

The
'Maynooth
Fifteen'
Remembered



By
James Durney and Henry Flynn

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Dedication

To the 'Maynooth Fifteen' and their families

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The Maynooth 1916 Centenary Committee



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Foreword

The century following Ireland's 1916 Rising has given cause to reflect on the events that preceded the conflict, the hostilities and on the decisions and changes that followed. Much of the public discourse has examined the international context, issues for Irish society and the varied lives of the leading participants. For posterity, it is fitting that the records of the fifteen Irish Volunteers from Maynooth involved in the Dublin fighting are compiled as a legacy of the centennial generation. This publication draws together the accounts of their lives and reveals some of the thoughts and ideals that motivated them.

On behalf of the Kildare Decade of Commemorations Committee, I would like to thank James Durney, Kildare's Historian in Residence, Henry Flynn for sourcing the photographs and Ken Maddock and the Maynooth 1916 Centenary Committee for their work on this valuable historical record.

*Councillor Pádraig McEvoy
Chairperson
Kildare Decade of Commemorations Committee*

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The Maynooth 1916 Centenary Committee

Ken Maddock

The Maynooth 1916 Centenary Committee was set up in September 2013 to commemorate the contribution of the fifteen men from Maynooth to the 1916 Rising. The committee successfully organised parades on the 98th and 99th anniversaries of the Rising which were very well received by the local community and media. For the centenary year a variety of events were organised and run over the entire year.

- On 1 January 2016 a specially commissioned flag was raised on Courthouse Square which would fly for the full year.
- On Proclamation Day, 15 March 2016, the Committee acted as ‘guard of honor’ at all the local primary schools flag raising events.
- The Committee lead the St. Patrick’s Day parades in Maynooth, Leixlip and Celbridge.
- On Easter Monday 2016 a commemorative wreath laying ceremony was held on Courthouse Square attended by approximately 2,500 people.
- Following the ceremony a three-hour street festival and battle re-enactment entertained the crowds.

- On the 23 April to mark the 100th anniversary of the Maynooth men's march to the G.P.O., in Dublin, the Committee organised a walk along the canal to the Garden of Remembrance, in Parnell Square, Dublin. In excess of 100 people participated in the walk.
- For Heritage Week 2016 two events were organised: a family walk to Leixlip along the canal; and a walking tour of Maynooth, followed by a pop-up museum in the Scouts' Den, Maynooth.
- A closing ceremony was planned for 31 December 2016, with a flag down ceremony on Courthouse Square.

In order to fund our events generous grants were received from Kildare County Council's Decade of Commemorations Committee. In addition, the local business community and Maynooth University gave generous contributions. Fund raising through a table quiz, bag packing, auctions and raffles were organised and well supported by the local community.

Our events could not have happened without the support and help of the Irish Military Vehicle Group, An Garda Síochána, Kildare County Council, Maynooth Tidy Town Committee, Mar Byrne Dance Troupe, O.N.E. and St. Mary's Brass and Reed Band.

The committee comprised: Eoin McCormack, Chairman; Paul Clarke, Treasurer; Ken Maddock, PRO; committee members: Johnny Dowling, Michael Dempsey, Hilda Dunne and Declan Sheridan.

Maynooth Company, Irish Volunteers, and the Easter Rising

James Durney

Maynooth Company, Irish Volunteers, were notified on 22 April 1916 (Easter Saturday) to mobilise the next day at the yard of Domhnall Ua Buachalla's hardware and provisions premises situated on the village's main street. The objective of the Maynooth Company was to march to Bodinstown Churchyard, near Sallins, Co. Kildare, and link up with other local Irish Volunteer units. Their job was to prevent reinforcements from the Curragh Camp getting to Dublin by destroying rail lines and telephone and telegraph communications. On Sunday morning the company mobilised at near full strength – twenty-one men. Two Volunteers failed to turn up. According to Pat Colgan they were informed of the Executive Council's decision to stage a rebellion against British rule and each man was asked if he was prepared to take part. Not long after mobilising a despatch arrived which cancelled the mobilisation order. Prior to disbandment all the men were notified by their Officer Commanding (OC), Domhnall Ua Buachalla, not to leave the village on that day or the following day, Easter Monday. Colgan recalled:

... on Easter Saturday all Volunteers were notified to get Confession on Easter Saturday night and (to be less conspicuous) to travel to outlying districts for Communion on Sunday morning. The hour of mobilisation was 10.15 Sunday

morning, the centre *Ua Buachalla's* store... I wanted to give the honour of announcing the starting of the Rebellion to *Ua Buachalla*. His example and his patriotism had kept us together. He always was a self-effacing man. He insisted that I would make the announcement. I cannot recall what I said, but it was something about going out in rebellion. I emphasised the seriousness of what we were about to do and I remember well saying that if any member wished to withdraw no hard feelings would be held. No Volunteer withdrew. We were about to issue the guns, ammunition and pikes when a messenger on a motor cycle arrived with a message from Eoin MacNeill, addressed to *Ua Buachalla*, cancelling any movement of Volunteers. We hung around discussing the matter. Before we dispersed a further message to *Ua Buachalla* from P. H. Pearse ordered us not to leave our district but to await further orders. We never received further orders.

On Easter Monday at 3 p.m. Father Malachi Eaton, the Junior Dean of Maynooth College, told me he had heard the Volunteers were in arms in Dublin. I rushed to *Ua Buachalla's* shop to find the shutters on the windows, the shop closed and Domhnall busily engaged filling school bags with buckshot, and the guns and pikes withdrawn from their hiding place ready for issue. With the exception of Tyrell, the Maguire brothers, the O'Neill brothers and the Ledwith brothers, the remainder of us lived in the village and word was sent to all except Patrick Kirwan.

The following answered the call: Domhnall *Ua Buachalla*, Liam Ó Raogain, Seán Graves, Patrick Kearney, John Kenny, Joseph Ledwith, Matthew Maguire, John Maguire, Timothy Tyrell, Thomas Mangán, Patrick Colgan. I had decided not to mobilise Patrick Kirwan, he was a married man with five small children; without his small earnings they had nothing to live on. All the party had not reported before I was called to the store door where I found Kirwan in a towering rage due to my omission to call him. I tried to reason with him about his

helpless family, all to no avail, he had lived to fight for Ireland, etc. I admitted him, he proved himself during the week in Dublin to be a courageous fellow.

While we were awaiting the Volunteers to mobilise a message was received from Eamon O'Kelly (a native of Maynooth) and Organiser for the Irish Volunteers, that he and Captain Byrne were on their way to join us. O'Byrne, O'Kelly and Tom Harris of Prosperous arrived to us at 6 p.m. We had gained a new Volunteer during mobilisation, Oliver Ryan, a Dublin man employed on the indoor staff, Maynooth College. He told me he wanted to take part in the fight with us. I told him we had no gun to give him; from under his overcoat he produced a .22 rifle and ammunition; we took him on. What a grand fellow he proved to be, until he died in the South Dublin Union, and unknown, some ten years back.

On Easter Monday afternoon Domhnall Ua Buachalla had learned from a bread van driver that fighting was taking place in Dublin between the Volunteers and the British military. He cycled to Dublin to get instructions and find out what the Maynooth Volunteers were to do. Ua Buachalla said:

On approaching the Phoenix Park I heard firing, I think it was from the Magazine Fort in the Park. I proceeded down the northern quays. At the Mendicity Institute there were British soldiers taking cover under the Liffey wall on the north side of the river and avoiding the firing which was coming from the Institute. They did not stop me and I passed through. Further down the quays near the Four Courts, the Volunteers had a barricade across the street. I was halted here. I told the officer who was in command there who I was and where and for what I was going. He let me pass through.

I proceeded to No. 2 Dawson St. which I knew to be the Headquarters of the Volunteers, but found the place locked up. I

started back for home and travelled via the N. C. [North Circular] Road. The British had a barricade on the street near Phibsboro Church. It was situated between Doyle's corner and the Church. I was allowed through here again without any interference. I cycled through the Park and back to Maynooth.

On reaching Maynooth I found Tom Byrne of Boer War fame, and Tom Harris there. Byrne had come on from Prosperous. I do not know if he was sent down by Volunteer Hqrs. to take charge in Kildare. The Maynooth Volunteers had mobilised in the yard of my house. There were about fourteen men present all told. They had the sporting guns and some rations.

