The Old Tough

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

Issue 17: Autumn 2026

Editorial

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Old Tough. The association has had a busy summer and we were lucky in that most of the events we attended were on lovely summer days. Among the places we visited were the Somme Museum in Newtownards, the Military Museum in the Curragh and The WW1 Museum in Collon, Co. Meath. You can read an account of these visits in this edition of the Old Tough. Members attended the Anzac commemorations in Grangegorman Cemetery and St. Ann's Church on Dawson street, the Royal British Legion Ceremony of Remembrance in the War Memorial Gardens in Islandbridge on the 11th of July and the following day we were present at the National Day of Commemoration in Collins Barracks. At the end of August 17 members of the association travelled to the Western Front to commemorate 100 years of the erection of the Celtic Crosses dedicated to the memory of the men of the 16th Irish Division. We took part in ceremonies in Wijtshate and Guillimont and thank you to Erwin Ureel, John O Brien, Sean Ryan, George Jones and John Sheehan for their input into organising these events. We met up with John O'Brien and Sean Ryan in Guillimont as they continue discovering and researching members of the RDF who died in the areas of Guillimont and Ginchy. We were able to place a cross on two of these discovered graves. Thank you to Brian Moroney for organising a wonderful trip, to Brian O'Byrne for parading our standard at both locations and at the Menin Gate. Wreaths were laid at the Menin Gate on behalf of the association, the ADIR and the Leinster Regiment. John Sheehan was invited to read the oration. Thanks to Seamus Moriarty for keeping a detailed account of our trip and an article and photographs on our Western Front trip will be given in the Blue Cap.

Paul Appleby, Thomas Murphy and Ian Chambers undertook a road trip which covered Le Cateau to Limburg in their search of family history revolving around the Dubs. An account of this will hopefully be given in a future edition of the Blue Cap. John O'Brien and Sean Ryan are continuing their research into locating graves of men who served with RDF and are buried in unmarked graves in Mount Jerome Cemetery. In this edition are dates for events from September to December. On the 8th of October at 6pm John O'Brien and Sean Ryan will give a talk on the history of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers in Pearse Street Library as part of the Dublin Festival of History, we look forward to seeing many members there. Our annual Open Day will take place in Collins Barracks on Saturday the 14 th November, all welcome. We hope you find this edition of The Old Tough interesting. As always we welcome contributions from members for our annual journal The Blue Cap.

John

T**he Editorial Committee** David Buckley, Philip Lecane, Thomas Murphy and John F Sheehan

