

*The Third Tipperary Brigade: its guerrilla campaign (1919-1921)**

By Kate O'Dwyer

The South Tipperary Brigade of the IRA (also known as the Third Tipperary Brigade) was formally established in October 1918 at a meeting in Tipperary town, presided over by Richard (later General) Mulcahy, representing General Headquarters of the Irish Volunteers. This brigade was the most active of the three in co. Tipperary, the other two being the North (No. 1) Brigade and the Mid (No. 2) Brigade.

Eamonn O Duibhir (1883-1963) from Ballagh near Thurles, one of the pioneers of the modern Irish-Ireland movement in the county, was responsible for setting up the first group of Volunteers in co. Tipperary in 1914. He was a member of the IRB and by 1916 its County Centre, the highest ranking in the county. From 1905 he had been a member of the Gaelic League and from 1908 a member of Sinn Féin. During the War of Independence he was Assistant Quartermaster of the Third Brigade.

One of the turning-points in the national movement in the county was a visit in November 1913 to Tipperary town by Seán MacDiarmada (later executed in 1916), who gave a speech in the Tivoli Hall in O'Brien (Henry) Street. Seán Fitzpatrick, later a member of Dinny Lacey's flying column, recorded that the speech "aroused the dormant, but by no means dead, national spirit of the townspeople and those of the surrounding countryside who attended . . . it . . . was . . . a shot in the arm for . . . Irish Irelanders amongst his audience".¹ It is certainly the case that national feeling among the population of South Tipperary was lifted by this visit.

Two *aeríochtaí* organised by the Volunteers in Ballagh in 1915 and 1917 also made a big impact. They were aimed at encouraging local people to work for the cause of Irish independence. The first, held on a Sunday in September 1915, was opened by Fr. Matt Ryan, PP of Knockavilla, a veteran of the Land War, who made three speeches that day. Piaras McCan, Richard Treacy and Seamus O'Neill also spoke.²

The second *aeríocht* in 1917 was even more successful. Again there was singing, dancing and music and on this occasion books, badges and pamphlets were sold. The RIC were barred from both events, but allowed to enter the second one provided they left their arms outside and took no notes of the proceedings. This defiance by the Volunteers strengthened ties between them and local people; in all, some 17,000 attended the 1917 event.

Increased numbers attended the Irish classes organised by O Duibhir; these were also used to sway people towards the Volunteers. Thomas (later Col.) Ryan, a member of the second flying column, says that it was at these classes his interest in Irish history was awakened.³ Eoin MacNeill's countermanding order in 1916 meant that only eleven men in Kilnamanagh barony came out to fight. They were Conor Deere (Gooldcross), Jim Browne (Clogher), Tom and Michael Kearney, Pat McCormack and Eamonn O Duibhir (Clonoulty), Tadhg O'Dwyer, Michael Sheehan, William Russell O'Dwyer and John O'Halloran (Knockavilla), and Phil Ryan (Mason) Rossmore.

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According to Thomas Ryan, it was not until the conscription crisis of 1918 that membership of the Volunteers increased. But when the threat of conscription passed, the number of recruits fell again.⁴ During 1917 and 1918 Sean Treacy was the principal organiser of the Volunteers in South Tipperary. He was imprisoned twice for these activities – in Mountjoy in 1917 and in Dundalk in 1918. He resorted to a hunger-strike to be granted political status and had to be force-fed. While he was in jail his comrades continued his work, and by the time of his release three battalion units had been formed. These were Clanwilliam (Tipperary town and district), Kilnamanagh (Dundrum and district) and Cashel.

The organisation of the Volunteers consisted of squads of eight members, sections of 16 and companies of four sections. With officers and special service personnel, each company should have had 87 members. However, because the body was organised on a territorial basis, uniformity of numbers was not found in any formation.

Some of the more prominent organisers in South Tipperary were the Meagher family in Ballycahill-Annfield and William Benn, L. Dalton, Michael O'Callaghan, the Roche family and J. Ryan in the areas southwards from Tipperary town. Piaras McCan, P. C. O'Mahony, F. Phillips, the Loobys and Seamus O'Neill worked in the Cashel and Dualla areas. Frank Drohan organised Clonmel, and Thurles was organised by J. O'Kennedy, D. H. Ryan and C. Culhane.