Domhnall Ua Buachalla was not a young man; he was fifty years of age, but he took the decision to leave his wife, Sinéad, and their seven children and walk into the unknown. The parting was hard, but inevitable given that Sinéad was aware that her husband was deeply involved in the revolutionary movement and their premises was a storing place for arms and ammunition. The Maynooth Volunteers were armed with one .45 revolver, with ten rounds of ammunition, fifteen .22 revolvers with thirty rounds of ammunition for each, one Lee Enfield rifle, and fifty rounds of ammunition and twenty American single-barrel shotguns with approximately fifty rounds of home-made buckshot for each weapon. They were also issued with home-made grenades. The grenades weighted over 2 lbs., and only Matty Maguire was capable of throwing one any distance. As the men were about to march away Patrick Weafer offered to join them. He was a prominent member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (A.O.H.) and Captain of the Maynooth National Volunteers. Pat Colgan remembered:

Having a spare gun, we took him along. Patrick Kearney asked to be released from his promise to take part. He was excused. John and Edward Kenny asked permission to go home to say farewell to their mother; they failed to return. Thomas Magee and Patrick Ledwith were absent at Fairyhouse races; they failed

to report. As far as I can remember, the O'Neill brothers, having failed to mobilise on Sunday morning, were not mobilised on Easter Monday. So our total strength was 15. Whilst waiting for Captain Byrne to arrive, I sent John Maguire to Dunboyne to mobilise the Dunboyne Company. He spoke with Sean Boylan and arranged to have the Dunboyne men meet us at Leixlip Railway Station at 8 p.m. The Dunboyne men, who numbered about thirty, left to keep the appointment before Maguire left Dunboyne. It appears they went about a mile on the journey and then returned home.

Before we left Buckley's [Ua Buachalla] store all of us knew we were going to attempt to reach Dublin. To mislead the R.I.C., we marched down Maynooth [Main] street in the direction opposite Dublin and towards Maynooth College. The people left their houses to see us pass. We had to use a bit of persuasion on a would-be helper, James Murphy, who, having a few drinks over the normal, insisted he was coming with us. Two members of the R.I.C., Constables Peter Cleary (one of the Belfast R.I.C. strikers) and Michael Nolan, formed up behind us but desisted when Eamon O'Kelly presented his revolver and threatened to fire.

We entered Maynooth College by the main gate. I suggested we would look up John Kenny, who was employed as personal servant with the College President. We found him in his quarters; he said the President would not let him come with us. The President, Very Revd. Monsignor Hogan, came on the scene and appealed to us to return home. He told us we were poor fools who were going to be slaughtered. I was cheeky enough to contradict him. He told me I was an impertinent fellow. He then appealed to Ua Buachalla to go home; failing, he said 'If you kneel down I'll give you my blessing.' He gave it.

We left Maynooth College by the back gate leading to the canal banks. We proceeded along the canal banks as far as Pike

Bridge, about a mile on the Dublin side of Maynooth. We then proceeded along the railway line.

Leaving the College by the Gashouse gate, at 7.15 p.m., the unit went by the railway lines to Blakestown, outside Leixlip. There they waited for a contingent from Dunboyne to join the march to Dublin. After a half-hour's wait, and no sign of the Dunboyne men, the Maynooth unit moved on, walking to Ashtown by the railway line. Pat Colgan and Tom Mangan were appointed as scouts and proceeded in front of the main party to carry out reconnaissance at each railway bridge and report back to Tom Byrne. They reached Lucan as it grew dark. By the time they reached Clonsilla it was quite dark and a heavy drizzle of rain was falling. They passed Blanchardstown, left the road and took to the canal banks. Here they had their first fall-out – a ten minute rest and smoke break – and proceeded along the canal; cutting across the fields into Finglas Golf Links. Dawn broke as they reached the banks of the Tolka River at a narrow point running along Glasnevin Cemetery. The men waded across the river up to their waists in water. They went into the cemetery, Tom Harris said:

... about two or three in the morning. Hiding our guns in the tower, we lay down under some trees and slept – at least I know what I did – for now and then I was awakened by the heavy rifle fire going on in the city.

When the cemetery gates opened later in the morning, Tom Byrne went out to reconnoitre. He returned with a report that the way to the G.P.O. was clear and thereupon we recovered our rifles from the tower and marched out.

The men headed into the city, meeting two armed Volunteers on picket duty at Cross Guns Bridge, and proceeded in formation, down Berkeley Road, into Blessington Street. Pat Colgan recalled:

Many of the residents were on the streets or in their windows.

Some of them advised us to go home or we would be slaughtered, others cheered us on. When we reached the Parnell Monument a terrific rifle fire barrage greeted us. We thought we were being attacked and we all raced for the shelter of the monument. It turned out to be a volley of rifle shots from the occupants of the G.P.O. to welcome us. As we neared the G.P.O. the garrison cheered us on. We entered the G.P.O. by the main entrance. Comdt. General Connolly was at the door. As we entered he shook each of us by the hand and smiled his welcome to us. Connolly was one of my heroes. I had never before met him. I felt all excited that he would show such an interest in us.

Tom Harris said James Connolly remarked that it 'didn't matter a damn if we were wiped out now as we had justified ourselves'. Pat Colgan remembered:

We were marched in to the main hall of the building where we were greeted by Kildare men who were members of the garrison: Frank Burke, Mícaíl Cowley, Tom Brien, Mick Croke, Paddy Byrne and others. We were issued with mugs of tea and buns by Brian O'Higgins. When we had finished eating Comdt. General Pearse spoke to us. His words have remained with me since. I think of them with great pride. He told us how glad he was to have us with them in the fight; that our action in marching from Kildare, even if we did no more in the Rebellion, would gain us a place in history. He then outlined the position to us. He did not expect any action at the G.P.O. for days. The Citizen Army at St. Stephen's Green was hard pressed and had not sufficient men. A group of Volunteers were cut off at the Dublin City Hall and 'Evening Mail' Office. He gave us the privilege of selecting our own post. He added, "The opinion is a rescue party at the City Hall would have little chance of surviving." As one, we all shouted "the City Hall." We were marched out to the G.P.O. yard to the magazine. Here we had further cause for pride in learning

the Volunteer in charge was Jim O'Neill, a native of Leixlip. I handed over the powder I had brought from Maynooth. O'Neill made me feel I had saved the Rebellion by my contribution. With the knowledge that my name would live in history and that I had made a great contribution with the 8 lbs. of powder to the success of the Rebellion, I felt elated.

Apart from the Maynooth Volunteers there were at least seven people from Co. Kildare in the G.P.O. garrison: Frank and Eva Burke (Carbury), Jim O'Neill (Leixlip), Michael Cowley (Kilcock), Tom Brien (Timahoe) and Paddy Byrne (address unconfirmed). Mick Croke, mentioned by Pat Colgan as being a Kildareman, was from Dublin. Shortly after their arrival the Kildare Volunteers had a cup of tea and a bun. Pádraig Pearse had met Domhnall Ua Buachalla at the door and was delighted to see his old friend. Tom Harris said:

We had not much time to rest, however, for soon after we were ordered by James Connolly, the commanding officer, to fall in with another party of the Hibernian Rifles and marched to Parliament Street to occupy a position there. We were issued with two canister bombs each and instructed how to strike a match and light the fuse and then fire them. We went down Liffey Street out on the quays and across the Halfpenny Bridge. The toll man demanded a halfpenny. We then proceeded by way of the streets running parallel between the quays and Dame Street to Parliament Street. On nearing our objective we turned into a by street and so reached the rear of No. 8 Parliament Street.

Their objective was to relieve the Citizen Army volunteers surrounded in the *Daily Express* office in Parliament Street. City Hall had been captured and retreating Volunteers were disheartened by the sight of civilians cheering British soldiers in the surrounding streets. At the opposite side of the bridge on the Liffey the toll-keeper demanded payment of a halfpenny each, which the Volunteers did not have in

hand. Lt. O'Kelly drew his revolver, which turned the argument in his favour and provided the men with free passage. The Maynooth men first broke into No. 12 Parliament Street and quickly seized the Exchange Hotel on Parliament Street. Tom Harris recalled:

We advanced to a door with glass panels and steps leading up to it. One of our party who carried a pickaxe for the purpose smashed in this door and we entered. We learned after that the premises we had entered were formerly the offices of the "Irish People", the official organ of the Fenian Brotherhood, and at the period of the Easter Week Rising were in the occupation of Sir Patrick Shorthall, who used them for business purposes.

