



Cumann Staire Chontae Thiobraid Árann

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Miscellany

Ministir réabhlóideach a chaith tréimhse i gCluain Meala: Seán Ua Cearnaigh

Níl mórán daoine a cleachtaíonn an creideamh Preispíteireacht i gCluain Meala na laethanta seo, ná le fada. Ach bhíodar ann sa tseanaimsir, iad gafa, den chuid is mó, le cúrsaí gnó. Ministir Preispíteireach amháin a chaith cúpla bliain ar an mbaile (áit a d'éag se), bhí sé de cháil air go raibh sé ar cheannairí na nÉireannach Aontaithe i gCúige Uladh. Ach bhí sé de cháil air freisin gur thug sé cúl le prionsabail na nÉireannach Aontaithe le linn dó a bheith i gCluain Meala. An tUrramach James Worrall ab ainm don duine seo.

Fear nach raibh an chuid is fearr den tsláinte aige riamh ba ea James Worrall. Rugadh i gcathair Luimnigh é thart faoin mbliain 1764. Bhain sé féin agus a mhuintir leis an Eaglais Bhunaithe. Cuireadh go Coláiste na Tríonóide é, áit ar bhain sé céim M.A. amach. Bhí sé ag dul le bheith ina mhinistir Anglacánach. Ach d'iompaigh sé ina Phreispíteireach agus d'imigh sé leis ó thuaidh. D'iarr sé ar Chúirt Eaglasta Aontroma é a cheapadh mar cheadúnach, rud a rinneadar ar ball beag. Chuaigh sé le múinteoireacht le linn dó a bheith ag feitheamh le pobal eaglasta dá chuid féin. Bhí sé mar oide príobháideach ag an gclann uasaicmeach Turnley i bPort na Carraige, Co. Aontroma. Oirníodh é ar 16 Márta 1796 agus ceapadh é mar mhinistir i Latharna, Co. Aontroma. Ministir dúthrachtach a bhí ann, teagascóir reiligiúnda den scoth, fear lách léannta de réir dealraimh. Ach bhí an tsláinte go dona aige. Bhíodh an múcadh, ach go háirithe, ag cur air go minic.

Liobráláí láidir a bhí ann. Bhí sé go tréan ar thaobh chearta na gCaitliceach. Chuaigh sé isteach sna hÉireannaigh Aontaithe cúig nó sé bliana roimh 1798. Go leor dá chuid phobail eaglasta féin i Latharna, áfach, ba dhúlseoirí dochta iad agus níor réitigh siad a bheag nó a mhór lena ministir. D'éirigh cuid acu as bheith ag freastal ar an teampall, fiú. Lean Worrall ar aghaidh, áfach, é níos díograisí ná riamh i gcúis na nÉireannach Aontaithe. Deir an staraí William McMillan:

*"As a United Irishman he opened his pulpit to Rev. James Porter of Greyabbey, whilst he was making a tour through the province, nominally delivering lectures on natural philosophy, but really swearing in United Irishmen."*¹

An tUrramach James Porter atá luaite sa sliocht thuas, bhí sé ar na ceannairí ba chróga a bhí ar ghluaiseacht na saoirse ó thuaidh. Chroch fórsaí na Corónach gallda é ar an dara lá d'Iúil 1798.

Cé go raibh dlúthbhaint ag James Worrall leis na pleananna a rinneadh don Éirí Amach, ní raibh sé páirteach sa troid. Ní air a bhí an locht, mar bhí sé an-bhreoite ag an am. Ach ghabh na fórsaí gallda é agus chaith sé roinnt seachtainí í bpríosún gruama Charraig Fhearghusa.

Nuair a scaoileadh amach é bhí cuid mhaith dá phobal eaglasta i ndiaidh é a thréigean i ngeall ar a dhearcadh réabhlóideach. Bhí Worrall imithe ó Latharna sul má d'fhill na dílseoirí siúd ar an teampall.

