

The Old Tough

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



Issue 7: Summer 2022

Editorial

After all the necessary Covid-induced restrictions of the last two years, it has been great to return to near-normal social engagement recently. The Association and its members have lately enjoyed a particularly busy period of remembrance events, where it has been possible to meet and greet one another again. Everyone involved in these in-person events has been thrilled to meet old friends and acquaintances for a good chat.

This summer edition of The Old Tough is full of news of recent Association activities, including in particular:

- an Association visit to Greece and North Macedonia in May which recalled the Dubs' participation in the Salonika Campaign of 1915 and 1916. This was originally scheduled for 2020 before Covid intervened;
- the splendid Service of Remembrance in Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on 12 June last which marked the centenary of the disbandment of six Irish Regiments (including the Dubs) in 1922. This was organised by the Association in conjunction with the authorities in Saint Patrick's and the other Regimental Associations;
- a new 52 page booklet, entitled 'Come on the Dubs!' – A Brief History of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers', which was a special project undertaken to mark the centenary. This Association booklet was distributed to the attendees in Saint Patrick's and later to the paid up members of the Association who were not able to be at the Service;
- our attendance at other remembrance events around the country, including in particular the National Day of Commemoration Ceremony at Collins Barracks, Dublin, led by the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, TD, on 10 July.

This lengthy edition of The Old Tough also includes a brief biography of Lieutenant William F MacHutchison, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, whose grave was only identified in France in 2017, 99 years after his death.

We hope that you find this edition of the newsletter interesting. As ever, we are open to receiving your suggestions and contributions to future editions at rdfa1918@gmail.com.

The Editorial Committee

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

Visit in May 2022 to the WW1 Battlefields of Salonika

A group of Association members visited Greece and North Macedonia from 9 to 13 May last to learn about the Dubs' participation in the Salonika Campaign of 1915 and 1916. The successful trip, which was originally scheduled for 2020 but postponed due to Covid, was led by historian, Mr Alan Wakefield. Our resident RDFA tour chronicler, Seamus Moriarty, will include a detailed report on the visit in the next edition of our annual journal, The Blue Cap.

Remembrance is a cornerstone of the Association, and we always try on these trips to facilitate visits by relatives and friends to the graves of former soldiers. So we decided to recount in this newsletter the particular graves and memorials that were specially visited on the tour. In most cases, this was the first time in over 100 years that any family member or friend had visited the grave or memorial.

On the first day, the group visited Karasouli Military Cemetery at Polykastro, Greece, where Association member, Mary Kennedy, paid her respects at the grave of her granduncle, 16677 Sapper Charles Kennedy, Royal Engineers. Charles died aged 29 on 17 June 1917. He was born in the village of Killasmeestia, near Ballybrophy in Co Laois. His family were small farmers and pump sinkers/well drillers for several generations. He had originally enlisted in the Royal Engineers at Templemore in 1907 and saw service in South Africa. He re-enlisted in 1914 and was wounded in France. Unfortunately Salonika proved to be his last theatre of war. He was originally buried in Caussica Military Cemetery, but after the War, many dispersed graves (including Charles's) were consolidated in Karasouli.



The Doiran Memorial close to the Greek border with modern North Macedonia remembers 2,175 men who died in the Salonika Campaign and have no known grave. 39 Dublin Fusiliers and many from other Irish Regiments are listed on the Memorial. Suzanne O'Neill spoke movingly there about her granduncle, 983 Private



Richard Harrison, 6th Battalion, Royal Munster Fusiliers, who died aged 43 on 8 December 1915. Richard was born in Drumheel, Co Cavan, on 11 March 1872. Very little is known about his life before he moved to Glasgow to live with his older sister, Margaret. Richard enlisted in Glasgow in

1914, and being born into an Ulster Protestant family, it is not known how he came to serve with the Royal Munster Fusiliers. However after training in Basingstoke, he left Liverpool on 9 July 1915 and was part of the 10th (Irish) Division which landed at Suvla Bay in Gallipoli on 6 August. Nine days later, his battalion participated in the unsuccessful attack on Kiretch Tepe Sirt Ridge with the loss of 43 men killed. On 10 October, the 10th Division was redeployed to Salonika (Thessaloniki today) to assist the British/French ally, Serbia, which was under attack.