When we established ourselves there we next effected an entry into the Exchange Hotel adjoining. We put the premises into as good as state of defence possible and then occupied positions on the roof.

We were distributed all over it, putting up barricades, etc. I do not know how many hours we were there. Byrne used to take runs out to scout outside. I believe [Pat] Colgan left it with a dispatch. It was a position we did not think we could maintain and we also did not think we could get out of it. We were there probably for four or five hours. There was a bit more of a scrap there with some British troops and a number of them were killed – I do not know the number of casualties. We were sniped, probably from the Castle. While we were there one of our party, an elderly Dublin man, who belonged to the Hibernian Rifles, was wounded by a bullet from an enemy position, and later died in hospital.

Several of the Volunteers went up on the roof where they immediately came under fire from soldiers positioned around Dublin Castle. Edward Walsh, a member of the Hibernian Rifles, was hit in the groin and died of wounds later that night in Jervis Street Hospital. He left a widow and two children. Harris continued,

At this time we had become heavily engaged and soon an intensive rifle fire was concentrated upon us from different enemy posts in the district so that at length we were in danger of being completely surrounded and cut off from the Republican forces.

The bombs the Volunteers threw at the military were ineffective and only a few exploded. By evening their position in the hotel had become untenable. A group of British soldiers charged across the street to try and force the door leading to the *Daily Express* office. Domhnall Ua Buachalla said:

One big soldier started to smash in the door with a sledge. I asked [Tom] Byrne if we would fire. I do not know what he said. I put up my rifle and took aim at this soldier and fired. He dropped the sledge and fell forward and the man next to him fell also. The second man was behind the big soldier and, apparently, both of them were hit. Immediately the rest of our boys opened up with the sporting guns on them and in a few seconds at least a dozen soldiers were lying on the street. An amazing thing was that a priest appeared on the scene almost immediately and attended to the soldiers who were wounded, or dead. We went on to the roof of the hotel to see if we could engage the soldiers in the Castle. The roof was heavily under fire from the Castle and the enemy had a party in the drapery establishment at the corner and junction of Dame St. and Parliament St. and opposite the "Evening Mail" office. This party were able to throw hand grenades at us ...

Pat Colgan was ordered to return to the rebel HQ at the G.P.O. to inform James Connolly that only Domhnall Ua Buachalla was armed with a rifle at their position and they were in danger of being surrounded. Colgan returned with Connolly's orders, which were for them to lie low as an attempt would be made to rescue the garrison at dusk. Tom Harris remembered:

In this extremity the experienced leadership of Tom Byrne was displayed, for not only did he succeed in extricating us and retire again to the G.P.O. without further loss. We were called back to the Post Office that evening. We evacuated the hotel completely.

The men broke through a wall into Shortall's shop from where they were to make their escape. At the same time the British advanced under the cover of machine-gun fire and took the now evacuated Exchange Hotel. They were at the front of Shortall's as the Volunteers left through the back door. Pat Colgan maintained he was the last to leave through the rear door of the house, but the first one to reach the bridge over the Liffey. After a retreat up Temple Lane, he noted that it was the only time he had ever 'come near to breaking an athletic record'. Back at the G.P.O. the Maynooth Volunteers were allowed to rest until midnight and were then assigned positions in the building overlooking Prince's Street. James Connolly, through Lt. O'Kelly, conveyed to them his appreciation of their efforts.

The British authorities had started to take action and thousands of troops and artillery were moved into Dublin from Belfast, Athlone and the Curragh Camp. By Friday the situation in the G.P.O. was becoming critical. Small fires had started on the roof and the surrounding buildings were awash with flame. James Connolly had been seriously wounded in the ankle by a ricocheting bullet on Thursday and was propped up on a mattress in the public hall. He continued to issue orders, but he had to be given morphine to dull the pain.

The British brought up an 18-pounder to Great Britain Street where it fired upon Arnott's drapery store, which pressed at the rear of the G.P.O. At the same time guns in Westmoreland and D'Olier Streets began to fire on Sackville (O'Connell) Street. It was at this stage that the garrison realised the British were not intending on making a frontal assault, but were going to pound the G.P.O. into dust. Tom Harris said:

As the weekend approached the continued occupation and defence of the building became more difficult and at length became more impossible owing to the heavy bombardment to which it was subjected by the British guns. The incendiary shells converted it into a blazing furnace and evacuation and surrender became inevitable.

Then they started to make preparations for the evacuation and what amazed me was the order that was maintained all the time. At no time was there panic... They were lined up and given their orders and instructions... They commenced singing 'The Soldiers' Song' but they were ordered to stop singing by the leaders as it was interfering with the orders which could not be heard.

I remember seeing a sketch of Connolly lying on a stretcher, with Pearse on one side. My impression of that sketch was that it got Pearse's position pretty correctly. Connolly, however, was not on a stretcher; he was on a bed... Pearse was issuing instructions that each man was to take twenty-four hours rations with him. Lieutenant O'Kelly was standing close to him and he ordered O'Kelly to give out the rations. O'Kelly called on me to help him... and I had a dozen rations given out when I got a bang on the foot and I fell disabled. I was wounded and O'Kelly got a slight wound. I think some fellow let off a shot and I got most of it and that put me out of action. One of the first of those who came to my assistance was Jim O'Neill of Leixlip.

As the G.P.O. became untenable due to the fires, the order to evacuate the building came. The wounded were evacuated through a tunnel that led from the rear of the G.P.O. to the Coliseum Theatre. Pat Colgan, Tom Mangan, John and Matt Maguire and Joe Ledwith had been sent by Lt. O'Kelly on a reconnaissance to the Coliseum Theatre. They awaited further orders, but in the meantime O'Kelly had been wounded in the foot by an accidental discharge of a shotgun. When Tom Mangan returned to the G.P.O. to see what was keeping O'Kelly

he found the building empty. Most of the garrison had left by the Henry Street exit, heading across the street and into the warren of alleyways and lanes between it and Great Britain (now Parnell) Street.

Pearse and Connolly had hoped to join with Ned Daly's garrison at the Four Courts, but there was no way past British positions on Capel Street. Instead the G.P.O. garrison broke into houses in Moore Street and barricaded themselves there. The killing of innocent civilians and the destruction of Dublin by the British military ultimately led to the surrender of the rebels. Pearse, wracked by guilt, knew that if the fighting continued more civilians would die.

The wounded Tom Harris was carried on a stretcher into Henry Street and down Moore Lane, which was under fire. Harris and several other wounded Volunteers spent the night in a stable in Moore Lane. The next morning he was placed on a stretcher in a yard at the top of Moore Lane.

Domhnall Ua Buachalla was exhausted and his memory of how he got out of the G.P.O. was inaccurate, but he found himself walking up Moore Street without his rifle and boots. He was walking towards Dominick Street when a soldier fired at him. The bullet passed harmlessly through the padding of his coat. Going into a tenement building he climbed the stairs to the first floor and fell asleep on a mat outside a closed door. The next morning he was awakened by a woman standing over him with a cup of tea and several slices of bread and butter. One youth in the family gave him a pair of boots looted from a shop. Ua Buachalla dug into his pocket and gave the youth whatever money he had. The father of the family, he learned, was in the British army on overseas service. He decided to make for Broadstone Station and try to get a goods train home, but was arrested by British soldiers and brought to where the rest of the G.P.O. prisoners were held.

Following the surrender Tom Byrne escaped the cordon and took a circuitous route to his mother's house in Eccles Street. He subsequently avoided capture. Ted O'Kelly, when his injuries healed, escaped from Jervis St. Hospital assisted by his aunt, who was a nun on the staff of

the hospital, and was a member of the Cullen family from Greenfield, Maynooth.

The first prisoners arrived in Richmond Barracks on 30 April and the first group were deported to England that night. Oliver O’Ryan and Jim O’Neill were among 200 prisoners transferred to Knutsford on 1 May. Another 289 went to Stafford Detention Barracks on the same day, including Tim Tyrell and Pat Kirwan. Domhnall Ua Buachalla said:

... I was brought with the other prisoners to Richmond Barracks and placed in the gymnasium. There was a big crowd of prisoners there at the time. The police and detectives and military officers were moving among the lined-up prisoners and picking out the leaders. I saw [Eamon] Ceannt in a corner having been one of the men picked out.

We were given some bully beef and dog biscuits to eat. We were kept in the Richmond Barracks that night on Monday, together with some hundred other prisoners.