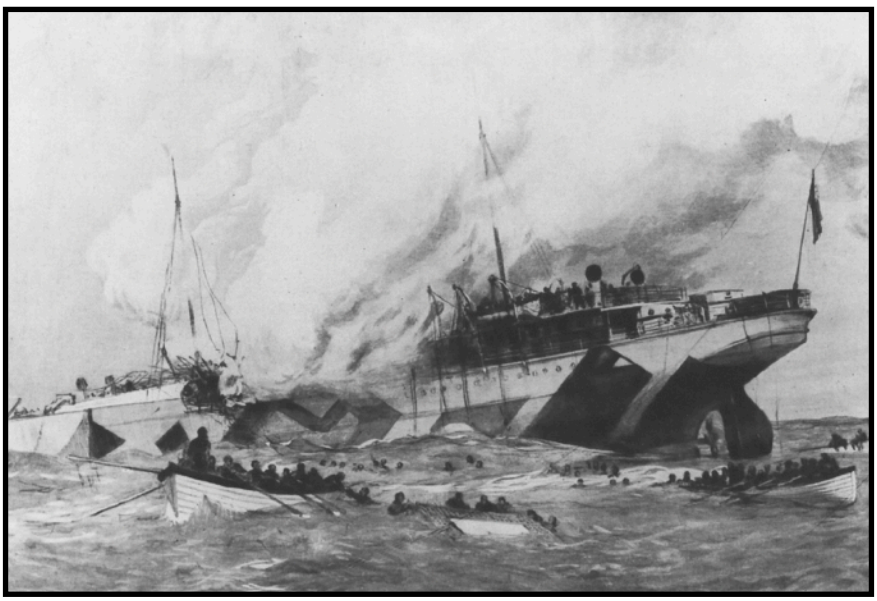
Philip Lecane

The following poem was found by Geoffrey Miller of Belfast in an album commemorating family members Lieutenant Sydney George Crawford, 3rd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers and his sister Letitia Harriet ("Harry") Hill who were lost on the *RMS Leinster* on 10 October 1918. "Harry's" body was never found. Sydney is buried on the west coast of Scotland. Both are commemorated in St Brigid's Church of Ireland, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin.

Out There

Poppies in Dublin in dull November,
Poppies from Flanders for all to wear,
Tokens to show that we still remember,
How they died for our sakes — the dead "out there."
In France and Flanders and far lands lying;
Some for their shroud have the white sea foam,
Not for them trumpets or brave flags flying;
They sleep "out there," and we are safe at home.
Green wreaths of laurel, and flowery crosses,
Song of thanksgiving and low-breathed prayer;
Grant we may rise through the pain of our losses,
God make us worthy of our dead — "out there."

Edith H. Bourchier
Foxrock, Co. Dublin,
November 10th, 1921



Dubs' News

Curragh Museum Visit 5th June 2026.
Suzanne O'Neill

Following on from our very successful trip to The Curragh Museum, on a beautiful sunny day in May 2024, we decided a return visit was in order. 17 members agreed and either drove (from as



far away as Kerry and Tipperary) or got the bus from Dublin. Lieutenant-Colonel Des Healy once again opened the museum especially for us. We did not have the beautiful sunny day this time, but along with BQ Donal McAllister and Pte Gary Rice, we were warmly welcomed. Gary gave us a very detailed tour of the rearranged museum, concentrating on anything "Dubs" related. He is a font of knowledge and managed the group with ease, answering questions while keeping an eye on the time! He is clearly as passionate as Des and Donal about this wonderful museum. At 12.30, we were honoured to share lunch with the army personnel in their mess hall, which proved to be a unique and very tasty experience. We had hoped for a tour of the WW1 trenches where the soldiers, including the Dubs, trained, but the inclement weather meant the ground was very wet. The trenches are quite a distance from the road and have a very undulating terrain, so Des came up with an excellent alternative.

We drove in convoy to Connolly, Officers, Mess, an imposing red-brick building, which now houses students. Des and Donal explained that the floor had at some stage been covered, hiding the beautiful original tiles and insignia in the hall entrance. They have undertaken the arduous task of bringing it back to life. The high-ceilinged room was impressive to say the least, with some surviving original features, large windows which flooded the room with light and a real sense of history, if only those walls could talk! We walked a short way down to another impressive red-brick building, the Plunket Officers" Mess. The original floors had been covered here too, and the ornate original door

had been taken down; luckily, Des knew where it was and was determined to reinstate it. We entered another beautiful high-ceilinged room, which Des explained was the meeting room for "The Curragh Incident", which occurred in March 1914. He went on to explain the history and its implications for Irish independence, which came eight years later. This was followed by a chance to view the impressive array of tanks on display outside the museum, with Donal answering questions; again, his enthusiasm shone through. We were then given another opportunity to view the very famous "Sliabh na mBan" armoured Rolls-Royce car. As a final treat, Des and Donal gave all tank and gun enthusiasts a sneak peek at what they have lined up for repair and display. It was another memorable RDFA day out. I want to sincerely thank Des, Donal and Gary for all their hard work. It was a very interesting day out; we were warmly welcomed and treated to view a few things the public doesn't see. Thanks also to all the members who attended and to Brian Moroney, who once again kept us all together. I look forward to seeing you all at the next "Dubs" day out.



