

The Old Tough

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



Issue 15: Spring 2025

Editorial

Welcome to the Spring 2025 edition of our newsletter, *The Old Tough*.

In advance of our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in December 2024, we circulated a questionnaire seeking feedback from members about the value of the Association's publications, communications and similar work. The useful results from the questionnaire are outlined in an article in this newsletter.

The AGM also generated comment about the size of the surplus arising from its Somme Trip last September. Your Committee has since had a look at this issue and has made a number of decisions giving refunds to those who planned to participate on the Trip. The details of the decisions made are included in a following article for the information of all of our members.

This newsletter also sets out a number of possible trip options for the year. These include:

- a visit to Mouse Trap Farm for the 110th anniversary of the decimation of the Dubs' 2nd Battalion on 24 May 1915. However as indicated in the accompanying article, any member who wishes to attend will have to make their own flight, hotel and transport arrangements;
- a guided visit to King House, Boyle, Co Roscommon, in August. King House exhibits memorabilia related to the Connaught Rangers, one of the Irish regiments disbanded in 1922;
- our planned overseas trip to Gallipoli in late September, about which our Chairman Brian Moroney has already been in touch with members.

Further details on these matters and other news relating to the Association are contained in our Dubs' News article following. Seán Ryan has also contributed an article on the unexpected link between the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and a Maltese Premier League team.

Another busy year of remembrance events is in prospect as evidenced by the listing at the end of this newsletter. Please make an effort to attend one or more of these events in your area.

We hope that you find this edition of *The Old Tough* interesting. If you have any comments, suggestions or contributions to offer for future editions of this newsletter or for our annual journal, *The Blue Cap*, please send them to us at rdfa1918@gmail.com.

The Editorial Committee

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

The Surplus arising from the Association's Somme Trip in September 2024

The work of the Association is primarily financed by our nominal annual members' subscription of €20, by donations and by any surplus arising from the events organised by the Association (e.g., Annual Dinner, domestic and overseas trips).

At our 2024 Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 6 December last, comment was made about the large Somme Trip surplus of €8,790 which was disclosed in the Association's financial statement for the period ending 30 September 2024. This exceptional outcome was due to a reduced rate per person obtained from the travel company, two late cancellations (which surprisingly we were not charged for) and unrealised admission charges – some local Belgian sites cancelled guided visits at short notice. The Chairman promised at the AGM that the Committee of the Association would address the matter in the New Year.

The following decisions have since been made:

- to refund €150 to each of the 28 participants on the Somme Trip. This rebate figure specifically relates to the savings made from the reduced per person charge and the unrealised admission fees and excludes those arising from the late cancellations;
- to make no refund to one member who did not travel but who secured a satisfactory refund from his travel insurer;
- to make a partial ex gratia payment to another member who did not travel and who had no adequate insurance, and
- to adopt for the future a policy of adding to trip costings a contingency/surplus provision of 10% of expected expenditure in order to safeguard the Association's finances.

The effect of these decisions is that the Association will retain a surplus of €3,865 from the Somme Trip to support ongoing Association activities. This amounts to 12.6% of actual expenditure on the Trip and is comparable with the surplus of 13.6% arising from the Ypres Trip in 2023.

This set of decisions was made with due regard to the Association's obligations under the Charities Governance Code. In particular the decision to refund €150 to each of the 28 Somme Trip participants was made during meetings of the Association's Committee when constituted entirely of Committee members who did not participate on the Trip.

The Committee considers it important that all members of the Association should be aware of this recent decision following the discussion at the AGM.

Results of the RDFA Questionnaire on Our Communications with Members

In advance of our Annual General Meeting (AGM) last December, your Committee decided to circulate a questionnaire by email and post to members seeking feedback on the value of the Association's publications, communications and similar work. 27 replies were received, and the results are outlined in the following table.