A Brigade Organising Committee was set up in May 1918, with headquarters at Barlows' of Shrough, between Tipperary and Galbally. Personnel elected were: Dan Breen (O/C, or chairman), Maurice Crowe (Adjutant, or secretary), and Matt Barlow, engineer. Others included Dinny Lacey, Con Moloney, Artie Barlow, Michael Sheehan (for Kilnamanagh), Dave Bourke (for Clanwilliam) and Paddy Hogan (for Cashel).⁵

In April 1917 Sean Treacy visited Cahir and proposed the formation of a Volunteer unit there. A battalion was formed, with Ned McGrath as Commandant, Thomas Ryan as Vice Commandant, Michael Ladrigan as Adjutant and Bill Looby of Ballylooby as Quartermaster.

On his release from Dundalk jail in June 1918 Treacy was officially appointed by GHQ as a Volunteer organiser. He set up two more battalions, in Drangan' and Clonmel, with the assistance of Ladrigan and Tom Donovan of Killenaule, so that by the end of October there were six battalions in South Tipperary. It was then that the South Tipperary Brigade was formally set up. Treacy was proposed as O/C but declined, asking that Seamus Robinson be elected. In the following year two more battalions were set up – in Fethard and Carrick-on-Suir – making a total of eight with 56 companies. This structure remained throughout the conflict.

Tipperary Courthouse Scene

During 1917 and 1918 the Volunteers in South Tipperary engaged openly in drilling and parading. According to Sean Fitzpatrick this was "in defiance of an enemy proclamation which prohibited marching in military formation, the wearing of uniforms and the carrying of hurleys".⁶ In March 1918 at Tipperary courthouse Sean Duffy and Tom Rogers, both prominent Volunteers, were charged with illegal drilling. Dan Breen sent out orders for as many men as possible to mobilise in the town with hurleys and sticks.

That morning over 200 showed up and, after dividing into two companies, began to drill. The District Inspector of the RIC sent for military support when his order to the Volunteers to cease drilling was ignored. With the arrival of the soldiers the Volunteers divided into four groups and surrounded them. Some Volunteers then went into the courthouse and made a laughing-stock of the proceedings.⁷

After Brigade HQ was set up in Shrough, Treacy suggested that sawmills be started because of the abundance of trees in the area. As well as having a commercial use, it served as a cover for the committee. Although the comings and goings aroused RIC suspicions, they could not prove that anything illegal was being done.⁹ A munitions factory was set up in the Mooresfort area, where men with the necessary expertise made simple bombs, repaired defective weapons and filled cartridge cases with buckshot or lead chippings. Arms procured in raids on houses were stored in dumps or hidden at Shrough. In Galbally the clerk of the church, Sean Lynch, hid guns inside a statue.

This was the situation in South Tipperary until the Soloheadbeg ambush on January 21, 1919. The men involved "... believed that the movement would go to seed" This is also the view in Dan Breen's account.⁹ "Treacy remarked to me that we had had enough of being pushed around ... while we remained inactive. It was high time that we did a bit of pushing".¹⁰

The object of the Soloheadbeg operation was to capture a consignment of gelignite being brought from Tipperary town to be used at a quarry at Soloheadbeg. Lar Breen, a brother of Dan, had been sent to work in the quarry to gather intelligence. The gelignite (some 160 lbs) was loaded on to a cart outside Tipperary military barracks, with an escort of two RIC men and two council employees. Paddy Dwyer, a Hollyford Volunteer, was posted in the town to see what route would be used.

Having seen the party take the Bohertrime road, he cycled by Kingswell Hill to tell Treacy and the waiting Volunteers. The party was met by a "hands-up" challenge and, on seeing the masked Volunteers, moved to unslung their rifles. At this point Treacy opened fire, followed by Breen and Robinson. Constables O'Connell and McDonnell fell dead. The gelignite was taken to Lisheen on the Tipperary-Dundrum road and some sticks scattered elsewhere as decoys. Those involved in the ambush were Treacy, Breen, Robinson, Tadhg Crowe, Paddy Dwyer, Patrick McCormack, Sean Hogan and Michael Ryan. South Tipperary was placed under martial law, with fairs and meetings banned and a curfew imposed.