Naimhdeas a phobail, nó cúrsaí sláinte b'fhéidir, a spreag Worrall chun imeacht ón áit. Shíl a

dhoctúir gur chóir dó cur faoi i mbaile griannmar éigin. Is dócha gur mhol duine éigin Cluain Meala mar áit oiriúnach. Ar aon nós, chuir Worrall faoi in 1802 sa bhaile álainn cois Siúire. Baile Caitliceach, den chuid is mó, ba ea Cluain Meala. Bhí na Preispitéirigh tearc go leor ann. Ach bhí cumhacht nach beag ag an Eaglais Bhunaithe Anglacánach ar an mbaile agus sna ceantair máguaird. Bhain an cinseal logánta leis an Eaglais sin. Cuid den chinseal chéanna agus a lucht leanúna bhíodar thar a bheith biogóideach, baint mhór acu leis an Ord Oráisteach.

Agus Worrall, ar liobrálai agus Éireannach Aontaithe é tráth, cén taobh den chlaí ar sheas sé? Creid é nó ná creid, ach d'iompaigh sé amach ina Oráisteach. Bhí sé anois níos binbí agus níos oráistí ná an tOráisteach ba threise i gcontae fairsing Thiobraid Árann. Deir William McMillan:

"In the south his political opinions took a completely opposite turn, so much so that the violent language and manner in which he was said to have expressed his new-born Protestant zeal shocked even the Orange Squires of Tipperary."²

Dhá bhliain a chaith Worrall i gCluain Meala sular éag sé. Fuair sé bás ar an 28ú lá de mhí na Samhna 1804, agus gan é ach tuairim is daichead bliain d'aois.

Fear maith a bhí ann tráth. Loic sé faraoir. I ndeireadh na dála ní raibh sé dílis d'idéil na nÉireannach Aontaithe!

Notáí

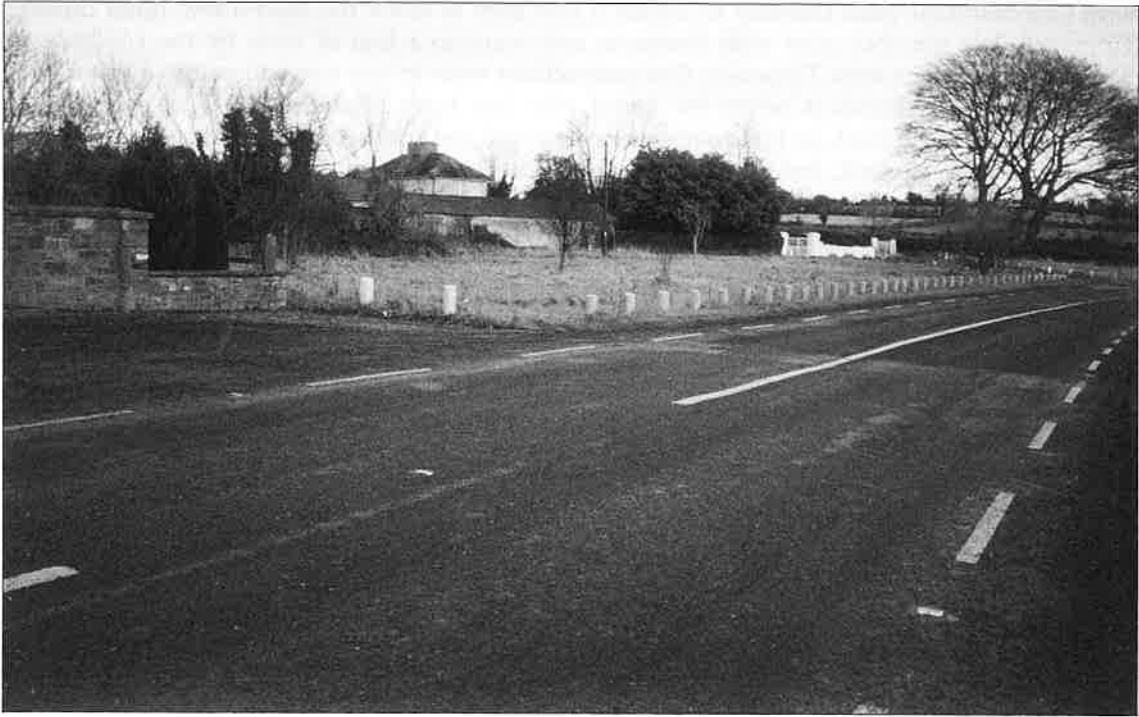
1. William McMillan. Aiste — Presbyterian Ministers and the Ulster Rising (leathanach 96) sa leabhar *Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter: The Clergy and 1798* (in eagar Liam Swords) Columba Press, Baile Átha Cliath, 1997.
2. *ibid.* (leathanach 97).