Pat Colgan was taken prisoner by a ‘little brat of a second lieutenant of the Royal Irish Regiment who kept prodding me with his revolver and telling me what a pleasure he would have in killing me’. He spent Sunday in various buildings under armed guard until Monday morning when he was marched to Ship Street Barracks. Shortly after his group were brought to Richmond Barracks. He recalled:

We were placed in an upstairs landing in ‘K’ block; our room overlooked the gymnasium. We saw P. H. Pearse, Major McBride, Tom Clarke and Willie Pearse being removed from the gymnasium on Tuesday morning. On our way to Richmond Barracks we were accompanied by a number of women “Separationists”; they did not like us. Over the door of our room was an allocation notice, “This room to accommodate ten men.”

Among those held in the room with Colgan were republican prisoners, including Harry Boland. Colgan said:

We awakened one morning to hear shooting. We decided some of our leaders were being shot. We all knelt and recited the Rosary. We numbered about 60 in the room. Each morning we were issued with one hard biscuit and a bucket of unsweetened tea and we were given a couple of empty salmon tins as drinking utensils. The biscuit was so hard it lasted us for several hours.

It used grow very chilly at night time so we lay as close as possible. Whilst Harry Boland was with us we arranged for him to make a pillow of my legs. I did the same with his legs. During the first few days in Richmond we had several identification parades ... Amongst the crowd brought in to identify us was a soldier who had been a prisoner in the G.P.O. I met him on Thursday in the G.P.O. He was carrying out some job near our post. Some Volunteers were taunting him and I intervened on his behalf. I learned he had worked at Kilcock in his pre-army days as a groom with Joe Kelly, The Mount, Kilcock. When he was brought in to identify anyone he could he walked down the line and failed to recognise us. When passing me he winked and passed on. I believe he came from Rathfarnham and although he knew all the Rathfarnham Volunteers he did not identify one person for the British. I heard he called to the relatives of the Volunteers in Rathfarnham to inform them of the welfare of the Volunteers.

The Volunteers who had been identified were notified one morning they were being removed, for Courtmartial the same day at 10.30. Harry Boland suggested to the others that they should go before the Court as "snappy" as possible. Jim Whelan had a cut-throat razor and they had a shave of sorts. The only water for all of them to use was contained in one of our drinking receptacles (salmon tins). I felt very sad at parting from Harry Boland. I had met Harry a few years before at the G.A.A. Annual

Convention where, although only a young lad, Harry used to play a major part.

On 4 May 308 prisoners were sent to Knutsford Jail, Cheshire, including Domhnall Ua Buachalla. On 8 May, Pat Colgan, Tom Mangan, John and Matt Maguire, were among 202 prisoners sent to Stafford Military Detention Barracks.

On 15 May three men arrested on their return to Maynooth were court-martialled and each sentenced to two years (eighteen months remitted). They were Seán Graves, Joseph Ledwith and Patrick Weafer. The *Kildare Observer* reported that Patrick Weafer, a carpenter had tried to join the RIC about six months previously, but was rejected because he did not meet the height requirement. Seán Graves worked as an assistant in Domhnall Ua Buachalla's shop, while Joseph Ledwith was employed as a canal lock-keeper. The three men had been arrested on their return to Maynooth after the Rising.

The destiny for the majority of Irish republican prisoners was an internment camp at Frongoch, in South Wales. The men in Frongoch from Co. Kildare were:

Michael Smyth, Athgarvan; Éamonn Ó Modhráin, Ballysax; Michael Cosgrove, Kilcock; James O'Neill, Leixlip; Tom Harris, Prosperous; Patrick Colgan, John Kenny, Pat Kirwan, John and Thomas Maguire, Thomas Mangan, Liam Ó Raogain, Oliver O'Ryan, Timothy Tyrell and Domhnall Ua Buachalla, all from Maynooth.

Due to political pressure many of the less well-known prisoners, including five men from Co. Kildare, were released on 22 July 1916. Liam Ó Raogain, Pat Kirwan, Timothy Tyrell, and Oliver O'Ryan, from Maynooth arrived home by the 10 a.m. train on Sunday. Their reception was not recorded.

The rest of the Maynooth men were released over the following months: Seán Graves was released in October 1916; the two Maguire

brothers, John and Matthew, were held until November 1916, while Domhnall Ua Buachalla was not freed until 23 December 1916.

The men of 1916 returned as heroes to a people whose attitude had changed utterly since they had left. Domhnall Ua Buachalla said:

When we were being escorted to the boat for internment, the people of Dublin were inclined to be hostile to us, particularly in the Richmond Barracks area where they were mostly British soldiers' wives ... There was a noticeable change in the people now, and I received a royal welcome reception on reaching Maynooth.

A few days before he left Frongoch, on 16 December, Pat Colgan was sworn into the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.) by Michael Collins. One of his lasting impressions of Frongoch, of course, was leaving it. He wrote later of the night of his release: '... our high spirits at Crewe Railway Station on our way home. And being home again on Christmas Eve.' Colgan, like Ua Buachalla and Michael Smyth and many others throughout Kildare and the rest of the country, would put to the test the skills and strategies they had learned in Frongoch Camp. There would be no repeat of Easter Week 1916; no holding of buildings waiting for the Crown forces to come to them. This time it would be war fought in a different way. Within five years the men of 1916 would force the most powerful empire in the world to the negotiating table.



Surviving members of the Maynooth contingent who fought in Dublin during the Easter Rising, Croke Park, 1938.

*Back row, left to right: Pat Weafer, Tom Byrne, Joe Ledwith, Tom Mangan and Matt Maguire.
Front row, left to right: Pat Kirwan, Tom Harris, Jack Maguire, Pat Colgan, Domhnall Ua Buachalla,
Tim Tyrrell and Liam Ó Raogáin.*



Survivors of the Maynooth Fifteen, Maynooth College, 1966.

*Back row, left to right: Patrick Weafer, Monsignor Gareth Mitchell.
Front row, left to right: Tim Tyrrell, Tom Mangan, Jack Maguire, (Matt Maguire or Joe Ledwith).*



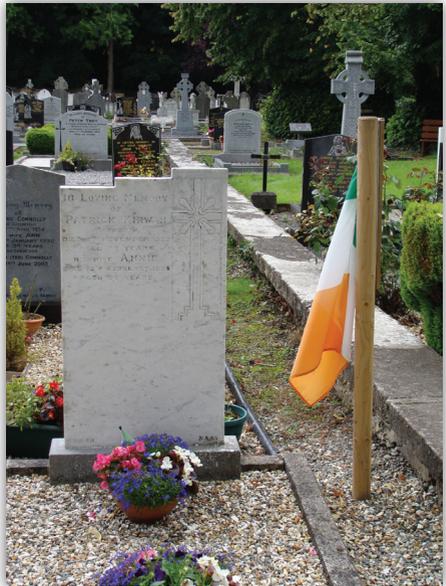
*Maynooth 50th anniversary celebrations, 10 April 1966
Group led by Joe Nevin (holding the flag), passing the Garda station.*



*A group photograph taken at a function in the Spa Hotel, Lucan,
to honour the Maynooth Fifteen, Easter 1966.*



*Headstone of Patrick Colgan,
Grangewilliam Cemetery, Maynooth.*



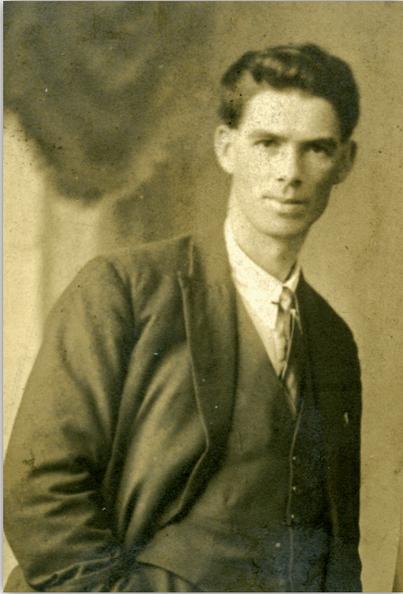
*Headstone of Patrick Kirwan,
Laraghbryan Cemetery, Maynooth.*



*Headstone of John Maguire,
Moyglare Cemetery, Maynooth.*



*Headstone of Matthew Maguire,
Moyglare Cemetery, Maynooth.*



Volunteer Seán Graves.



Lt. Edward O'Kelly.



Marker of burial place of Oliver Ryan, communal plot, Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin.



Headstone of Tom Byrne, Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin.



