Decade of Centenaries in Kilkenny

in Kilkenny

(1913- 1923) - Year by year

An information booklet for primary schools
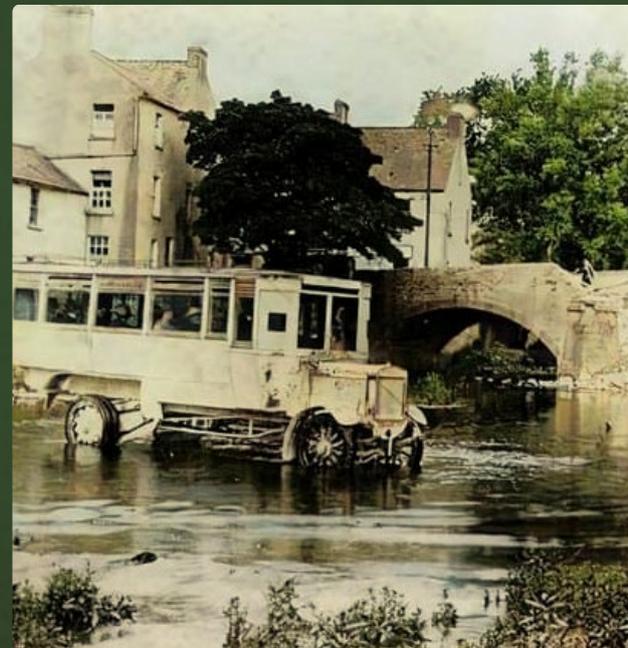
INTRODUCTION

The years between 1913 and 1923 witnessed many important events throughout Kilkenny and Ireland, which really did change the course of Irish history. Over the past few years, many commemorations were held to remember the centenary (100 years) of these events and the people that took part in them. The government has called this time; 'The Decade of Centenaries'. So many things happened, that it can all become a little bit confusing! For example, there were tensions over 'Home Rule', then in 1914, World War One broke out, in the middle of that we had the 1916 Rising, then right away, just after World War One finishes, the country went straight into a War of Independence and then a Civil War. Phew! We don't do things easy in this country! But have no fear, this booklet by Kilkenny County Council Library Service is here to help. We will try to make it a bit simpler and easier for everyone to understand. We have a timeline of events in Kilkenny during that decade, with details on where you can find further information and resources.

What better way to start a Kilkenny brochure than with hurling! In 1913, Kilkenny won their first 3-in-row of All Ireland Senior Hurling titles, beating Tipperary in the final. It brought much joy to the county. The team was honoured in City Hall with a civic reception. Dick 'Drug' Walsh, Dick Doyle (both

Kilkenny hurling monument, unveiled 2016

Mooncoin), Jack Rochford (Threecastles/ Tullaroan) and Sim Walton (Tullaroan) amassed seven All-Ireland medals each with that year's victory. That record of All-Ireland medals was not matched until Christy Ring did it in the 1950s, and later surpassed it. The next Kilkenny three-in-a-row was not completed until 2008. In 2016, a statue symbolising County Kilkenny's love of hurling was unveiled on Mayor's Walk in the city. In 2021, a statue was unveiled in Mooncoin to the captain of the 1913 team, Dick 'Drug' Walsh.


Lady Desart with Kilkenny hurling 3-in row team- philantropist, Gaelic revivialist, millionairess, Free State senator, Freewoman of Kilkenny
copyright John Kirwan

Links: https://www.dib.ie/biography/walsh-richard-droog-a8895 (Drug Walsh)
https://www.dib.ie/biography/rochford-john-jack-a7758 (Jack Rochford)
https://www.dib.ie/biography/doyle-richard-dick-a3984 (Dick Doyle)
https://www.dib.ie/biography/walton-simon-francis-sim-a8912 (Sim Walton)