Preparing for an Ambush: Pa Lonergan

Early in the month of May 1921 the South Tipperary Brigade Flying Column, led by Dinny Lacey, arrived at the house of my father, Patrick R. Lonergan, at Kilfeacle, Tipperary at nightfall. A Flying Column consisted of between thirty and forty very well armed IRA men who were on the run on account of their republican activities in their native districts. My father's house was Kilfeacle Company's headquarters, and it was thither all accounts came of intending engagements. On this occasion the members of the column had come to make preparations for an ambush of British forces, planned for the following day.



Pa Lonergan. Photo taken while on service as a member of the Irish Volunteers during the Spanish Civil War of 1936-37. His account of his experiences in that war was published in THJ 2001.



Roadside at Ballyhurst – site of the ambush. Nearby is a memorial to 'The Fenian men of West Tipperary' who gathered in this area to participate in the rising of 1867.

On this particular evening our company was present to get billets for the members of the column – two or three to each house according to size. Then guards had to be placed at crossroads around the area, and instructions given as to what steps should be taken if the enemy appeared.

Dinny Lacey and some senior members of the column adjourned to the parlour where they held a meeting. I was told to wait outside to receive instructions. After a long time Dinny Lacey came out and told me to go to the house of William Ryan at Clonmaine, Donaskeigh, which was about three miles away across the fields. There I was to await a body of IRA men from Donohill, who were expected to arrive at about ten o'clock, and I was to bring them to the house where Dinny Lacey was staying. I duly went to Ryans' house, and told them my purpose. The inmates of the house went to bed, and I waited on by the fireside.

It was after four o'clock when I heard the dog barking. I went out and met Larry Power and twenty members of his Donohill company. He told me that there had been a mix-up about the meeting place – Doherty's of Ballyrobin. They were two families called Doherty in Ballyrobin, both of whose houses had been used as meeting places. The volunteers had assembled at the wrong house, had waited for a long period and had then gone home. After some time the mistake was discovered and all the men under orders had to be rounded up and brought on.

I got back to Dinny Lacey at about six o'clock, and then we had to scatter them around for their breakfast. The ambush was to be held at Thomastown, about five miles away. The departure time was a lot later than planned. The ambush party went on its way, and I was sent

with Commandant Seán Downey to collect a few men to block the road a few miles outside Tipperary. We got four men with crosscuts and went to a line of trees by the roadside at Ballyhurst, 2½ miles from Tipperary. Our instructions were to saw a tree to within a few inches of falling, and to knock it when we heard rifle fire from Thomastown. That tree would effectively block the road, so that reinforcements could not come from Tipperary barracks. We waited until five o'clock, but no sound came from Thomastown. We withdrew and left the shaking tree, which the owner felled the following week.

It later emerged that the ambushing column was late arriving in position, and the enemy forces had already gone through.

Micháel Doheny's description of hurling in the 1820s and 1830s: William Nolan

In 1859 Michael Doheny the exiled Young Irelander wrote a collection of autobiographical sketches for the *Irish American* newspaper. Invariably Doheny was more interested in political matters but on a few occasions he revisited the Tipperary of his childhood and outlined aspects of its social life. The following extracts were published on 19 February 1859 and relate to his memories of the game of hurling. Doheny was born at Brookhill near Fethard in 1805 so we can presume that he was actively involved in athletic activities in the 1820s and 1830s. In the *Tipperary Historical Journal*, 2001, Liam Ó Donnchú noted that Doheny's revolutionary colleague, David Power Conygham, referred to hurling in his book *The O'Donnell of Glen Cottage* (1860). The game described by Doheny appears to be the Tipperary version of cross-country hurling. There are details on the positioning of players and the skills pertinent to various positions. In his analysis on the decline of the game which Doheny dates to the pre-famine period he emphasises the opposition of the priests and the disinclination of the farmers to allow the game on their grazing lands. He says nothing of landlords or of the government implying that it was 'internal' rather than 'external' pressures which weakened the game. In the context of the GAA's early commitment to athletics it is of interest that hurling in Doheny's day was but one element in a range of sporting activities. The version of Doheny's account which follows has been edited to remove material extraneous to his details on hurling. Its inclusion has been prompted by the victory of Tipperary in the All-Ireland hurling final of 2001.