The Soloheadbeg ambush was not sanctioned by GHQ. Third Brigade officers, although aware of GHQ displeasure, held a meeting at Nodstown, Cashel, where it was decided that the Soloheadbeg initiative would be followed up. After the ambush the participants went into hiding as a full-scale search was mounted for them. Rewards were offered, starting at £1,000 and going up to £10,000; these were never claimed. GHQ was anxious that the Volunteers involved would go to America until the situation calmed down, but the Tipperary Volunteers refused and instead issued a proclamation directing all British troops to leave the country.¹¹

Ernie O'Malley was sent to South Tipperary at the request of Treacy and Robinson. As a GHQ organiser he was to assist in making the Volunteers into a cohesive fighting force. But he found among Tipperary Volunteers a healthy contempt for GHQ. "They wanted to be left alone ... to work things out in their own way, free of interference from headquarters."¹²

O Duibhir collected arms throughout Munster and bought others in Dublin, one of his



Sean Treacy

suppliers being Sean McGarry, an IRB man working for a steel firm in Pearse Street.¹³ Other weapons were stolen from large houses or taken from the RIC. Thomas Ryan actually held up a British officer with a wooden gun, relieving him of a Webley 45. He also stole another revolver from an RIC man who was courting in a park.¹⁴

Frank Drohan, O/C of the Clonmel battalion, hid ammunition in empty paint-tins, which he placed openly on the shelves of the paint store of his family's coach-building business.¹⁵ Treacy hollowed out stairposts and rafters in his home to hide documents and weapons.¹⁶ Other weapons were bought directly by Volunteers from the British military. The two large barracks in Clonmel and Tipperary town traded or sold rifles to Volunteers.¹⁷

O'Malley began his training course by distributing maps to each battalion area, so that they could define their own areas of operation. However, he met many disputes over a stretch of river or road, with each group claiming it as in its own area. "Men did as their grandfathers had done, thinking in brawn . . . Often they were cocksure . . . they had nothing to learn and suspected all ideas."¹⁸

When wooden guns were not available for training, real guns were used with an empty cartridge placed so as to prevent hammer action. Wooden grenades weighted down with lead were used in practice, so that men could learn to throw them with accuracy. As well as learning how to use cover and to disarm each other, they practised sniping at sounds, moving objects and flashes in the dark.

The variety of weapons used by the Third Brigade was extensive. An old Fenian dump discovered near Treacy's home contained eleven rifles, two of which were said to have been used by the Volunteers. It was impossible to get a comprehensive list of arms from a brigade; companies were afraid they might be asked to share their arms with other companies.

In May 1919 companies from Tipperary town and Mount Bruis seized 450 two-gallon tins of petrol from an oil company's premises at Limerick Junction. This haul was hidden in a dump at Kilross to be used in attacks on the military barracks in Tipperary and on police barracks.¹⁹ It was also used to destroy the military rifle range at Ballyglass outside Tipperary. It was transported in milk-churns as if the carriers were coming from a creamery!

The South Tipperary Brigade realised that intelligence gathering was essential. O Duibhir records that by the end of 1919 the RIC there were "honeycombed with men who were loyal".²⁰ Once when transporting arms he saw three RIC men on the road in front. They saluted, then approached and shook hands, offering to escort him past Dundrum barracks. Tom Carew, the local IO, had won them over! In the same barracks Constable Stack had been ordered to follow O Duibhir; he too was sympathetic to the Volunteers and only reported what he was asked to. Thomas Ryan discovered after the Truce that in Ardfinnan the RIC and the local Volunteers O/C had an understanding that the local Volunteers would be safe so long as they did not attack the barracks.²¹

Volunteers instructed to observe details of military and police movements were able to do so because some were employed in barracks as civilian workers.²² Treacy ordered his men to take note of details like the types of buildings adjoining barracks, precautions taken when doors were opened and the position of phone and other wires.²³ Treacy also ordered that dispatches carried by cyclists be hidden inside cycle-tubes and even inside hollowed-out turnips.

Because dispatches were occasionally captured by the RIC, Battalion numbers were sometimes altered by the Volunteers in order to cause confusion.²⁴ Telephone wires were tapped, either on the roadside or by getting copies of coded messages from friendly operators. Codes were even supplied at times by friendly RIC men.²⁵ By 1920 the Tipperary Volunteers were also using portable wirelesses for communications between units.²⁶

Local support (active or tacit) was the base on which the Third Brigade thrived. As well as providing safe houses, food, clothing and information, some locals went further. To move arms from Dublin, Paddy Ryan (Thady), who worked at Kingsbridge (now Heuston) station, put consignments on a train that would be collected by Volunteers at Goodcross station.²⁷

Barracks Attacks Begin

Attacks on barracks began in earnest in January 1920. Drombane Hall, which was used as a police barracks, was attacked in January using some of the Solohead gelignite.²⁸ The gable-end was destroyed and half the roof blown off. The building had to be evacuated because it was so badly damaged. This attack was an example of co-operation between different areas and units. Drombane was in the Second Brigade area and the attack was organised by men of that area, but Third Brigade units also took part and supplied the gelignite.