Question Asked	Yes	No
Do you receive correspondence from the Association by post?	9	18
Do you have your own email address?	24	3
Do you use the email of a family member or friend instead?	0	27
Have you the option to print the Association's communications?	21	6
Did you receive the last edition of <i>The Blue Cap</i> (December 2023)?	25	2
Did you read one or more articles in the last <i>Blue Cap</i> ?	26	1
Did you receive the last edition of <i>The Old Tough</i> (Autumn 2024)?	27	0
Did you read one or more articles in the last <i>Old Tough</i> ?	27	0
Were the articles in <i>The Blue Cap</i> and <i>The Old Tough</i> interesting?	27	0
Are you able to read <i>The Blue Cap</i> and <i>The Old Tough</i> online?	22	5
Do you use our website, www.greatwar.ie , to read past articles?	15	12
Do you use our Facebook page to keep up-to-date with news?	12	15
Do you use our X/Twitter account to keep up-to-date with news?	3	24

In evaluating the results in January, your Committee considered the results to be very positive overall with, for instance, all 27 replies indicating that the articles in *The Old Tough* and *Blue Cap* were interesting.

The vast majority of members (89%) have access to email, and a good majority (78%) are able to print our communications. On the other hand, only 56% reported using our website, and smaller numbers used Facebook (44%) and X/Twitter (11%) to keep up-to-date with Association news. While the latter two results probably reflect our elderly membership profile, both media are important in keeping the Association in the public eye and securing new members.

With the recent further steep increase in postal charges, the cost of posting three editions of *The Old Tough*, one edition of *The Blue Cap* and our AGM papers in 2025 (ignoring any extra letters about trips, etc) will be €9.55 (for members within Ireland) and €17.90 (for members in Britain). The printing of each set of *Old Toughs* and *Blue Cap* in 2025 will probably cost an extra €10 at a minimum. Clearly in the light of these figures, your Committee must have a hard look later this year at our annual subscription which is a very modest €20 for all members, whether located within Ireland or overseas.

The Committee thanks all of our members for their informative replies to the questionnaire.

Dubs' News

The 2024 Edition of *The Blue Cap*

The latest 128 page edition of our annual journal, *The Blue Cap*, was finalised in January, issued to members and published on our website, www.greatwar.ie, under the Periodicals and Essays tab. We hope that you have enjoyed its contents and found it informative.

Kevin Cunningham RIP

A longstanding stalwart of the Association, Kevin Cunningham, died on 20 February 2025 in Beaumont Hospital surrounded by his loving family. His funeral took place in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Donaghmede, on 24 February. Our Chairman, Brian Moroney, spoke eloquently at his funeral about the Association's importance in Kevin's life, because it honoured the memory of former Royal Dublin Fusiliers like his father, Sergeant Tommy Cunningham 9500, who had served in the Regiment's 2nd, 8th and 9th Battalions during World War 1. Our Association was well represented at Kevin's funeral, and John O'Brien paraded our Standard outside the Church with the support of his family.

Even though Kevin was born in 1936, he continued to travel well into his 80s on the Association's annual trips to the Western Front. Our trip in 2018 was particularly important for him. On 27 May that year, we stopped at Malassise Farm, halfway between Epehy and Lempire in northern France. His father Tommy had been captured nearby during the German Spring Offensive on 21 March 1918. Guided by Tom Burke, we walked along muddy tracks across that battlefield of 100 years earlier.

Near Enfer Wood, Kevin spoke about his father and how, while being interrogated after his capture, he was struck across the face by a German officer for giving wrong information on the British formations. His bloodied face and uniform may have saved him from abuse later as he was marched into captivity in Germany. In his emotional speech, Kevin paid tribute to the founders of the Association as they had helped to change attitudes in Ireland. Kevin was proud of Tommy's service in the Great War which was now a badge of honour and no longer a cause of shame. Pictured is Kevin (left) in full flow that day while talking to Association members.



Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Recent Remembrance Events

John O'Brien and Seán Ryan from the Association travelled to Belgium to participate in grave rededication ceremonies at Tyne Cot and Zandvoorde British Cemeteries on 26 March. John attended in his capacity as a member of the Machine Gun Corps Association and paraded its Standard at the ceremonies which were honouring men from the Machine Gun Corps whose graves had recently been identified. As many Dubs (including John's grandfather) had served in the Machine Gun Corps and as several members of Seán's family served with the Dubs, Seán also paraded the Association's Standard at the events. See the accompanying photograph of John and Seán at Tyne Cot and the press statement of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission dated 28 March 2025 at <https://www.cwgc.org/our-work/news/three-unknown-soldiers-graves-from-the-first-world-war-rededicated-in-belgium/>.



On 3 April, a notable centenary ceremony was held in the Garda Memorial Gardens at Dublin Castle. This commemorated the enactment of the Police Forces Amalgamation Act 1925 under which over 1,000 serving officers of the Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) transferred to An Garda Síochána. John Sheehan from the Association laid a wreath on behalf of the Association of Disbanded Irish Regiments (of which our Association is a member). The names of the 32 DMP men who died in the course of their duty between 1836 and 1925 (including 11 who fought in the Great War) were read aloud during the ceremony. Pictured from left to right are John Sheehan, Jim Herlihy of the Historic and Reconciliatory Police Society, and Mark O'Brien, an Association member in DMP uniform.



Forthcoming Committee Changes

At the March Committee Meeting, Paul Appleby announced that he would be resigning from the Committee in the coming weeks to focus on a number of emerging domestic commitments. While his available time to support the Association would be more limited for the foreseeable future, he intended continuing to contribute to the Association as his time allowed. He hoped to maintain his research work and write occasional articles for *The Blue Cap*. This news was greeted with much regret by his fellow Committee members.

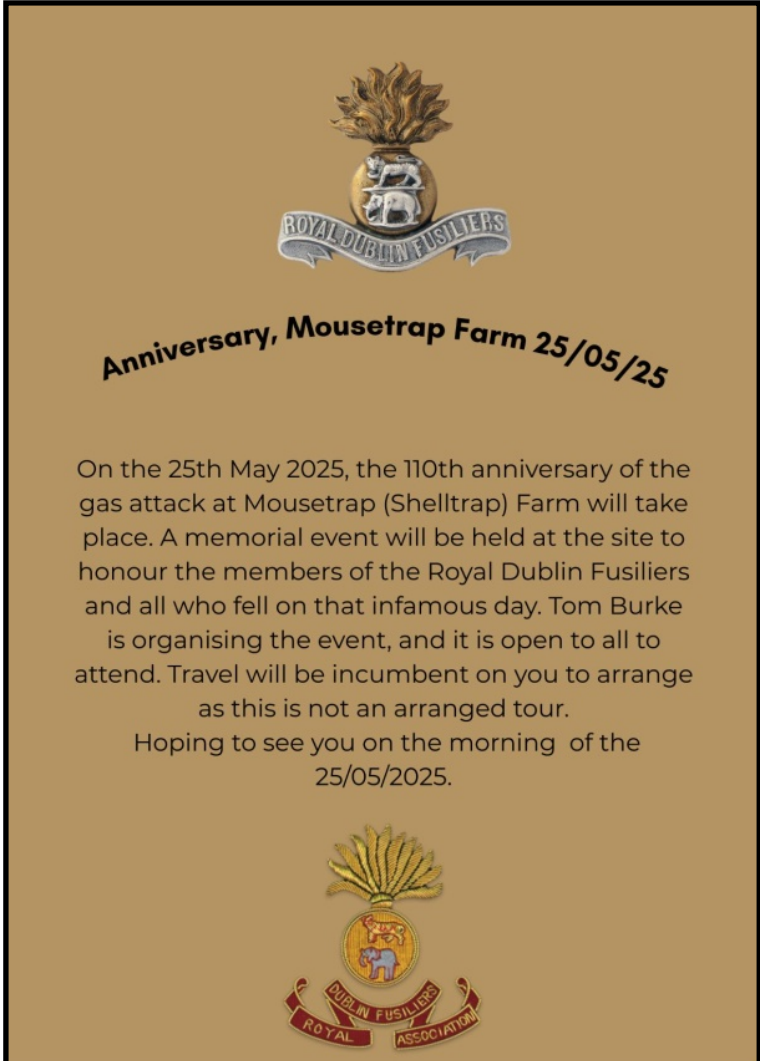
At the same Committee Meeting, Sally Keogh indicated that she would not be seeking re-election to the Committee at the next Annual General Meeting (AGM). Similar tributes were paid to Sally for her Association work over a number of years, particularly in her former role as Treasurer.