Having mentioned the incident of the evening hurling match, I may as well here present a hurried sketch of that most exhilarating, exciting and noble sport. "The hurling" included many things besides the actual game. It prevailed among all classes and everywhere though its rules and conditions were different in different localities. In my part of the country there was hurling among the small boys, hurling among the large boys, hurling among the grown men, and hurling among the veterans. It took place usually on Sunday afternoon. Usually a match was made between the boys on the ground; one would call his favourite hurler (the first by toss), and then another his favourite and so on till all were exhausted. Then, in the middle of a fair field, the ball was thrown up high in the air and upon it every eye was fixed, and some half dozen or so eagerly waited for its descent to have the first blow. Then blow followed blow; and the

ball sometimes high in the air, sometimes on the bound, sometimes rolling on the ground, received the heartiest blows amid cheers and bravos and shouts, the merriest, wildest, most vehement and exciting that ever fell on the ear withal. Each boy took the place his own choice and aptitude suggested; and for hours the contest would continue without either side gaining a perch on the other, the conflict raging all the time over at least forty perches of the field, each boy, constrained by no rules, did his utmost to force the ball through the defences of the other side. My place, since I remember, was in the middle of the combat, where dexterity was of less avail than strength. I took this post in the game at a very early age and held it till I was a man. According as the persons engaged were advanced in years, the game became more exciting, and the interest in the result more intense and feverish. When the match was made we use to 'strip', which meant, to remove our shoes and stockings, coats and hats. I have been engaged in many and many a scene involving the deepest interests that ever challenged human susceptibilities; but never did I feel all my energies roused, never were muscle and eye and nerve and heart strained to the same tension, as when I used to stand 'stripped', waiting for the ball, when I watched it as it rose and came down and the first desperate dash was made.

I here speak of the boy and not the man, and much less the veteran. In the hurling between men, which invariably grew out of the hurling between boys, rivalries and jealousies, sometimes darkening into animosities, would begin to dim the effidgence of that the brightest, most exhilarating, and speaking physically, the most elevating of all sensations. I experienced this change too, but with inward pain, as I saw men eying me furtive glance and angry menace with whom as a boy I used to contend with no feelings between as but one of mutual admiration and love.

The hurling between men was, however, THE HURLING. It took place like the other on Sunday afternoons, but not always. When it was on weekdays it lost much of its softening influences. The interest of winning absorbed every other, and controlled the feelings of sage and matron, man and woman, youth and maid, lad and girl, down to the very child – on Sundays other thoughts intervened – among the actual performers the excitement and anxiety may be as great; but the scene was well calculated to subdue, if not expel the angrier passions that grew out of rivalries, and sometimes, it may be out of old sores and old feuds half patched up.

About one o'clock groups of men and women would be seen converging to the hurling field, called the 'Green', after the fashion of the times of old, wherein the field of tournament was so named, for attached to every regal fort was a 'Green' literally, a field of tournament. To the 'Green' came the happy groups. Here the wooer and his sweetheart, and, oh! how sweet and dear and precious and well proved by the tender yet shrinking care with which he helped her over the fences, wound slowly round by devious ways where they by no means needed to go into the field, and then parted to save appearances. By other ways came boys and girls and grown up people, – some boisterous, some silent, some who met often, and some who never met before. The hurlers, who were to be of the day walked towards the scene distracted or in groups, and in this case discussing the strong and weak points of their adversaries. The number of persons at one of those matches usually varied from five hundred to five thousand. In one corner of the field was the play called 'high gate', where men and women took each other's hands and one stood in the middle of the circle they formed. The privilege of this one was to call whom he or she pleased to follow him or her, and if a male he made a nod or mere feint and was caught, and if a female she used her position to tantalise or to please her partner;