The men in their light summer uniforms were ill-equipped for the cold of winter, and disease was also prevalent after the privations of Gallipoli. On 31 October, the depleted battalion was moved west to Lake Doiran on the Serbian border. On 7 December in chaotic and dreadful conditions, Richard's battalion went into the support line to help counter a concerted Bulgarian attack. While the casualties were surprisingly low, Richard was reported killed in action on the following day. His body was never recovered.

On behalf of his wife Miriam, John F Sheehan also spoke at the Doiran Memorial about 23048 Private Peter Stafford, 6th Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who was killed on 3 October 1916 at Yenikoi (now called Provatas), 80 kms north of Thessaloniki. Peter was a brother of Miriam's grandmother. One of six children, he was born on 6 October 1899 at Sandwith Place, Dublin, the son of James and Mary Stafford (née Hanlon). James, aged 44, re-enlisted in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers in April 1915 and survived the War. Unfortunately, Peter, his son who was aged just 16 when he enlisted in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers later that year, did not. Listed above Peter's name on the Memorial is Captain Charles Martin, 6th Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, whose sister, Mary Martin a Voluntary Aid Detachment nurse, went on to form the Medical Missionaries of Mary.



The group also visited Struma Military Cemetery near Kalokastro, Greece, where 73 Dublin Fusiliers are buried. On behalf of member Kathleen Leyden, Seamus Moriarty spoke at the grave of her grandfather, 23031 Private James Murphy, 6th Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who died aged 33 on 3 October 1916. He was a labourer before enlistment and married Teresa Ledwidge in 1904. They lived at 27 Upper Dorset Street, Dublin. Before James embarked for service overseas, Teresa went to Kilkenny to show him their newly arrived daughter. This baby would grow up to become Kathleen's mother, and neither would of course see James again. Kathleen's late



husband, Tommy, was a veteran of RDFFA trips to the Western Front and Gallipoli and never missed the RDFFA Christmas Dinner.

On returning to Thessalonika, the group visited the Salonika (Lembet Road) Military Cemetery where 19 Dublin Fusiliers lie buried. One of these is 23269 Private Michael Bird, 6th Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who died aged 37 at the 62nd General Hospital in Salonika on 8 September 1917. While he was wounded during the War, it is not known if he died of those wounds or from some other cause. Michael had married Julia Curtis in Trim, Co Meath, in 1899, and they lived at Haggard Street. In July 1916, he was in the 4th Battalion of the Dubs but was later posted to Salonika with the 6th Battalion. When Michael died, Julia was left to rear seven children, the youngest of whom was born while Michael was in Salonika. On behalf of Bob Lynch and the Bird family, Paul Appleby placed a remembrance cross and Irish flag on Michael's grave.



Cuimhnímís – Let us remember.



Service of Remembrance, Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, 12 June 2022

On 12 June 1922 six months after the conclusion of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and five other Irish Regiments (the Connaught Rangers, the Leinster Regiment, the Royal Irish Regiment, the Royal Munster Fusiliers and the South Irish Horse) laid up their Colours in Windsor Castle prior to the formal disbandment of the Regiments. One hundred years later to the very day, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association arranged to mark the centenary of this historic occasion with a Service of Remembrance in Dublin's Saint Patrick's Cathedral. This important event was only possible with the wholehearted cooperation of the Cathedral authorities and in particular the Reverend Canon Charles Mullen who was always available to us with advice and guidance on aspects of the planned commemoration. We also acknowledge the support of the other disbanded Regimental Associations and various State Authorities, particularly An Garda Síochána.

The Service was conducted by the Dean of Saint Patrick's, the Very Reverend Dr William Morton. The First and Second Lessons were read respectively by Kevin Cunningham and Tom Burke of the Association, while the Very Reverend KRJ Hall preached the Sermon. The Cathedral Choir and Organist accompanied the prayers and readings with uplifting music. A charitable collection which ultimately will benefit the Association was taken up, and the assembled congregation of about 250 people contributed generously.