In April eight evacuated police outposts were burned and an attack made on Roskeen barracks. Again, as at Clonoulty earlier that month, no arms were captured. April also saw the destruction of barracks at Clonea near Carrick-on-Suir by Third Brigade units and, in a joint operation on 28 April, Ballylanders barracks was attacked by the Third Brigade and the East Limerick Brigade. This time the RIC surrendered with seven carbines, five revolvers and ammunition.²⁹

After O'Malley, Treacy and Robinson had re-organised each battalion area, it was decided to mount a large-scale attack in Hollyford in May. It was chosen because the area had one of the strongest companies in the county; also, Hollyford lies deep in the hills and O'Malley had found that "The hill country people had learned not to talk . . . and this reticence was an added protection".³⁰ Furthermore, Teacy had spent his childhood there, his mother being one of the Allis family. The most important factor, however, was that the Hollyford company had been trained by Jim Gorman, who had deserted from the Australian army while home on leave and was a skilled marksman.

Shanahan's public-house was the centre for the operation. The barracks itself was a long two-storied building with windows protected by steel shutters. It was decided that the form of attack would be through the roof. The north gable, however, was 40 feet high; so the problem was how to find a ladder long enough to reach the top. The problem was overcome when a local mason joined together four ladders in a series of intricate knots he had learned while at sea.

The attacking party consisted of five men with shotguns and seven riflemen under Treacy. Robinson and O'Malley began the roof attack. Both were armed with two revolvers each, hammers to break slates, detonators and fuse. Each had a petrol container strapped to his back and sods of turf soaked in paraffin. Buckets of petrol were carried to the foot of



Seumas Robinson

the ladder; 50 gallons of petrol and paraffin were used. Grenades were thrown through the hole in the roof and revolvers emptied. O'Malley told the men not to shout. "A silent attack . . . would unsteady [the defenders'] nerves and make them more uncertain in the darkness of what was coming next".³¹

By dawn the barracks was destroyed and had to be evacuated next day. Lessons learned at Hollyford were rectified at Drangan and Rearcross later that Summer. In the meantime attacks continued. In May a vacant barracks at Carrickbeg was blown up and Cashel courthouse destroyed. Next night Glenbane barracks was destroyed. The South Tipperary and East Limerick Brigades joined in a successful attack on Kilmallock barracks on 27 May and again on 4 June on Cappawhite barracks.

In June 1920 it was decided to attack Drangan barracks at the southern side of the Slieveardagh mountains. Having learned at Hollyford the need for a pump, one was borrowed from Mullinahone creamery. The centre for this operation was the home of George Hayden, the engineer in the Mullinahone area. Men from Callan battalion in co. Kilkenny also took part and a doctor was positioned in a cottage in the village.

The attack began by spraying incendiary material (using the pump) across the roof, which was then set alight by throwing mud bombs (made from local yellow clay) from below. The men on the roof protected themselves with wet sacks to avoid getting burned. Although the pump broke down several times, it was effective enough to set the building ablaze. The attack ended with the surrender of the police. They were ordered to throw out their weapons and ordered to march away. The capture of the arms proved a huge boost for Brigade morale.

July 1920 saw a large-scale attack on Rearcross barracks. Although situated in the North Brigade area, it was responsible for sending out raiding parties to the south and was "a thorn in the side of the south Tipperary volunteers".³² It was well protected, standing back from the road with a projecting porch. The back yard was covered with rolls of barbed wire and the front windows steel plated, with wire mesh over them to guard against grenades.

The barracks and the shop next-door were owned by a man named Flannery, who had not found favour with local Volunteers because he had ignored the police boycott. His shop was to be the base for the attack. It transpired that the North Tipperary Brigade O/C knew nothing of the proposed attack; the first he heard of it was some hours beforehand, the battalion involved not having informed Brigade Staff. Then trouble began! The Newport company was ordered not to block any roads, and it is likely that the same order was given to the other North Tipperary companies, so that any road to be used by any reinforcements would be unprotected.

Also, a dispatch rider was sent to inform the South Brigade that they were in North Brigade territory and, as they had no jurisdiction, they would have to withdraw. This was serious for Treacy as a senior officer. However, O'Malley assumed command as he was directly answerable to GHQ, so he took it on himself to sanction the presence of the South Tipperary Volunteers.³³

Flannery opened his door at a late hour when those outside called for a drink. With socks over their boots to reduce noise, the Volunteers went up into the rafters, bringing barrels of petrol. They also had bombs and grenades. Jim Gorman made a hole in Flannery's roof with a sledge and then got on to the barracks roof. Bombs were dropped through the hole he had made, and a pump sprayed fuel across the roof.