the forfeit of being caught being in every case a kiss. You may be sure, good reader that in case the wooers I have shown thee advancing under shade of hawthorn to the scene, if they joined to the 'high gate' never called out or followed one another; and you may be sure, too, that never did either [or] the least twitches of jealousy if he or she saw, in accordance with the custom of the play, kisses bestowed or received. That was the real and rare charm of true rural life. Then there was in another part of the Green the game of leap frog. On the Green itself were matches of boys and amateur hurlers. The latter were men who were not to engage in the match. Striking the ball perpendicularly in the air and receiving it as it descended on his hurl, and sending it again on high, ten, twenty, thirty times successively without moving an inch, was a favourite mode of exhibiting the skill and power of the ambitious contestant. In one part of the Green a match of boys would be engaged with a desperation which excluded or absorbed all other subjects, even including the great trial of parish or county prowess that was to crown the day. In a different direction would be seen a straining group of men witnessing a trial of strength between two athletic-throwers; in another spot could be discovered one, two, or more lithe leapers, on whom hundreds of admiring eyes would be fixed, as they bounded through the long line of spectators with an agility absolutely marvellous.

But evening is drawing nigh. The sun is sinking fast. The veterans are becoming serious. Here and there a young girl abandons the "high-gate" and looks troubled and anxious. Groups of men move nervously to and fro. Anon you see eager young women with their hearts in their eyes displaying rather ostentatiously a hat or coat, or some other article of dress belonging to the other sex. Now a man bounds forth stripped. A moment before, and all the evening, he might have been seen moving sluggishly about; but now he seems of another nature and another sphere. To compare his agility with that of a deer would be doing him vast injustice, for the change in his movements, in his muscle and nerve is nothing to the change in his heart. He is bare of foot, wears knee-breeches girt at the waist by a belt or string, a short flannel waistcoat, and cap or light straw hat. Another, and another, and another follow, all equipped alike, inspired alike, and impassioned alike. Twenty-one at a side are now stripped. They divide into two wings and a centre. In the centre are the heaviest and strongest men, on the *cord* the most dexterous and on the *scriob* the fleetest of foot. Thus arranged, they come face to face with their opponents and take each other's hurlies as boxers take each other's hands. Some experienced old hurler is appointed to throw up the ball. See it rise in the air glistening in the setting sun. The fourteen men that constitute both centres close where it is to descend. It comes, the hurlies clash, the men clutch as if for a death wrestle, and some are sent sprawling; heads, limbs, ball and hurlies are now in one entangled mass. How it happens that heads and legs and arms and ribs are not mashed in so reckless a melee is almost a miracle; and yet they are no sooner down than up, no sooner up than down. The ball is now here, now there, now in the air, now driven before some one of unmatched fleetness. The crowd becomes as excited as the performers, cheering, encouraging, exulting, as the fortunes of the hour incline.

But the struggle seldom lasted long, no more than half an hour, when the contest was decided. In my region there was no goal. The victorious party drove the ball before them over fences and rivers and walls and gullies wherein the hurlers met each other head foremost, but no one ever complained of his fate.

As I have said, the sport is fast passing away. Its decay is owing to several causes among which these are leading. First, the introduction of the dance drew down on the

hurling the opposition of the priest. In some instances, too, of late, family and faction fights were renewed at the hurling, which still more imperatively called for the reprobation of the clergy. And finally there was yet another cause which operated more effectually than any or perhaps all others, namely the disinclination of the farmers to allow the hurling on their grazing lands. It was curious to observe how this feeling gradually gained on the people. In the space of twenty years it so extended that what was first a rare exception indeed became an universal and unrelaxing rule. That evils were growing up with the sport is undoubted, but the evils could be averted or crushed out by the same power and agency that were sufficient to put down the hurling itself. And putting down the hurling was so far crushing out the national heart. Woe to those who lend themselves to the unholy work of unnerving a people and accommodating them to the fetters of their masters. A few feeble attempts have been made in this country [America] to revive hurling but without success, because politicians seek to make it subservient to their selfish and most unworthy purposes.