These developments mean that two vacancies on the Association's Committee will need to be filled at the AGM later this year. Any member interested in serving on the Committee is asked to contact Chairman Brian Moroney at brianmoroney55@gmail.com as soon as possible.

Remembrance Ceremony at Mouse Trap Farm, Belgium, on Sunday, 25 May at 10.30 am

Early on the morning of 24 May 1915, the German Army attacked Mouse Trap Farm, north of Ypres/Ieper, under the cover of a chlorine gas cloud. This severely disabled the defenders including the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. By about 2.30 pm that day, there was no fighting in the Dublin or the adjacent Royal Irish Regiment trenches. In the words of the 2nd Battalion's War Diary (WO95/1481) vis-à-vis the Battalion's actions: *"...everyone held on to them to the last; there was no surrender, no quarter given or accepted; they all died fighting at their posts."* When the Battalion was withdrawn that evening, its strength numbered just one officer and 20 other ranks out of the 17 officers and 651 non-commissioned officers and men who had stood to arms that morning.

Today Mouse Trap Farm is a working farm, and visitors are invariably prohibited. However with the help of Erwin Ureel, a Belgian friend of the Association, Tom Burke, our President, is organising a memorial event on site on 25 May to remember the terrible events of 110 years earlier. As indicated in the accompanying graphic, this is not an organised tour. Anyone who wishes to attend will have to organise their own flights, hotel and local transport arrangements. Tom is travelling to Charleroi with Ryanair on 23 May, returning to Dublin on 26 May, and he will be staying in Ypres/Ieper. If any member wishes to attend the ceremony under their own steam, please email Brian Moroney at brianmoroney55@gmail.com as soon as possible. Brian will pass on your contact details to Tom.



ROYAL DUBLIN FUSILIERS

Anniversary, Mousetrapped Farm 25/05/25

On the 25th May 2025, the 110th anniversary of the gas attack at Mousetrapped (Shelltrap) Farm will take place. A memorial event will be held at the site to honour the members of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and all who fell on that infamous day. Tom Burke is organising the event, and it is open to all to attend. Travel will be incumbent on you to arrange as this is not an arranged tour.

Hoping to see you on the morning of the
25/05/2025.

**DUBLIN FUSILIERS
ROYAL ASSOCIATION**

Possible Trip to King House, Boyle, Co Roscommon, in August 2025

King House in Boyle exhibits various artefacts of the Connaught Rangers, one of the Irish Regiments disbanded in 1922. The Connaught Rangers Association has invited our Association to visit King House to see the Connaught Rangers' exhibits. They have kindly offered to guide us around the House. We are hoping to visit during a Saturday in August, and our initial thinking is to travel by train from Dublin to Boyle. Further details will be notified to members when arrangements have been finalised.

Tour of the Gallipoli Peninsula, September 2025

The Association's overseas tour this year will be to Gallipoli in late September where the Dublin Fusiliers suffered horrendous casualties in 1915. It will consist of six nights in Turkey, four of which are envisaged to be on the Peninsula. We plan to stay two nights in Istanbul, one at the beginning and one at the end of the tour. The estimated cost is €1,850 per person sharing with a single supplement of about €350. This cost covers most of the tour's expenses, including air travel, airport transfers, hotel accommodation, breakfasts and evening meals, coach travel, museum fees and a professional guide.