Attendees at the Service included the Lord Mayor of Dublin (Councillor Alison Gilliland), the Ambassadors of Australia, Canada and New Zealand and representatives of the Belgian, British, German and Turkish Embassies. The Irish Army Chief of Staff was represented by Brigadier General Tony Cudmore and Major General Adrian Ó'Murchú. Representing An Garda Síochána was Assistant Commissioner Michael McElgunn, and other State attendees included members of Seanad Éireann, Dublin Fire Brigade, Dublin City Council and the National Museum. Members of the disbanded Irish Regimental Associations attended in numbers, and other guests represented the British Legion, the Military History Society of Ireland, the Somme Heritage Centre, the Friends of the Somme, the Kilkenny War Memorial Committee, the Killester WW1 Memorial Campaign, the Organisation of National Ex-Servicemen, the Irish United Nations Veterans Association, the Irish Guards Association, the Royal Irish Regiment, the RUC George Cross Foundation and the Northern Ireland Veterans Association. All attendees received a specially commissioned Centenary Booklet entitled 'Come on the Dubs!' – A Brief History of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

At the close of the Service, the Standards of the British Legion, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association and other Regimental Associations were paraded in the Cathedral. The accompanying photographs below give a sense of the impressive ceremonial procession in which John O'Brien paraded the Association's standard.

Afterwards, many attendees joined the Association in the nearby Hyatt Centric Hotel for a reception. This proved to be very popular as it was the Association's first social gathering since the



lifting of many Covid restrictions. At the Hotel, David Buckley exhibited some Dubs' memorabilia (documents, photographs, badges, drums, etc) in a magnificent display which attracted a lot of interest.

Overall, the Service of Remembrance was a fitting way to mark the centenary of the disbandment of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and five other Irish Regiments. It was a highly successful occasion, and the principal organisers were Brian Moroney, the Association's Chairman, and John F Sheehan. The Association received much positive feedback from the attendees for the various organisational arrangements.

Other Remembrance Events

While the Service of Remembrance in Saint Patrick's Cathedral on 12 June was the centrepiece of our centenary year, the Association has attended a large number of other similar events this summer.

On Saturday, 9 July, the Association was well represented at the Royal British Legion's Annual Remembrance Ceremony in the War Memorial Gardens, Islandbridge, Dublin. Our Standard was one of many paraded at the event. The accompanying photograph of the number of wreaths laid that day emphasises the extent to which the sacrifice of so many Irish men and women in the Great War continues to be honoured today.



Next day, 20 Association members attended the National Day of Commemoration in Collins Barracks, Dublin, to all Irishmen and Irishwomen who died in past wars or on service with the United Nations. The Taoiseach, Micheál Martin TD, led the proceedings which included readings and prayers by representatives of the Jewish, Islamic, Christian, Hindu and Buddhist faiths together with a Humanist reflection. Pictured is one of our longstanding members, Ms Margaret Horne, with the Taoiseach that day in the company of George Jones, Suzanne O'Neill and Brian Moroney.



On Saturday, 16 July, in Ennis, Co Clare, a delegation of nine RDFA representatives (pictured on the following page) attended a Commemoration Event at which the Associations representing the six disbanded Irish Regiments each received a complimentary commemorative gift box (also pictured below) containing six regimental coins pertaining to each disbanded Regiment. Only 100 copies of this specially commissioned memento have been produced, and each costs €150. The Association's gift box will be lodged in the RDFA Archive in the Dublin City Archive, Pearse Street, Dublin, later this year.

Other commemorative events at which the Association was represented in recent months included:

- a Remembrance Event in Clonmel on Sunday, 10 April, organised by the Royal Irish Regiment (18th Regiment of Foot) Association, which included lectures, a parade of standards and a wreath-laying ceremony;



- the Royal British Legion’s Remembrance Ceremony at dawn on ANZAC Day, 25 April, in Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Dublin, which was followed that evening by a Service of Remembrance held in St Ann’s Church, Dawson Street, Dublin;
- the current Royal Irish Regiment’s Old Soldiers’ Day in Belfast on Saturday, 4 June. Our acceptance of the Regiment’s invitation demonstrates our continuing desire as an Association to contribute to the process of reconciliation on the Island of Ireland;
- the Connaught Rangers Association’s Centenary Event in the Mayo Peace Park, Castlebar, on Sunday, 31 July (see picture on the left below), and
- the Leinster Regiment Association’s Remembrance Ceremony in Birr on Sunday, 7 August (see picture on the right below).