*Headstone of Tim Tyrrell,
Laraghbryan Cemetery, Maynooth.*



*Headstone of Tom Harris,
Caragh Cemetery.*



Headstone of Joe Ledwith, Laraghbryan Cemetery, Maynooth.



*Headstone of Domhnall Ua Buachalla,
Laraghbryan Cemetery, Maynooth.*



*Headstone of Pat Weafer,
St. Coca's Cemetery, Kilcock.*



*Headstone of Liam Ó Raogáin,
St. Ibar's Cemetery, Co. Wexford.*



*Burial place of Tom Mangan,
Grangewilliam Cemetery, Maynooth.*



Commemorative walkers being addressed by Monsignor Hogan, Maynooth College, April 2016.



St. Mary's Brass and Reed Band lead the commemorative walk from the College, April 2016.



*Monument to the Maynooth Fifteen,
The Square, Maynooth.*



*Commemorative walkers on the Royal Canal
towpath heading to Dublin, April 2016.*



The tired but spirited walkers in the Garden of Remembrance, Dublin, April 2016.

Obituaries of the 'Maynooth Fifteen'

Oliver Ryan 1885-1938

A native of Dublin, Oliver Ryan was born in 1885. He departed his employment as a servant at Maynooth College to join the Maynooth Volunteers when they were receiving Absolution, on 26 April 1916. He left Maynooth on Easter Monday evening with fourteen other volunteers and travelled on foot by the Royal Canal towpath to Dublin. After resting in Glasnevin Cemetery the group arrived at the G.P.O. early on Tuesday morning. He fought in the Parliament Street area and the G.P.O. until the surrender. Deported to Knutsford Prison on 1 May 1916, he was later interned in Frongoch Camp and released on 22 July 1916. He rejoined his unit and served until 1918.

Oliver Ryan died in a Dublin sanatorium on 22 July 1938 and was buried in an unmarked plot in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin.

James Durney

Dr. Edward O'Kelly 1883-1941

Killed in Air raid Irish Doctor's Death

Sincere sympathy has been aroused in Co. Kildare by the tragic death of Dr. Edward O'Kelly, in an air raid at his residence at 30, Oakley Square, London.

Deceased was a son of the late Dr. Thos. O'Kelly of Maynooth, who

was a sterling Nationalist in the old Parnellite days, and was also an enthusiastic supporter of the G.A.A. at its initiation.

The late Dr. Edwd. O'Kelly was a medical student at University College, and during the stirring times prior to 1916 organised the Irish Volunteers in Kildare. He held the rank of Commandant of the 4th Battalion, Dublin Brigade, I.R.A., and led the Maynooth and Kildare men to Dublin in Easter Week.

He was married to Miss Maisie Stallard, second daughter of the late George Stallard of Dunville House, Kilkenny, who survives him. Deceased was related to the late Cardinal Cullen. His many old friends of the National Cause in Maynooth and other parts of the country will deeply regret to learn of the tragic occurrence, and will extend their heartfelt sympathy to his widow. The funeral took place on Friday after 10 o'clock Mass at the Church of Our Lady of Hal, London, N.W. 1.

Leinster Leader 26 April 1941

Matthew Maguire 1884-1969

Late Mr. M. Maguire, Dunboyne

The funeral of the late Mr. Matthew Maguire, Brownstown, Dunboyne, to Moyglare Cemetery, passed through Maynooth accompanied by a Guard of Honour of surviving comrades of Maynooth 1916 men composed of the following:- Messrs. Tim Tyrrell, Tom Mangan, Tom Harris T.D., Patrick Weafer, Joe Ledwith, Mick Cummins, Patk. Kirwan, Jack Maguire. A decade of the rosary was recited in Irish by Tim Mangan at the graveside.

Amongst the many relatives present were the following:- Laurence Maguire (son), Alice, Moira and Breedh (daughters), Mrs. Mary Shadwell, Mrs. Nannie Weafer, Mrs. Katie Fitzgerald (sisters), Christy and Jack Maguire (brothers), Mrs. Jos. Ledwith, Alice Maguire, Bill

Maguire, Mrs. Jeffers, Mrs. Edwards, Jack and Mrs. Fitzgerald, Matt and Mrs. Fitzgerald, Matt Weafer, Sen., Matt Weafer Jun., Jack Weafer, Brendan Edwards, Babs Edwards, Larry Ward, Mrs. Sweeney, Miss Ina Smyth, Mr. and Mrs. Callaghan, Mrs. Collins, Thos. Caulfield, Patrick Weafer, Lauchlan Caulfield, Joe Weafer, Barney, Paddy and Seán Collins, Seán Weafer.

The funeral was met outside Maynooth by the Guard of Honour. There was a very large and representative attendance.

Leinster Leader 24 May 1947

Patrick Kirwan 1871-1959

Regretted Maynooth Death

The funeral of the late Mr. Patk. Kirwan (88) whose death occurred after a short illness took place to Laraghbryan Cemetery. The attendance was large and representative.

The late Mr. Kirwan (Patk.) was well-known for his keen sense of humour and his retentive memory. His passing severs yet another link with the National movement and Ireland's fight for freedom. Joining the Volunteer movement at its foundation he was foremost in the ranks of the men who marched from Maynooth to Dublin under the command of Donal Ua Buachalla in Easter Week, 1916 and was later interned in Frongoch until the amnesty. He took an active part with Maynooth Company during the War of Independence as a member of the Irish Republican Army. He took the Republican side in the civil war and was interned in Gormanstown until after the cease fire order in 1923.

The Guard of Honour marched beside the hearse from the church to the Cemetery. It included Thomas Harris, Thomas Mangan, Tim Tyrrell, R. Harris, Patrick Weafer, 1916 comrades. Maynooth Company was represented by R. Bean, Chris Sherry and John

Mangan. Representing North-Kildare staff were, Michael O'Neill, John Logie, Straffan, Patk. Healy, Celbridge, James Farrell, Leixlip. The last prayers at the graveside were recited by Rev. Father Leahy, C.C. Maynooth.

Leinster Leader 14 November 1959

Patrick Colgan 1890-1960

He fought in 1916 Rising

Major P. J. Colgan, Muckcross Hotel, Killarney, who has died aged 69, was a native of Maynooth. He was one of the party led by Donal Ua Buachalla from Maynooth to fight in the 1916 Rising. They were received by Pearse in the G.P.O. where they fought until the surrender.

Afterwards he took an active part in the fight for freedom and served sentences in Belfast and England. He was also interned in Ballykinlar Camp. He was an intimate friend of Michael Collins.

He joined the National Army following the Treaty and held various posts in it until he retired with the rank of major sixteen years ago. He then acquired an interest in the Muckcross Hotel which he managed until his death. He was keenly interested in the G.A.A. and for a period was Secretary of Kildare County Board. He was one of those responsible for introducing Gaelic games into the Army and was also interested in Army Boxing. He is survived by his wife.

Before the senior football final at Droichead Nua on Sunday, two minutes silence was observed. The remains were removed to St. Mary's Cathedral, Killarney, on Friday, and the funeral, after Requiem Mass, took place to Grange William Cemetery, Maynooth on Saturday.

A Guard of Honour of Old I.R.A. accompanied the remains and the Army provided the firing party and a bugler sounded the Last Post.

Leinster Leader 24 September 1960

Thomas Byrne 1880-1962

Commdt. T. Byrne Captain of the Dáil Guard dies

Commandant Tom Byrne, of 67 Old Cabra Road, Dublin who has died in a Dublin hospital, was former Captain of the Guard at Leinster House and was the last surviving officer of the Irish Brigade which fought with the South Africans against the British in the Boer War. He was 82.

A native of Carrickmacross, Commdt. Byrne went to work as a miner in South Africa in 1896. A few years later, he recruited the Irish Brigade to fight against the British. Taking part in the defeat of the British at Dundee, the Irish Brigade moved on to Ladysmith, where Commdt. Byrne saw the capture of Sir Winston Churchill, then a young war correspondent.

As the fighting ended the Irish Brigade destroyed their equipment and marched into Portuguese East Africa to be interned. They were released shortly afterwards and sailed to Trieste. From there they travelled overland to Hamburg to board a liner for the United States.

After reaching America Commdt. Byrne engaged extensively in mining work, then in 1914 returned to Ireland, as he said himself, "on a short trip," but soon was actively preparing for the Easter Rising. As captain of B Company, 1st Battalion, he led the Kildare unit of the Volunteers to the G.P.O. on Easter Tuesday, and during the ensuing week took part in the fighting in Liffey Street and Parliament Street.