The police eventually moved to a concrete shelter at the rear. At 9 a.m. a scout gave a false alarm about reinforcements, which infuriated Treacy because some Volunteers retreated without orders. However, the success of the attack was measured in the inconvenience caused to the RIC, who had to set up in Flannery's shop and the local school while the barracks were repaired.

Problems with GHQ!

The problem of GHQ sanction (or rather the lack of it) arose again in August 1920 with a proposed attack on Clerihan barracks. Robinson had to attend a GHQ meeting in Dublin; in the event of his not being back, Treacy would take charge. Robinson made it in time, but with a GHQ officer who wanted to know if Treacy had GHQ sanction. Treacy said he had not, and that most of his previous operations had none either. This was precisely what the Dublin meeting had been about, with Robinson questioning the need for the GHQ sanction, which he felt would discourage local initiative. But the Clerihan attack was called off; the Volunteers had to obey the orders of a senior officer when he was present.³⁴

As O'Donoghue commented: "the democratic organisation of the Volunteers and the impossibility . . . of any tight control by headquarters staff permitted and encouraged . . . local initiative on a scale quite abnormal in a regular army . . . IRA organisation . . . developed . . . services to meet specific needs as they arose".³⁵

One such development was the formation of a flying column, suggested by Sean Treacy and Dan Breen. The first was formed early in October 1920 under Dinny Lacey of the 4th battalion. It comprised men mainly from the 3rd and 4th battalion areas and some of the Galtee battalion. By the end of October it was about 70 strong. As this was considered too large, men were grouped into their own areas as Active Service Units.

Similar ASUs were formed in Tipperary and Clonmel.³⁶ In November a second column was formed under Sean Hogan. Made up mainly of men of the 5th and 6th battalion areas, it operated primarily between the Galtee and Knockmealdown mountains. One of the first operations by the No. 1 column was the Thomastown ambush on 28 October 1920 of a small group of military travelling from Templemore to Tipperary. The road was simply blocked with a cart and the convoy fired on. According to Sean Fitzpatrick, five or six soldiers were killed and more wounded; there was only one IRA casualty, who got a leg wound.

The No. 2 column first operated from a house in Glenpatrick; when it became dangerous they moved into the Comeragh mountains. Here they had a clear view of three major roads. Being up in the mountains gave the men a sense of security according to Thomas Ryan.

No. 1 column was next in operation on 13 November at Lisnagaul near Bansha. The target was a Crossley tender full of police. On hearing a warning shot from a Volunteer look-out, the police fired back; Sean Fitzpatrick's opinion is that they thought it was a lone sniper. But when they rounded a bend they were met by a hail of fire and the vehicle crashed, four RIC being killed and four seriously injured. The column captured rifles and ammunition and set the vehicle alight.³⁷

No. 1 column spent Christmas 1920 resting in Donaskeigh and Grantstown. For many it was their



Sean Hogan

first Christmas away from home. In January 1921 the Mount Bruis company and one Tipperary town company sniped at Tipperary barracks from its perimeter. Usually the barracks ignored such fire; but this attack was sustained, so soldiers came hurriedly from their beds, shooting indiscriminately and wounding their own men.³⁸

At times columns co-operated. Nos. 1 and 2 joined in an ambush of a convoy of lorries at Hylands Cross between the Galtees and Knockmealdowns. One soldier was killed and two wounded, one dying later. The prisoners were released and the lorries burned. As Lacey's men were on their way to the Knockmealdowns they encountered District Inspector Potter and, discovering who he was, took him prisoner. They decided to use him to bargain for the life of a Volunteer named Traynor about to be executed in Dublin. The British refused to hand over Traynor, who was hanged in Mountjoy. Potter was then executed by the column.³⁹

After the formation of the flying columns, the function of the Brigade staff became almost purely administrative. Their HQ at Rosegreen was impressive, an underground room built by the Rosegreen company with railway sleepers and part of Cashel golf links pavilion.⁴⁰ The trapdoor was covered with sods, which were watered daily to keep the grass growing. The room contained files, typewriters, stocks and bedding; lighting came from a car battery. According to Thomas Ryan, from the time the columns began to operate, Robinson remained at Brigade HQ and "was not regarded by the men as having any effective control over them".⁴¹