Some 30 members have expressed interest in going, and all must have appropriate travel and medical insurance for the trip. A non-refundable deposit of €400 must be paid by 1 May to secure a booking. The balance will be due by 1 July. All payments should be made to the Association's bank account as follows:

Name:	The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association
Bank:	Bank of Ireland, Stillorgan Road, Dublin 4
IBAN:	IE57 BOFI 9013 5180 5058 76
BIC:	BOFIIIE2D

Please ensure that your surname and Gallipoli is on the bank reference for your tour payment. Please also notify Brian Moroney at brianmoroney55@gmail.com after making your payment.

If you have not already notified your interest in the tour, please do so without delay by emailing Brian at the above email address. The tour participants will be notified of the arrangements when the details have been finalised.

Floriana FC in Malta and the Royal Dublin Fusiliers**Seán Ryan**

Floriana is a Maltese town located just outside the walled city of Valletta. A major British Army Barracks was built there in the 19th century. During my visit to Malta in March with other members of the Irish United Nations Veterans Association, Nigel Holland, the Mayor of Floriana (pictured below on the right with myself), talked to us about the history of Floriana FC, the local professional football team which plays in the Maltese Premier League.

Between 1894 and 1905, the Club's colours were green and red quartered shirts (pictured), black shorts with green and red socks. In 1905, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers were stationed in Floriana, and three friendly matches were played between the Club and the Fusiliers. At the end of the final match, both teams exchanged their shirts, and shortly afterwards, the Club changed their official colours to the Fusiliers' green and white vertical striped shirts. Green and white remain the official colours of the Club to this day (pictured).

The nickname 'tal-Irish' (meaning 'the Irish' or 'of Ireland') applies to the Club and all the residents of Floriana today. The association with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers is one claim for the origin of this nickname, while others suggest that it emanated from the enthusiastic welcome that the townspeople gave to Cardinal Michael Logue, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, in 1895. Regardless of the veracity of these claims, it is remarkable that the football colours of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers are still worn in Malta 120 years later.



Additional Source: <https://www.ireland.ie/en/malta/floriana-the-maltese-town-where-irish-connections-run-deep/>.

Remembrance Events, April to August 2025

Remembrance events for the fallen of WW1 and other conflicts take place annually. The following list indicates the known remembrance and other notable events for the next five months, and the Association expects to be involved in some capacity in most of these. An asterisk (*) beside a date below signifies that the RDFA Standard is scheduled to be present for the event.

Date/Time	Event	Place
23 April, 11 am*	Brief Talk by Seán Ryan on the Dubs' Standard as part of a tour of the Cathedral	St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin
25 April, 6.30 am*	ANZAC Day Remembrance Event	Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Dublin 7
25 April, 11 am	ANZAC Day Wreath-Laying and Parade	The Cenotaph, Whitehall, London, after Service in St Paul's Cathedral
25 April, 7 pm	Service of Remembrance	Saint Ann's Church, Dawson Street, Dublin 2
27 April, 4.30 pm	ANZAC Day Commemoration	Kilkenny Peace Park
25 May, 10.30 am*	Ceremony remembering the Dubs and others who died 110 years ago	Mouse Trap Farm near Ypres/Ieper, Belgium
25 May, noon	Ceremony in memory of deceased UN veterans	Arbour Hill, Dublin 7
25 May, 8 pm*	Last Post Ceremony	Menin Gate, Ypres/Ieper, Belgium
8 June, 10.30 am*	Combined Irish Regiments Annual Parade	Whitehall, London
30 June, 8 pm*	Last Post Ceremony	Menin Gate, Ypres/Ieper, Belgium
1 July, 4.30 pm*	Somme Commemoration	Ginchy Cross, Guillemont, France
2 July, 8 pm*	Last Post Ceremony	Menin Gate, Ypres/Ieper, Belgium
12 July, noon*	Somme Commemoration	War Memorial Gardens, Islandbridge, Dublin 7
13 July, 11 am	National Day of Commemoration	Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, Dublin 7

As the year proceeds, this list of remembrance events will be updated and extended in future editions of *The Old Tough*. Members are encouraged to attend as many as possible in their local areas.

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Spectamur Agendo
(We are known by our deeds)