He escaped in disguise after the surrender, travelling to the North for six months and then returning to take part in the re-organising of the 1st Battalion. He was elected its Commandant in succession to Commdt. Edward Daly, who had been executed. Commdt. Byrne was the Dáil's Captain of the Guard until his retirement. In 1946, Commdt. Byrne was decorated by the South African Government for his war services.

Irish Press 8 September 1962

Domhnall Ua Buachalla 1866-1963

Death of last Governor General

The great patriot and man of determination Maynooth gave to Ireland has died. An tUasal Domhnall Ua Buachalla, third and last person to hold the office of Governor General of the Irish Free State, breathed his last in a Dublin nursing home on Wednesday. He was 98. He had been living at Donnybrook, Dublin. Padraic Mac Piarais was said to have described [him] “as a real patriot and one of the most determined men in Ireland” this great figure born in Maynooth in 1865 and who became a Sinn Féin deputy for North Kildare in the General Election.

Love of Language

He held the office of Governor General from 1932 upon the passing of the Constitution (Amendment 27 Act), removing the King of England from the Constitution and ending the office of the Crown in Ireland.

He preferred to drop the English title of Governor General and be known as “Seanascal”, a gesture that exemplified his deep love of the Irish language. He was once prosecuted for having his name in Irish on a car. He refused to pay the fine and goods in his shop were sold to collect it.

He had been in retirement many years, living a quiet life. His part in the Easter Rising is fairly well known. He mobilised a group of about twenty in Maynooth. They marched to Dublin, he with a rifle, the others carrying shotguns, sporting guns and revolvers. Earlier, an tUasal Ua Buachalla had cycled to Dublin to discover that contingents had begun the insurrection. It was on his immediate return that he got the men together.

They fought in three garrisons before the surrender, following which he was interned in Knutsford and Frongoch. Then came release under the general amnesty and his election to parliament in 1918 for Kildare. He opposed the Treaty.

He was interned in Dundalk Gaol following the surrender of the Four Courts in the Civil War. Republicans who captured Dundalk blew open the prison, and he and others were set free.

He was defeated in the General Election of 1923 but returned as a Fianna Fáil deputy four years later. He met with another defeat at the polls in 1932.

Upon appointment as Governor General, he decided not to live in the Viceregal Lodge, as was the practice of his predecessors, Mr. Tim Healy and Mr. James MacNeill. At the abolition of the post, he was granted a gratuity of £2,000 and £500 a year for life.

There were four sons and three daughters in the family. His wife died in 1918.

Leinster Leader 2 November 1963

Liam Ó Raogáin 1888-1965

Death

O'Regan (Wexford) – May 16 1965, at St. Anne's Hospital, Dublin. Liam, beloved husband of Florence O'Regan, 58 Bishopswater, Wexford; deeply regretted by his loving wife, brother, sisters and relatives, R.I.P. Funeral from Church of the Assumption, Wexford to St. Ibar's Cemetery, Crosstown to-day (Tuesday) after 10 o'clock.

Liam Ó Raogáin was born in 1888 and was an Irish speaker from the Ring Gaeltacht, Co. Waterford. He was employed as a foreman in Domhnall Ua Buachalla's hardware shop in Maynooth, when he joined the Irish Volunteers. He left Maynooth with the contingent of Irish Volunteers on Easter Monday and arrived at the G.P.O. the following morning. He remained in Dublin for the rest of the week and was deported to Knutsford Jail on 1 May and then interned in Frongoch.

He was active in the War of Independence, and interned in the Curragh during the Civil War. He later moved to Kells, Co. Meath where he was manager of a grocery store until 1939 when he moved to Wexford, where he remained until his death in 1965.

Irish Independent 18 May 1965/James Durney

Thomas Mangan 1887-1968

Maynooth death

The death has taken place in hospital of Thomas (Tom) Mangan, of Railpark, Maynooth, one of the members of the Maynooth group who marched to Dublin and took part in the 1916 Rising. He was in his eighties and had been ill. During the fighting he was stationed with Patrick Weafer and others at Parliament Street where there was an important outpost. He is survived by a brother, Michael, sister-in-law, nephews and nieces. The remains were removed to St. Mary's Church, Maynooth and interment was in Grangewilliam Cemetery. Rev. V. Dempsey, A.P., Maynooth, officiated.

Leinster Leader 29 June 1968

John Maguire 1886-1968

Mr. John Maguire

Mr. John (Jack) Maguire, of 2 Leinster Cottages, Maynooth, who has died, aged 81, fought in the War of Independence as a member of the small band led by Donal O Buachalla, the last Governor General of Ireland, who marched into the G.P.O. on Easter Monday, 1916, to support the hard pressed garrison there.

Unmarried, Mr. Maguire is survived by his sisters, Mrs. Annie Weafer, Maynooth, and Mrs. Alice Kelly, Ballybrittas, Laois; nieces and nephews. One of his nephews is Senator Jack Fitzgerald, Dunboyne.

Irish Press 17 August 1968

Joseph Ledwith 1894-1970

Death of Mr. Joseph Ledwith

Mr. Joseph Ledwith, Blanchardstown, who died recently at St. Kevin's Hospital, was one of the 15 men received by James Connolly in the G.P.O. on Easter Monday 1916. They had marched under the late Donal O'Buachalla, from Maynooth to join a garrison there. Very Rev. Fr. T. O'Higgins, P.P., officiated at the graveside in Laraghbryan. A firing party from Collins Barracks, Dublin, gave military honours.

He is survived by his wife Anne, and his daughters Mrs. Jeffers, 39 Slievebloom Park, Walkinstown, Dublin, Sister M. Philip Neri, South Infirmery Cork, Mrs. Kelly, Station House, Castleknock, Co. Dublin, Mrs. Brennan and Mrs. Walsh (England).

Leinster Leader 2 May 1970

Timothy Tyrell 1887-1970

Death of Timothy Tyrell

Mr. Timothy Tyrell, Crew Hill, Maynooth, one of a party under Donal O'Buachala [sic.] who on Easter Monday 1916 marched from Maynooth to the G.P.O. where they were received by James Connolly, has died at the age of 83. The tricolour-draped coffin was received at St. Mary's Church, Maynooth, by Very Rev. F. O'Higgins, P.P., and Requiem

Mass was offered by Rev. J. Duff, C.C. Both priests officiated at the Laraghbryan graveside over which was fired a volley by a party from Collins Barracks. The last post was sounded. Present were members of a Maynooth and Celbridge guard of honour.

Leinster Leader 21 November 1970

Tom Harris 1895-1974

Former Deputy Dies

The death occurred on Monday at St. Vincent's Hospital, Dublin of Mr. Tom Harris, Caragh, Naas, who was a member of the Dáil for 25 years and gave a sterling service as a public representative and in the fight for independence. He was 78, and his death followed a short illness.

Native of Cloncurry, Enfield, and reared at Prosperous, he was a man of indomitable spirit, fearless in the many campaigns in which he figured and outspoken in his views.

He was a Fianna Fáil T.D. from 1931 to 1956, and he served for many years on local statutory bodies, including Kildare Co. Council and the Co. Committee of Agriculture. Mr. Harris was brother of Very Rev. P. Harris, P.P., Naas, O.P., Dominican College, Newbridge.

Interned, Escaped

He took part in many engagements with the Old I.R.A. and during the 1916 Rising was with the G.P.O. Garrison in Dublin; he assisted in carrying the wounded James Connolly from the G.P.O. Wounded in the fighting, he was treated at the hospital, Dublin Castle and after recuperating was interned in Brixton and Frongoch prisons. He fought in the Tan War, and during the Civil War took the Republican side and for a period was interned at Newbridge, from which he escaped.

Tributes to his long public service were paid by the Chairman, Mr. Andy Mahon, and members, at a special meeting of Kildare Co. Committee of Agriculture at Kilcullen on Monday night. Messrs. Hugh Cosgrove, P. McNamara and P. Hayden joined in the expression of sympathy, and members stood as a mark of respect.

Chief mourners are Mrs. Annie Harris (wife); Rev. James Harris O.P., Michael and Sean Harris (sons); Mrs. Anne Ryan, Mrs. J. Slattery and the Misses Betty and Mary Harris (daughters); Mrs. Anne Grehan, Grove Park, Rathmines (sister); Very Rev. P. Harris, P.P., and Mr. Richard Harris, Straffan (brothers).