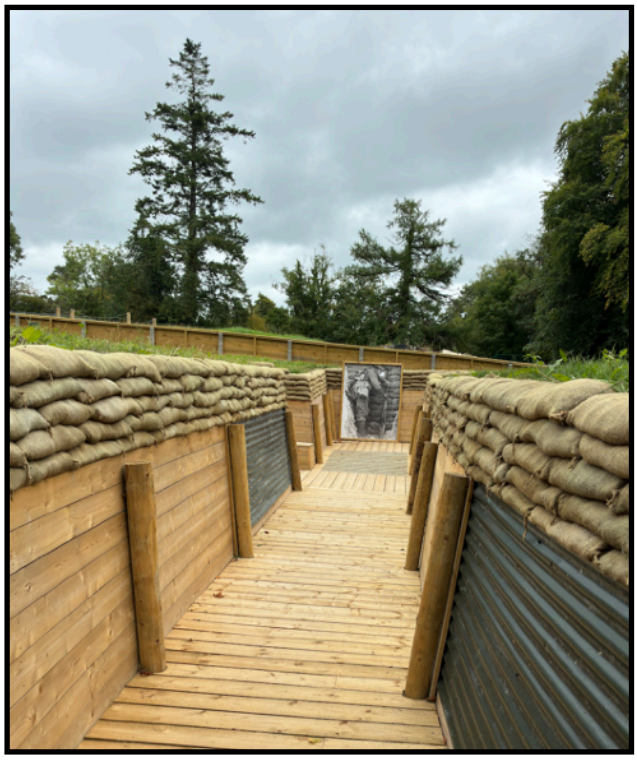




Dubs' News

The RDFA trip to Cavan County Museum in Ballyjamesduff.
Sally Keogh

Twelve members of the Association joined this trip on Saturday 23rd May. We were met by our guide Catherine McGuinness, the Research and Education Officer of County Cavan Museum who was aware of our special WW1 interests and would take us on a tour of the outdoor trenches. This is the largest replica WWI trench in either the UK or Ireland. 'The immersive outdoor installation - featuring over 350 metres of frontline, communication, and support trenches - was designed according to the specification used by the Royal Irish Fusiliers at the Battle of the



Somme in 1916'. Thousands of visitors from across the world come for this historic experience, and recent work which involved a complete rebuild, has ensured its future for generations to come. The site is also accessible for mobility aid users. A stunning façade of the GPO with its history of 1916 stands full height in the background. These two major events historically and emotionally linked, set alongside the Peace garden. Of special importance to the Museum is their educational programme which is very popular with schools. Of the 49,000 Irish soldiers killed in WW1, 752 were from the Cavan. They are remembered in the Roll of Honour. A local community exhibition of 752 individually created colourful hearts, strung across a ceilin in the sunlight from a window, was a beautiful, thought provoking, memorial in this 110 th anniversary of the 1 st Battle of the Somme. Inside the WW1 Gallery displays personal artifacts, medals, and letters from local figures like Major General Sir Oliver Nugent, Charles Moore, and William O'Reilly. There are a variety of exhibitions over several floors including a history of Cavan GAA, folk life, uniforms, the boat room with a Lough Errill long boat, and of course, the Percy French room where you can join in a song. Overall, a most interesting and enjoyable trip together. Our thanks to Catherine McGuinness, the friendly staff and, last but not least, thanks for the lovely table setting on our arrival, with very welcome teas, coffees and scones. This very brief account cannot do justice to a fabulous place to visit.

Footnote. The Cavan County Museum is in a former house (Farrenconnell) of Maj. Gen.Nugent, commander of the 36th Ulster Division in WW1, in particular at the Battle of the Somme, and was said to be his refuge from the horrors of war. To mark the centenary of his death, **Cavan County Museum hosted the "Nugent 100 - Cavan and the Great War" conference** on July 4, 2026, **featuring expert speakers Dr. Nick Perry, Ronan McGreevy, and Dr. Fionnuala Walsh.**

Combined Irish Regiments Parade
Cenotaph, London
John F Sheehan

On Sunday the 14th June a number of our members attended and took part in the annual parade at Whitehall, London which begins on King Charles Street and proceeds to the Cenotaph. Our chairman, Brian Moroney laid a wreath on behalf of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association, our member Mark O'Brien laid a wreath for the DMP and I laid wreaths for the RIC and ADIR.We were well represented, also included were Sean and Ann Ryan, Therese Moroney and Miriam Sheehan, our London member Sean Chambers carried the RDF standard.





