November and December 2023

Date	Time	Location
Sunday, 5 November	3 pm	<p>Saint Anne's Cathedral, Belfast <i>Royal Irish Regiment's Annual Service of Remembrance</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Train times: Connolly Station to Belfast:</i> Dep 10 am Arr 12.08 Dep 12 noon Arr 14.08 <i>Return: Lanyon Place to Connolly</i> Dep 17.05 Arr 19.17 Dep 19.05 Arr 21.15</p>
Tuesday, 7 November	1.15 pm	<p>Saint Ann's Church, Dawson Street</p> <p><i>To commemorate the 300 year anniversary of the Church, Patrick Hugh Lynch will lecture on the Merrion Square Debates 1927. 'Influences and Legacies' will include a presentation by the RDFA on parishioners who are remembered on the two war memorials in the Church with particular emphasis on the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.</i></p>
Thursday, 9 November	11 am	<p>Grangegorman Cemetery <i>Royal British Legion Claddagh Branch Memorial Service</i></p>
Saturday, 11 November	11 am	<p>Killester Garden Village, Dublin 5 <i>WW1 Remembrance Ceremony</i></p>
	12.30 pm	<p>Saint Mary's Church of Ireland Church, Oldtown <i>Dedication Service to local men who died in both World Wars (Refreshments afterwards)</i></p>
Sunday, 12 November	2.30 pm	<p>Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin <i>Remembrance Sunday – Service begins at 3 pm</i></p>
Monday, 13 November	7 pm	<p>Royal British Legion, Castleberg, Co Tyrone <i>Memorial Dedication to Constable Lawrence (Laurence) Crawley, Sergeant, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, killed in action, 13 November 1916</i></p>
Friday, 17 November	7 pm	<p>City Quay Church, Dublin <i>RDFA Annual Remembrance Service for deceased family and friends</i></p>

Friday, 8 December

6 pm

Masonic Hall, Molesworth Street, Dublin

Annual General Meeting of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, followed by our Christmas Dinner at 7.30 pm. Details for booking our Christmas Dinner will be circulated by email and post to members shortly. The papers for the AGM will be circulated to members in mid-November.

Advance Notice – 9 June 2024, Combined Irish Regiments Association Parade, Whitehall, London.

We look forward to meeting you at some of these events.



Spectamur Agendo
(We are judged by our deeds)