The remains were removed on Tuesday evening to Caragh Church, and interred on Wednesday in the local cemetery. Oireachtas members, former Old I.R.A. comrades, and representatives of public bodies were among the attendance.

Tuesday night's meeting of Naas Urban Council was adjourned as a mark of respect. Chairman Ger Grehan said Tom Harris was the epitome of a patriot. He had served the people of Naas for over fifty years as a T.D. and as a councillor.

Mr. P. J. Fitzsimons said he had a great admiration for Mr. Harris. Mr. T. Gillece said Mr. Harris never feared to say or do what he thought was good for his county and his country. The other councillors joined in the tribute and Co. Manager, Mr. E. M. Murphy, associated himself with it on behalf of the staff.

***Leinster Leader* 23 February 1974**

Seán Graves, 1893-1971

Seán Graves was born in 1893 and was a native Irish speaker from Ring, Co. Waterford. He was an assistant in Domhnall Ua Buachalla's hardware shop in Main Street, Maynooth, when the Easter Rising

began. As a member of Maynooth Company, Irish Volunteers, he travelled to Dublin on Easter Monday and took part in the fighting during Easter Week. With Pat Weafer and Joe Ledwith, he evaded capture and returned to Maynooth, but was promptly arrested. He was court-martialled, sentenced to two years imprisonment and deported to England.

He took part in the War of Independence and took the anti-Treaty side in the Civil War. He later joined An Garda Síochána and was stationed at Killorglin, Co. Kerry, when he retired in 1954. John Graves died in Waterford Hospital on 31 July 1971, and was buried in the Churchyard in Ballinagoul, overlooking Dungarvan Bay.

James Durney

Patrick Weafer 1890-1975

Was last of 1916 Group

An era ended on Thursday with the death at his home Mariaville, Maynooth of Mr. Patrick J. Weafer, the last of the fifteen men who marched from Maynooth to Dublin to fight in the 1916 Rising.

Mr. Weafer, (84) was sentenced to 2 years imprisonment with the rest of the contingent but they were released after six months in the November amnesty. He was on the run during the Tan War.

He was prominent in local affairs all his life, being a member of the Civil Defence Corps up to two years ago, the L.D.F. and Maynooth Red Cross. He was Staff Major of St. Mary's Brass and Reed Band, Maynooth, and played a major role in the success of the Band through the years.

Band members carried the remains from his home to St. Mary's Church. The Band played during Requiem Mass on Friday morning and led the funeral procession for a mile outside the town on route

to Kilcock cemetery. The Band again led the procession into Kilcock playing solemn music, and members laid the remains to rest in St. Coca's Cemetery.

He is survived by his sons, Tom, N.T., Bundoran, Paddy, England; daughter, Mrs. Hannelly (Maidie) Enfield; and sisters, Julia, Mariaville, Maynooth, Mrs. Josie O'Sullivan, Mrs. Nan Bissett, Mrs. Lily Smyth and Mrs. Dina Collins.

The other members of the Maynooth contingent in 1916 were Capt. Tom Byrne, Lt. Ted Kelly, Domhnall O'Buachalla, Patrick Colgan, Patrick Kirwan, Matt Maguire, Liam Regan, Oliver Ryan, Thomas Harris, T.D., John Maguire, Tim Tyrell, Joseph Ledwith, Seán Graves and Tom Mangan.

Leinster Leader 8 February 1975

Took part in the famous march to Dublin

Padraig Beirne

How much can a man be expected to give voluntarily to the community? Some very little, while others are prepared to offer the supreme sacrifice – their lives. Seventy-four-years-old Patrick Joseph Weafer, as he tends his hobby – the flower garden at his home, Mariaville, Maynooth, where his family has lived for three generations – can reflect on a lifetime of unselfishness to his country. Indeed, he is still giving in his capacity as Post Warden with Maynooth and District Civil Defence Unit.

Wore bib

Son of the late carpenter and undertaker Thomas Weafer, he is one of a family of ten, two boys and eight girls. This tall, fresh man is proud of being able to trace his ancestry in Maynooth to the time of Silken Thomas, when a Lieut. Weafer was in charge of the guard. Patrick began school at the local Convent, where, he recalls, the nuns insisted that each pupil wear a bib. His boyishness rebelled and the bib was quickly discarded each evening at the school gate. Later he attended the boys' school at Pound Lane where the late Mr. John Martin taught.

Luxury bikes

Spinning tops was the craze of schoolboys at that time. Local blacksmith Tom Nolan became an expert at fitting the tops with steel axles. The objective was to break your opponent's top with the axle. At

this time bicycles were a luxury, but roads were not as we know them to-day. Patrick remembers travelling with other youths on a Sunday to try out their machines on the first steam-rolled road in their area. Later the first motor cars made their appearance. For some time this caused a mild sensation. Everyone crowded to the road-side to watch, and old people shook their heads and prophesied the end of the world was near. Young Weafer was more than thrilled when given his first drive in one owned by his cousin, Mr. Joseph Caulfield, whose family ran the local Post Office.

In drama

Participation in community activities began for Patrick at an early age. While he apprenticed to his father's trade, workmen on the installation of Maynooth College electricity plant organised a dramatic society. Patrick became a keen member and took part in many productions. At this time, dances in the present meaning were unheard of. There were house socials and, of course, the annual balls. Big event of the year was the Hunt Ball. This was by invitation only. Around 1914 Patrick joined Redmond's Volunteers and later on the formation of Sinn Fein became a member of the local unit under Donal Ua Buachalla who was later to be Governor General of Ireland.

The Rising

The unit trained with poor weapons under cloak, and it was not until Easter Monday evening that the unit heard of the Rising. The word was given to assemble in Buckley's yard. With fourteen others, Patrick attended and was issued with a shotgun, home-made cartridges and grenades. The grenades were over 2 lbs., and only one amongst them, Matty Maguire, was capable of throwing any distance. The poorly-equipped unit marched to the College where the President, Very Rev. Dr. Hogan, gave conditional absolution in the square.

By lines

Leaving by the Gashouse gate, the unit went by the railway lines to

Blakestown outside Leixlip. There they waited for a contingent from Dunboyne to join the march to Dublin. After a half-hour's wait, the Maynooth unit moved on Ashtown by the railway lines and canal, cutting across the fields to Finglas and waded across the Tolka. Reaching Glasnevin, they hid their arms and lay behind headstones until daybreak. At dawn, Capt, T. Byrne, who was in charge of the unit, sent scouts down into the city. When the all clear was given, the party moved via Cross Guns Bridge to the G.P.O. where they were welcomed by James Connolly. The city was quiet – people strolled around, swinging their canes, curious to know what was happening.

Posted

At the G.P.O. the Maynooth men were given their first meal since noon the previous day. It consisted of tea and fish. Later the men were given a posting – Royal Exchange Hotel. The orders were to grenade the Mail Offices.

The unit was not long in position when pinned down by rifle fire from the City Hall and tall buildings in the vicinity. Patrick, Jack Graves, and one of the Dublin scouts named Walshe sent from the G.P.O. with the unit, went on the roof to get better positions. Crawling back along a gully, Walshe was shot and died later. When bringing down the wounded man, the command that each man look after himself was given. Patrick Weafer and Jack Graves hit for the southern sector of the city. Two days later they got back to Maynooth and were arrested in about a week. When taken to Maynooth R.I.C. barracks, Joseph Ledwich, another member of the unit had also been arrested.

Released

Then began a trek in handcuffs from barracks to barracks until the three were sentenced to two years penal servitude at Mountjoy. However, they were released the following Christmas. Patrick returned to Maynooth. The Rising was dead; the general feeling – depression. Patrick continued his carpentry and took a position in Dublin. When the I.R.A. was formed, he joined and helped form a company in

Kilcock. During the Black and Tan reign of terror he was a 'marked man' and had to forego weekly trips home. The main activities of the I.R.A. at that time was the destruction of places likely to be used by the Tans as outposts. Among the places burned were the Town Hall, Maynooth, the R.I.C. barracks, Donadea and Leixlip barracks.

Despite strict surveillance Patrick managed to outwit the British authorities. He brought ammunition in the frame of his bicycle to the I.R.A. companies in Kilcock and Maynooth on several occasions and carried documents from one post to another in the city. On one occasion when carrying papers which would have meant his instant arrest and perhaps being faced with a firing squad if caught, the tram on which he was travelling was stopped and searched. When the young army officer saw Patrick on the top deck swinging his walking cane, he asked in a side whisper "You are in Government service sir?" Patrick nodded, keeping his fingers crossed.