Standards were paraded to music from the band of the Pipes and Drums. This annual event began in 1923 organised by veterans to honour the famous Irish Regiments which were disbanded on June 12th 1922 following the establishment of the Irish Free State. Those regiments were the Connaught Rangers, Royal Munster Fusiliers, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, Leinster Regiment, Royal Irish Rifles and South Irish Horse, all of which were disbanded, the SIH in the July. The ceremonial colours were placed in Windsor Castle at the request of King George V. The parade continues annually in order to preserve their names and honour the glorious deeds of the Irish Regiments throughout history. We were fortunate to meet a Chelsea Pensioner, John Kavanagh whose Grandfather P. J. O'Connor MC. was in the RDF and we asked him to do a search on his family connection to the Dubs which he agreed to do. On the previous day some of our members attended the Trooping of the Colour which was facilitated by our good friend and member Eddie Rooney.

The history of the flags and standards including those of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers

Thomas Murphy

The earliest known flag/standard was the Shahdad Standard. Dated 2400 BCE, it was discovered in the Shahdad Kerman province, Iran, in 1969. (Figure 1) Early civilisations in Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt used rigid pole-mounted emblems, statues, or metal carvings called vexilloids to identify tribes and military units (Figure 3). The oldest continuously used national flag is the Danish flag, in use since 1625. (Figure 2).



Figure 1 Shahdad Standard



FIGURE 2 THE DANISH NATIONAL FLAG

During the medieval period flags were used to signal soldiers to assemble and also to signal information to them about the battle situation. The use of silk allowed flags to be flown on a flag pole. It was in this period that symbols were introduced for various Families and Groups, with Heraldic rules to describe family crests. Flags were also used on ships for identification and communication purposes. At this time, flags were introduced to represent different countries. Some of the earliest examples of military flags were in China in the 11th century BCE, in ancient Greece and Persia. All are all known to have used cloth banners to designate different parts of their armies. In ancient times, it was the Romans who made the most widespread use of military flags. From around 100 BCE, banners, also known as vexillum, were used to represent different army units. The vexillum was composed of a piece of cloth fastened to a cross bar at the top of a spear, sometimes with a fringe around the outside. The only surviving Roman vexillum is dated to the first half of the 3rd century. In the medieval period flags as we know them began to develop. Flags made of cloth attached to an upright pole on one side seem to have first been used in the middle-east. Later introduced to the Western world, they were not widely used until the 9th-century.

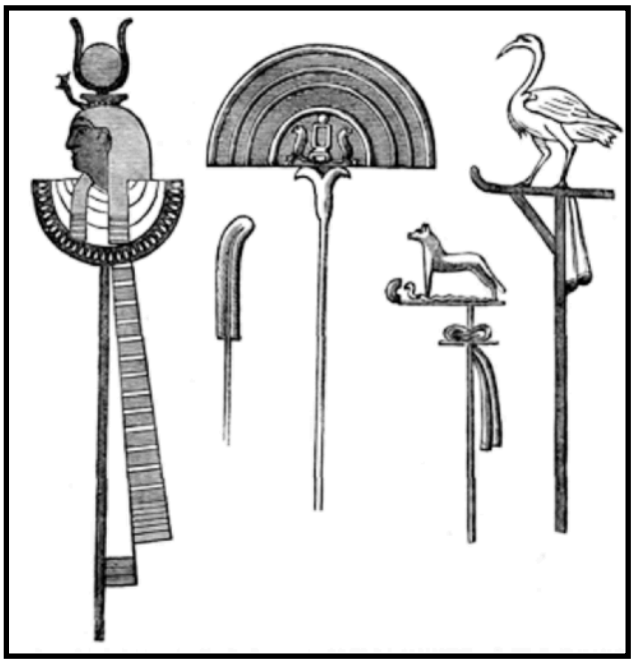


FIG 3 VEXILLOIDS



FIGURE 4 VIKING RAVEN FLAG

Flags are often mentioned in the early history of societies such as the Vikings.