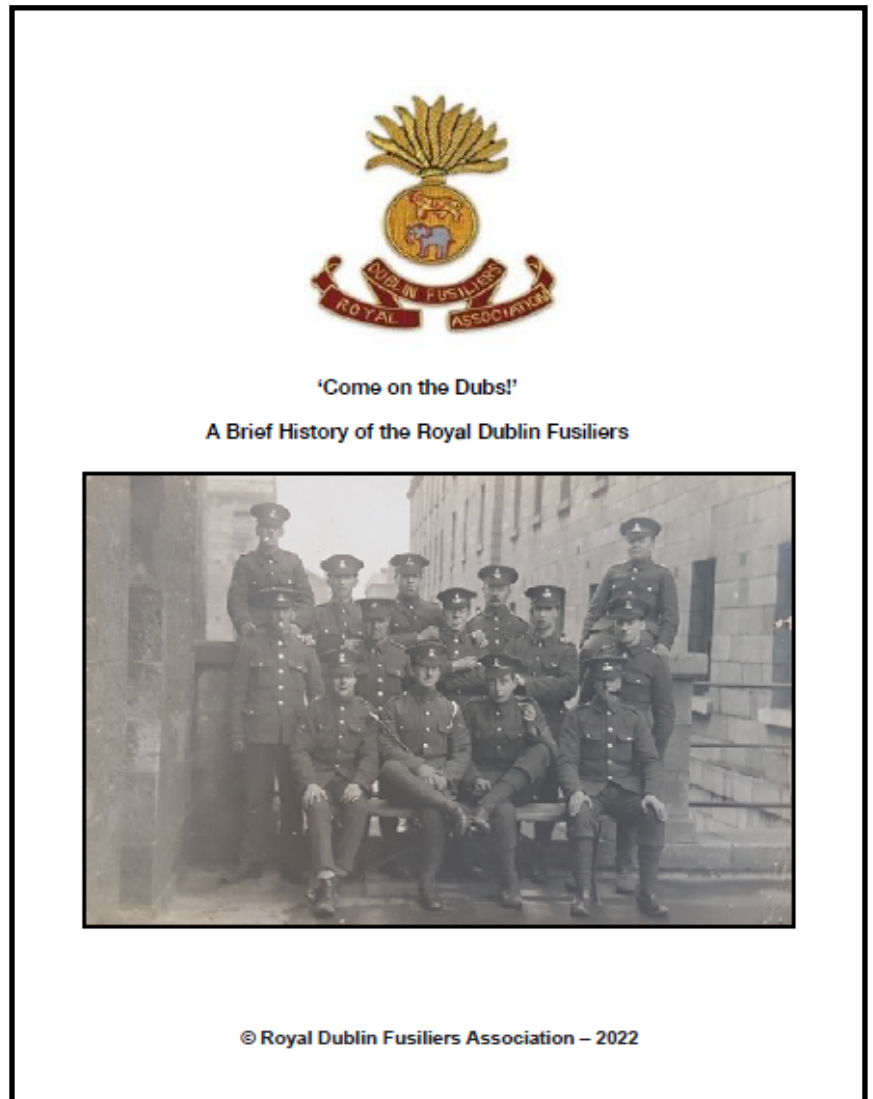
'Come on the Dubs!' – A Brief History of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers

To mark the centenary of the disbandment of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in 1922, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association has recently published a brief history of the Regiment. This includes information on the Fusiliers' participation in the major battles of World War 1 on the Western Front, Gallipoli, Salonika and Palestine. This history complements the extensive research on the Dubs which has been published in various books and in the Association's annual journal, *The Blue Cap*, over many years.

The 52 page booklet may be purchased for €10 each (plus postage). Please contact rdfa1918@gmail.com if you want one or more copies, and we will let you know the overall cost and the payment options.

Copies may also be purchased from one of the following outlets:

- Alan Hanna's Bookshop, Rathmines, Dublin 6;
- Bridge Street Books, Wicklow Town;
- Hodges Figgis, Dawson Street, Dublin 2;
- National Museum Bookshop, Collins Barracks, Dublin 7;
- Schull Books, Ballydehob, Skibbereen, Co Cork;
- Stokes Books, George's Street Arcade, Dublin 2.



Lieutenant William Frederick MacHutchison, Royal Dublin Fusiliers

By John F Sheehan

In early July this year, my attention was drawn to a house for sale close to where I live. The advertisement in the Independent Newspaper stated that it was once the home of a WW1 lost soldier. On reading the article, I saw that he was a Royal Dublin Fusilier by the name of William MacHutchison. William was born in Belfast on 16 October 1893. He had two brothers and a sister, born to a Scottish father and an Irish mother from Co Down. The family came to live in Dublin, and William was educated at St Andrew's College, Booterstown, Dublin.