In 1923 Patrick married Kilcock nurse, Anne Larkin. There were three children, Thomas, a woodwork teacher with the Co. Leitrim Vocational Education Committee, Patrick junior, working in England and Mary who is now Mrs. Hannelly, Enfield.

With Band

When the State began to find its feet, Patrick's attention turned to a more peaceful organisation. In 1932, he was one of the founder members of the now famous Maynooth Brass and Reed Band. He became its staff major and remained so until his retirement in 1963.

With the outbreak of World War II, the call to arms was again answered by him. He became L.D.F. District Quarter Master for South Meath, North Kildare and North Dublin. An expert rifleman, he was on the Maynooth team which won the Liffey District rifle championships on two occasions. In retirement this unassuming man portrays little of the anxieties of his lifetime. To him the deeds were something that had to be done by someone.

Leinster Leader 8 August 1964

Maynooth paid its tribute to men of 1916

With impressive ceremonies, a parade, commemoration lunch and concert, residents of Maynooth and the surrounding areas honoured the 1916 heroes. A special place of honour was reserved for the five survivors of the march to Dublin during Easter Week, 1916.

The parade to a special Mass in St. Mary's Parish Church which was celebrated in Irish by Very Rev. W. O'Riordan, P.P., assisted by Rev. J. Duff, C.C., was expertly planned. The large group of onlookers and general public applauded loudly as each unit stepped out at the order of Martin Prendergast, the Parade Marshall.

A Colour Party from the local F.C.A. unit headed the parade and was followed by Maynooth Brass and Reed Band. Next in line were the five survivors, escorted by an F.C.A. party, Old I.R.A., Girl Guides, I.C.A., O.N.E., Narraghmore Pipe Band, G.A.A., Red Cross, Civil Defence, Geraldine Boys Club, General Public and the Fire Brigade.

An F.C.A. party rendered honours at the Consecration. Afterwards the units marched to Geraldine Castle at St. Patrick's College. Wreaths were laid at a specially erected platform in remembrance of Domnall Ua Buachalla, Patrick Colgan, Patrick Kirwan, Matthew Maguire. On the platform during the reading of the Proclamation by Mr. Gerard Coogan, Chairman of the 1916 Commemoration Committee, were Rt. Rev. Mons. G. Mitchell, President, St. Patrick's College; Very Rev. W. O'Riordan, P.P., Maynooth; Rev. J. Duff, C.C., Michael Dillon, Corbally, Celbridge, nephew of Joseph Plunkett, one of the signatories of the Proclamation; Mrs. B. O'Grady, daughter of the late Patrick Kirwan; Mrs. L. Keely, widow of the late L. Keely, Old I.R.A.; Larry Maguire, son of the late Matthew Maguire; P. J. Weafer, Timothy Tyrell, Jack

Maguire, Michael Cummins, Killeaney, Maynooth; Joseph P. Buckley, son of the late Domnall Ua Buachalla, and Patrick Nolan, Secretary of the Commemoration Committee. The ceremonies concluded with a concert in the Parish Hall. Guests of honour were the surviving marchers and they were greeted with fanfare salute by the Brass and Reed Band. Over 500 enjoyed the excellent show under the M.C., Mr. Patrick Nolan.

Afterwards Mr. Coogan, Chairman of the Committee, thanked each organisation and the public for co-operation. He had a special word of thanks for Mrs. Patrick Farrell and Mrs. Henry Flood, producers of the concert, and the wonderful cast of the show.

Leinster Leader 7 May 1966

Walking in the footsteps of heroes

James Durney

One hundred years after a small band of men left Maynooth to participate in the 1916 Rising around 120 people took part in a re-enactment of the historic event. Organised by 'The Maynooth 1916 Centenary Committee' the aim was to walk in the footsteps of the 'Maynooth Fifteen'. Participants, organisers and supporters gathered at the grounds of Maynooth College, where after registering for the walk, the crowd was addressed by Monsignor Hugh Connolly who read from the eyewitness account of the Very Reverend Monsignor Hogan. On Easter Monday 1916 Monsignor Hogan had appealed to the Maynooth Fifteen to go home saying they were 'poor fools who were going to be slaughtered' by the British. His appeals went unheeded and reluctantly he gave the men his blessing. This time (2016) the blessing came more willingly, as Monsignor Connolly joked with the crowd. The St. Mary's Brass and Reed Band led the procession off from the College Gates to the Harbour where descendants of the Buckley and Weafer families waved a flag to signal the start of the walk.

It was a nice warm day, perfect for a saunter along the Royal Canal, but the pace was steady enough if we wanted to keep to our schedule and reach Binns Bridge by 5.00 p.m. By the time we reached our first water break my legs were quite aware that I had walked 5.3 miles. We stopped at the boat slip and amenity area on the Kildare-Dublin county boundary where refreshments and toilets were provided by Waterways Ireland. After a welcome ten minute break we started

off again on to our final water break, another five miles at Talbot Bridge, Blanchardstown, with refreshments sponsored by Super Valu Maynooth. We were now on the 'home straight' and pushed on for the remaining five miles and reached Binns Bridge on time. Here we grouped together for the walk to the Garden of Remembrance. Several Gardaí on pushbikes ushered the walkers into the bus lane and we proceeded down Dorset Street, Frederick Street North and to the Garden of Remembrance.

The group was met by Críona Ní Dhálaigh, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, who welcomed us to the city and spoke about the significance of the event. Presentations of replica 1916 50th anniversary commemorative medals were made to the Lord Mayor and several of the walkers and short speeches made by three of the organisers, Ken Maddock, Paul Clarke and Eoin McCormack. As Historian in Residence for Co. Kildare, I also made a short speech and read the lines of Matty Maguire's poem:

*We but mustered a few from the plains of Kildare
And bravely we fought for dear Mother Erin
Though forced to surrender, not conquered we were
But strong in our hearts burn the wish to be free,
And we pray for the day to soon come again
And the chance once again to prove we're men.*

From first hearing about the 'Maynooth Fifteen' many years ago I have written and talked about these brave men so much that I felt I had to do the commemorative walk. On reaching Dublin I tried to put myself in their shoes 100 years ago. After walking fifteen miles carrying rifles, grenades, ammunition and possibly some food the Maynooth Fifteen arrived at the G.P.O. to be welcomed by Patrick Pearse and James Connolly. They were given a short rest before being sent to Parliament Street to relieve fellow comrades under attack by British troops. Despite having little or no military experience – only Tom Byrne had been in combat before – they acquitted themselves well.

However, they were forced to retreat and returned to the G.P.O. where they served for the remainder of the week before the evacuation and surrender. While some walkers made their way down to the G.P.O. the memorial garden was a fitting place to end the walk as it is dedicated to the memory of 'all those who gave their lives in the cause of Irish Freedom'. After a group photograph at the 'Children of Lir' sculpture the tired, but proud, walkers made their way home.

However, my trial was not over. The next morning I was up early and back in Maynooth where I was the official starter to the 'Rebellion Run' the Maynooth 10k/5k Challenge. Registration began at 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. in Maynooth Post Primary and then it was down to the College Green where hundreds of runners and walkers were performing stretches and exercises before the start of the run. The Maynooth 10k/5k Challenge was organised to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Rising (24 April 1916) and on hand to spur on the challengers were two of the organisers Gerry Quinn and Teresa Murray and Joe Buckley, grandson of Domhnall Ua Buachalla. At 10.30 a.m. I gave the countdown and the Rebellion Run was off. The finish was at Carton Avenue and each participant was given a specially designed commemorative medal as a 'thank you' for supporting the event.

For the walkers and runners of this momentous 2016 weekend there was plenty of refreshments, encouragement, rest and recuperation. For the Maynooth Fifteen in 1916 there was imprisonment, little encouragement and many years of violence and strife ahead. But for all participants, 100 years apart, there was satisfaction and comradeship, perseverance and pain, and a feeling of a job well done.

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On 24 April 1916 fifteen Irish Volunteers walked from Maynooth to Dublin to take part in the Easter Rising.

The 'Maynooth Fifteen' Remembered recounts the story of fifteen Volunteers from Maynooth, who fought during Easter Week 1916. It includes accounts of the celebrations in the town in 1966 (50th Anniversary) and 2016 (Centenary), along with the obituaries and last resting places of each of the men.

€5.00

All proceeds from the sale of this book will go to
The Maynooth 1916 Centenary Committee