An example of the 9th-century vertical flying flag is the raven banner that was used widely by the Vikings. (Figure 4). The first recorded evidence of a flag in Europe appears on the Bayeux Tapestry. (Figure 5).

In the 12th century, armies were led by Knights who identified their soldiers by the use of heraldry. Developed in the second quarter of the 12th century ,heraldry primarily deals with identification by means of devices placed on shields. with the symbols becoming the means by which knights and later other upper-class individuals became identified. After some time, these heraldic badges came to be emblazoned on flags. In the beginning the banners were a development of the gonfalon, which consisted of a flag tied to a lance, but soon became diverse displays of important people's arms. Traditionally there



FIGURE 5 NORMAN FLAG ON THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY



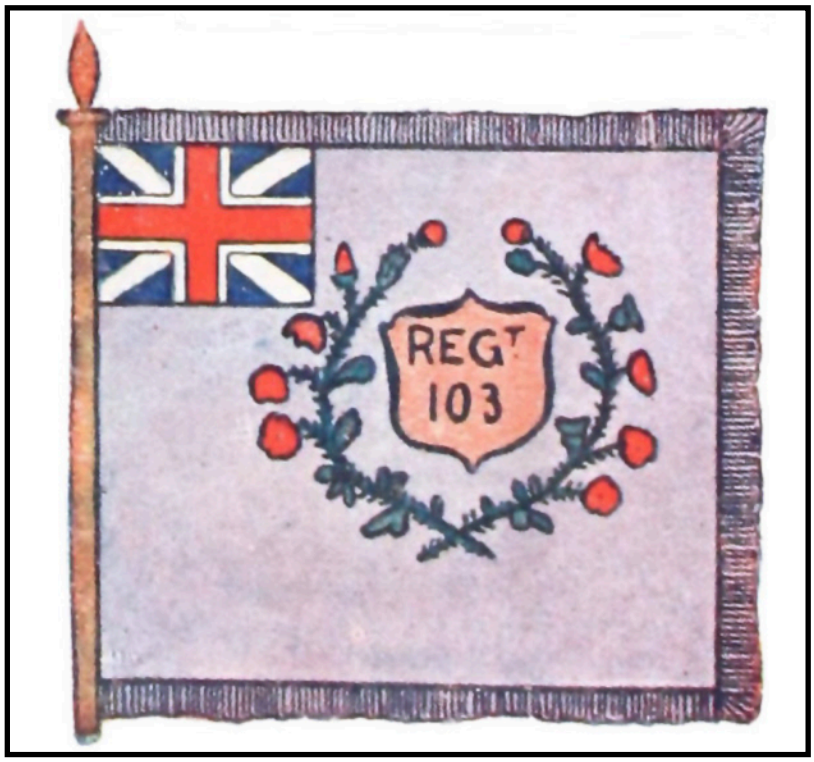
FIGURE 6 GONFALON (BANNORS)



FIGURE 7 12TH CENTURY KNIGHT

are several types such as pennons, banners of arms or the previously mentioned heraldic standards. The pennon was a small, elongated flag with either a pointed or swallow-tailed end. It would have been marked with the badge or armorial emblem of the owner and displayed upon their lance as a personal ensign. A banner of arms is square or oblong. Larger than the pennon, it bore the entire coat of arms of the owner, as upon a shield, but in a square or rectangular shape. (Figure 7). The design of flags and standards developed over centuries and were under the local control of Heraldic Authorities for each country. In 1881, the Childers Reforms created new regiments in the British Army. The regiments were created by the pairing of existing regiments, their renaming and each being given a depot and a recruiting area. The 102nd Regiment of Foot (Royal Madras Fusiliers) was paired with the 103rd Regiment of Foot (Royal Bombay Fusiliers), which were originally regiments of the East India