Early in 1921 the 2nd Southern Division was formed, with Ernie O'Malley as O/C. It comprised five brigades – South and Mid Tipperary, Mid and East Limerick and Kilkenny. O'Malley believed that South Tipperary would become its backbone as it was the strongest and best organised.⁴² Divisional spirit was hard to build, however, because of the shortage of arms. The Truce of July 11, 1921 came as a relief, not only for the British forces in South Tipperary but also for the Volunteers there. Dan Breen admitted: "the respite was welcomed as the level of hostilities over the previous months could not be sustained indefinitely due to problems of supply and manpower".⁴³

FOOTNOTES

1. Fitzpatrick, Sean: *Recollections of the Fight for Irish Freedom* (Tipperary, 1975), p. 5.
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3. Ryan, Thomas, in *Tipperary Historical Journal* 1991, p. 20.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
5. Fitzpatrick, op. cit., p. 7.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
7. Ambrose, Joseph G.: *The Dan Breen Story* (Cork, 1981), pp. 13-14.
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9. Gaynor, Sean, in *Tipperary Historical Journal* 1993, p. 34.
10. Breen, Dan: *My Fight for Irish Freedom* (Tralee, 1964), p. 38.
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12. O'Malley, Ernie: *Raids and Rallies* (Dublin, 1982), p. 44.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
14. Ryan, T., op. cit., p. 24.
15. Frank Drohan, in *Nationalist Centenary Supplement* 1990, p. 42.
16. Ryan, Desmond: *Sean Treacy and the Third Tipperary Brigade IRA* (Tralee, 1945), p. 30.
17. Fr. Colmille, op. cit., p. 46.
18. O'Malley, E., op. cit.: *On Another Man's Wound* (London, 1961), p. 134.
19. Fitzpatrick, op. cit., p. 21.
20. O Duibhir, E., statement to Military History Bureau, p. 58.

21. Ryan, T., op. cit., p. 28.
22. Colmcille, op. cit., p. 46.
23. Ambrose, op. cit., p. 16.
24. Ryan, Thomas, in *Tipperary Historical Journal* 1991, p. 47.
25. O'Malley, op. cit. (1961), p. 132.
26. Hill, Sean, in *Tipperary Star*, 8 Jan. 1994.
27. O Duibhir, op. cit. (Mil. Hist. Bur.), p. 59.
28. Fr. Colmcille, in *Capuchin Annual* 1970, p. 261.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 262.
30. O'Malley, op. cit. (1982), p. 13.
31. O'Malley, op. cit. (1961), p. 138.
32. Fr. Colmcille, op. cit. (1982), p. 264.
33. O'Malley, op. cit. (1982), p. 51.
34. Fitzpatrick, op. cit., p. 24.
35. Ryan, T., op. cit. (1991), p. 27.
36. Fitzpatrick, op. cit., p. 26.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
38. Ryan, T., op. cit. (1992), p. 49.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 50 and 52.
40. O'Malley, op. cit. (1961), p. 280.
41. Ryan, Thomas, in *Tipperary Historical Journal* 1993, p. 51.
42. O'Malley, op. cit. (1961), p. 279.
43. Marnane, Denis G.: *Land and Violence: A History of West Tipperary* (Tipperary, 1985), p. 128.

Not a Founder

Some GAA historians, notably W. E. Murray in his 1977 article in *Irish Historical Studies*, "The I.R.B. and the Beginnings of the G.A.A.", and Murray de Búrca in both his *The G.A.A. A History* and *Irish Gaelic Football* and the GAA suggest that Maloney was actually present in Thurles at the foundation meeting. However, no documentary evidence has surfaced to support their assumptions.

Both writers claim that Maloney's name was left out of the list of those present because he was a noted member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.). Maloney's alleged membership of the I.R.B. is based on his name appearing twice in police returns of members of the organisation. Unlike his two Irish Tipperary colleagues at national level in the GAA, J.K. Brooks (Thurles) and Patrick T. Foster (Newmarket) there is no documentary record of his being under surveillance by the police or of a dossier having been kept on his movements.

Maloney gave no indication that he had been in Thurles on 1 November 1884 when, at that December 1884 meeting of the GAA, he was elected to the executive. It was almost certainly the nucleus of the first GAA club in the county. However, 21 years later he had made such a claim in a letter to the *Irish News* of 30 December 1905 he stated that three of the delegates in Thurles in November 1884 "were members of the I.R.B. Institute".