On leaving school at 17, he became a bank clerk at the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, now known as HSBC. Aged 21 in 1915, he enlisted in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers like many other young men of all classes who answered the call of John Redmond, the Irish Parliamentary Party leader, in defence of small nations. Almost 5,000 Dublin Fusiliers would lose their lives in the War.

Although William enlisted as an ordinary rank soldier (no 15851), he held the ranks of Corporal, Acting Warrant Officer, Acting Quarter Master Sergeant and finally Lieutenant during his service. He served in Egypt, France, Salonika, Malta and back to France, where he sadly lost his life at Morcourt between 27 and 29 March 1918 at the height of Germany's final major offensive on the Western Front. He was last seen heading for the dressing station at Lamotte, France. In his early career in Egypt, William suffered a severe stomach infection whilst with the 7th Battalion and was hospitalised for over two months with the Red Cross. He was subsequently shot in the Struma Valley during the Salonika Campaign and was sent home to convalesce. He returned to the 8th/9th Battalion of the Dubs in France in November 1917 and was later assigned to the 1st Battalion.

William's burial place remained unknown for 99 years until the grave of an unidentified Lieutenant buried in Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery in France was brought to the attention of the Ministry of Defence. Following extensive research, it was confirmed by the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) that it was the grave of Lieutenant William F MacHutchison, Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

In April 2017, a service was held at his graveside attended by, among others, his grand-niece, her son and the Mayor of the local town. The service was conducted by the Reverend Justin Bradbury, Regimental Chaplain to The Queen's Royal Hussars. William's parents, John and Jane, ever hoping that he would turn up alive, had waited for three years before posting his death notice.

William is also remembered with his WW1 colleagues in Christ Church, Rathgar, Dublin 6.

Remembrance Monument in Leixlip, Co Kildare

Our attention was recently drawn to a Memorial erected by Leixlip Town Commissioners in 2000 to 16 local men who died as soldiers in the course of their duty. 13 of the men were killed in World War 1, of whom five were Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Another two died during World War 2, while one died on peace-keeping duties in 1960 in the Belgian Congo. See the accompanying photograph of the Memorial which is located at Main Street, Leixlip.



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Articles wanted for The Blue Cap 2022

The Association's annual journal, The Blue Cap, regularly contains interesting articles about the history of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the men who served in the Regiment. It also reports on the Association's remembrance activities during the year.

If you feel that some of your research would be of interest to the wider membership and to the public at large, please email rdfa1918@gmail.com with your proposal or draft article, and a member of the Editorial Committee will contact you to discuss it.

Seminar on Irish WW1 Ex-Service Men and Women in Post-War Ireland

To mark the centenary of the disbandment of six Irish Regiments (including the Royal Dublin Fusiliers) in 1922, the National Library of Ireland will present a day-long Seminar on Saturday, 17 September 2022, in Dublin City Library, Pearse Street, Dublin 2. The Seminar on the above subject, starting at 11 am, will have five speakers including Tom Burke MBE, our Association's President. The title of Tom's talk is: *'All his failings are a result of war service.'* *The quest of WW1 Irish ex-service personnel for help.* He will outline the plight attributed to or aggravated by the wartime experiences of thousands of WW1 Irish ex-service men and women. Admission is free, but you need to book a ticket in advance via the following link <https://www.nli.ie/en/list/current-events.aspx?article=b896bfb8-c988-49ca-ae39-90d8a98617f3>.

A worthy date for your diary in this centenary year!

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New Book on Noel Drury's WW1 Diary

Dr Timothy Bowman, Chairman, Army Records Society, recently notified the Association that the new book, edited by Richard S Grayson and entitled *The First World War Diary of Noel Drury, 6th Royal Dublin Fusiliers: Gallipoli, Salonika, the Middle East and the Western Front*, can be made available to new members of the Army Records Society at the 2022 membership rate. Membership costs £25 for UK residents and £35 for those residing outside the UK. This compares with the purchase price of £75 from the publisher, The Boydell Press. While Dr Bowman hopes to recruit long term members to the Society, he has indicated that our Association's members are welcome to join for one year only in order to receive the book. As the 2022 membership year ends on 30 September next, this offer expires on that date. If you wish to avail of the offer, please contact Dr Bowman at T.Bowman@kent.ac.uk.



Spectamur Agendo
(We are judged by our deeds)