Company army until they were taken over by the British Army. They were renamed the 1st and 2nd Battalions Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The new regiment's depot was in Naas, Co. Kildare and its recruiting area was comprised of counties Dublin, Wicklow, Kildare and Carlow. The



regimental motto was Spectamur Agendo (We are known by our deeds). Each battalion had a nickname -The 1st Battalion were The Blue Caps and the 2nd Battalion were The Old Toughs. The Royal Dublin Fusilier badge/emblem was a tiger (for the 1st Battalion) and an elephant (for the 2nd Battalion) surmounted by an exploding grenade, the symbol of a Fusilier battalion. Each battalion had its own standard, which carried its battle honours. The Royal Dublin Fusiliers gained 48 battle honours and 5 theatre honours throughout their history. The honours reflect service inherited from their East India Company antecedent regiments, campaigns in South Africa, and major engagements during the First World War. The following is a list of battle honours carried on the Royal Dublin Fusilier standards.



Early and Indian Campaigns



- Plassey, Buxar
- Arcot, Condore, Wandiwash, Pondicherry
- Guzerat, Sholinghur, Nundy Droog
- Amboyna, Ternate, Banda
- Seringapatam, Kirkee, Maheidpore
- Beni Boo Ali, Ava, Aden
- Mooltan, Goojerat, Punjaub, Pegu, Lucknow

South African War

- Relief of Ladysmith
- South Africa, 1899–1902

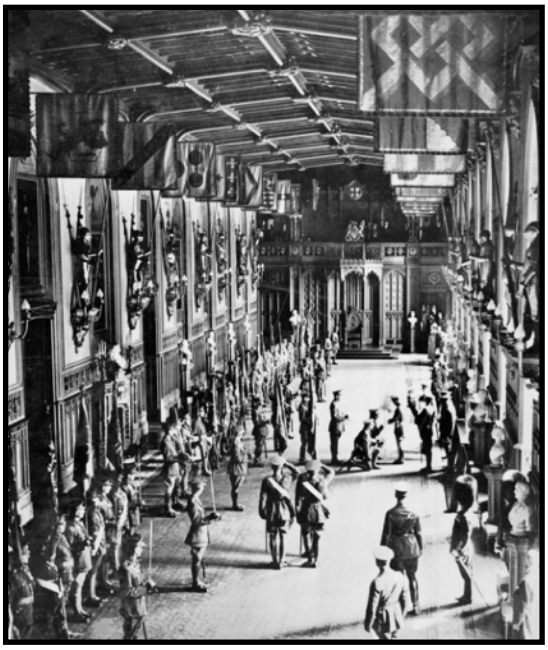
First World War (Western Front, Gallipoli, and Middle East)

- Retreat from Mons, Marne 1914, Aisne 1914
- Le Cateau, Armentières 1914
- Ypres 1915, 1917, 1918
- St. Julien, Frezenberg, Bellewaarde
- Somme 1916, 1918, Albert 1916
- Guillemont, Ginchy, Le Transloy, Ancre 1916
- Arras 1917, Scarpe 1917, Arleux
- Messines 1917, Langemarck 1917, Polygon Wood
- Cambrai 1917, 1918
- St. Quentin, Bapaume 1918, Rosières, Avre
- Hindenburg Line, St. Quentin Canal, Beaurevoir
- Courtrai, Selle, Sambre, France and Flanders 1914–18
- Gallipoli 1915–16 (including Helles, Krithia, Suvla, Sari Bair)
- Macedonia 1915–17 (Kosturino, Struma)
- Palestine 1917–18 (Gaza, Jerusalem, Tell 'Asur)



In 1922, on the formation of the Irish State, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers were disbanded. Also disbanded were the Royal Irish Regiment, the Connaught Rangers, the Royal Munster Fusiliers, The Prince of Wales Leinster regiment (Royal Canadians) and the South Irish Horse. The standards and emblems of the regiments were laid up in Windsor Castle





The disbanded flags and standard laid up in Windsor Castle

The Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association has its standard which is paraded at various events. It is shown below, carried by the association's standard bearers John O'Brien and Sean Ryan.



SEAN RYAN



JOHN O' BRIEN

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Crown and company Volume 1 Maj. A. E. Mainwaring.

Crown and Company volume 2 H.C. Wylly

Macgeorge, Andrew (1881). *Flags; some account of their history and uses*. Blackie & Son.

Websites

- History of flags (Wikipedia)
- greatwar.ie

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Up-coming events:-

8th October	Festival of History talk by John O'Brien and Sean Ryan "A brief history of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, Pearse Street Library, at 6.00 pm
14th November	RDFA open day Collins Barracks Museum Dublin 11.00 to 4.00
5th December	RDFA Christmas Lunch (date to be confirmed)

Merchandise Price List

The attractive merchandise which is available to Association members principally comprises a tie, a scarf, a blazer badge and a metal pin as shown in the following photograph.



After a recent review, your Committee has agreed a new merchandise price list as follows:

- Member's bundle – option A (tie or scarf, blazer badge and metal pin) €34
- Member's bundle – option B (tie and scarf, blazer badge and metal pin) €44
- Tie €24
- Blazer badge €16
- Metal pin €10

The above prices include standard postage. If registered post is required, add €7 to the listed price. Destinations outside the island of Ireland may incur an additional postal charge.

All enquiries for purchase of RDFA merchandise should be addressed to the Membership Secretary by email: rdfa1918+Membershipsecretary@gmail.com or by post to Suzanne O'Neill, RDFA Membership Secretary, c/o The Old Pound, Ballybrittas, Co Laois R32 E1C5.

Please clearly state the destination address in your enquiry. Payment for merchandise must be received by the RDFA via cash, cheque or bank transfer before merchandise is dispatched. For electronic bank transfers, the RDFA account details are as follows:

IBAN: IE57 BOFI 9013 5180 5058 76
BIC: BOFIIE2D



A tribute to the late John Moore

Brian Moroney, Chairperson RDFA

John Moore, who passed sadly passed away on the 9 th August was one of our own old contemptible. One of those who joined our association in the very early days of our journey. Funnily enough if John heard me using this phrase he would chuckle and say' Old Codgers more like. 'For John was a man who treated the ups and downs of life with the same urbane and equitable charm of a man who is at perfect peace with the world. John Brinlsley Moore to give him his full name always appeared to me to be representative of a bygone age, a man of the Edwardian period, calm, kind, charitable and someone you could rely on in any situation. John's commitment to the association was not founded in any way to a direct relationship with a past member of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Rather a deep feeling that many men who served in the British Army, Navy or Air Force in WW1 and who were Irish had somehow been left behind by history. He not only joined our Association but threw himself into supporting our events, trips and indeed Annual Dinners. In his usual generous way John never asked for a ticket for the dinner, instead booking an entire table!! As ever he would be accompanied by his great friend and confidant Helen. He also worked as a volunteer aiding Seaman at the Stella Maris Hostel, helped raise funds for the British Legion and became involved in the Dun Laoghaire Maritime Museum. He helped foster relations between the people of Dun Laoghaire and Holyhead and their shared maritime history. But I knew him best as one of our members. I can see him now as he stood waiting to board our coach on any of our trips. Happily waiting to be last on board as he smoked a quick cigarette before our next stop! Eyes faintly creased as the smoke drifted up past his face, chuckling in his throaty way at something someone had just said and telling me we were playing an absolute blinder. His knowledge on the Great War was never overtly displayed but knowledge he certainly had. On one occasion, as we stopped to have a talk at the graveside of Francis Ledwidge, a famous Irish poet, in Artillery Wood Cemetery at Boezinge, John stopped us as we made our way back to the coach. Standing at another Headstone in the cemetery he pointed out that another famous poet lay mere yards from Ledwidge. The Welch Poet, Hedd Wyn, who was actually killed on the same day as Ledwidge, an awful coincidence. John delivered a talk on that Welsh poet that was spontaneous and entertaining at the same time and displayed his great grip of history and of those who held a place of interest!! As they say we shall not see his like again and we will all be the worse for that fact. May he rest in eternal peace with all those he loved who have gone before him.

Spectamur Agendo

SCAN ME