The year 1913 saw the continued escalation of what was called the 'Home Rule crisis'. At this time, all the Irish politicians had to go to the House of Commons in Westminster in London. There was no parliament in Ireland. Most of the Irish politicians in London were in the 'Irish Parliamentary Party', led by Wexford man, John Redmond *(bottom right)*. After a general election, Redmond and his MPs found themselves holding the balance of power in the UK. Redmond told the Prime Minister he would support them if they did just one thing for him; give Ireland a 'Home Rule' parliament. This meant we would still be part of the United Kingdom (UK), just like England, Scotland and Wales, but we would have our own parliament on the island of Ireland to look after local affairs. So, a little bit of independence! The Prime Minister agreed. He had no other choice really as he didn't want another election to happen. However, there were some people in Ireland who did NOT want Home Rule. These were called 'Unionists' and were led by Dublin man, Edward Carson *(top left)*. In response, to show how angry they were about it, they setup their own private army known as the UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force), to fight against Home Rule at all
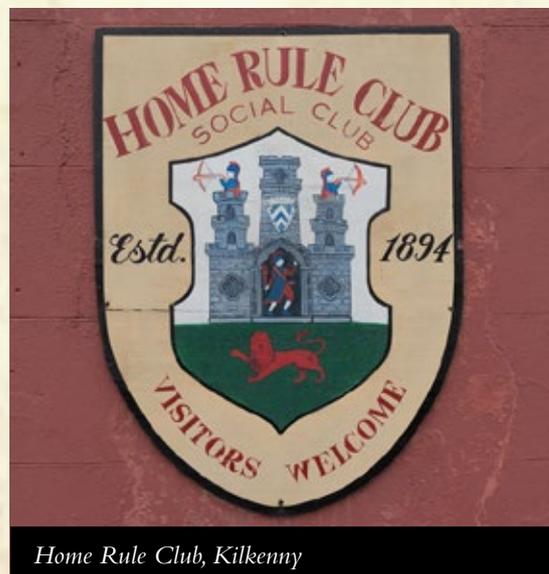
Home Rule Club, Kilkenny

costs. Although the majority of unionists were based in the north of Ireland, there were unionists in County Kilkenny. In fact, a big meeting was held in Kilkenny Castle in 1912 at which '300 unionists' attended in protest against Home Rule. Those that followed Redmond and supported Home Rule were known as 'nationalists'.
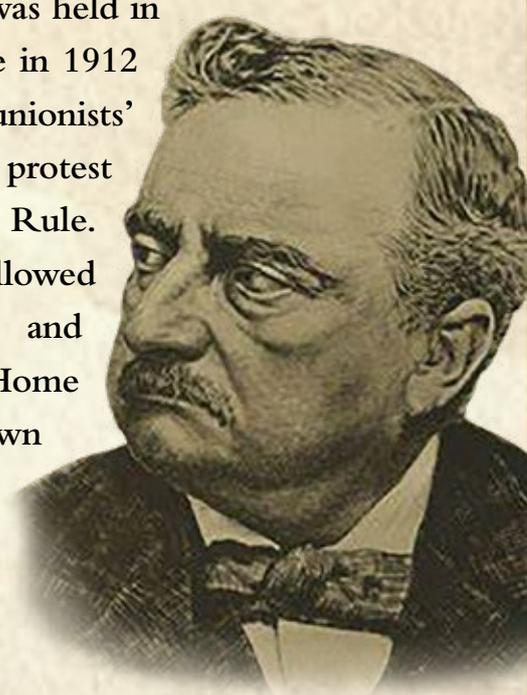
In response to the establishment of the UVF in parts of Ireland, nationalists setup their own army with the opposite aim; to fight for Home Rule. This organisation was known as the 'Irish Volunteers'. To


Roger Casement

great fanfare at the Tholsel/City Hall, a Kilkenny branch of the Irish Volunteers was established at which lots of young Kilkenny men joined up. The two men that launched the Volunteers in Kilkenny that day would become very famous after 1916. These were Roger Casement and Thomas MacDonagh, who were both sadly executed after the Easter Rising. MacDonagh, a Tipperary man, had a connection to Kilkenny as he had taught English and French in St Kieran's boys secondary school in Kilkenny. Here's what one of his pupils had to say about him:

"he taught us honours English for two years and gave us an appreciation of poetry, especially Wordsworth and Keats, which we never lost and often recall… He was of a gentle disposition, and I cannot remember him ever being in a real temper, or even punishing any of us (a contrast indeed to many of his colleagues!)".

Thomas fell out with the President of St Kieran's, because he wanted to introduce Irish as a subject in the school. Some of you would be delighted to hear that Irish was not usually taught in schools in Ireland when we were still part of the United Kingdom. MacDonagh shopping centre in Kilkenny is named after Thomas.
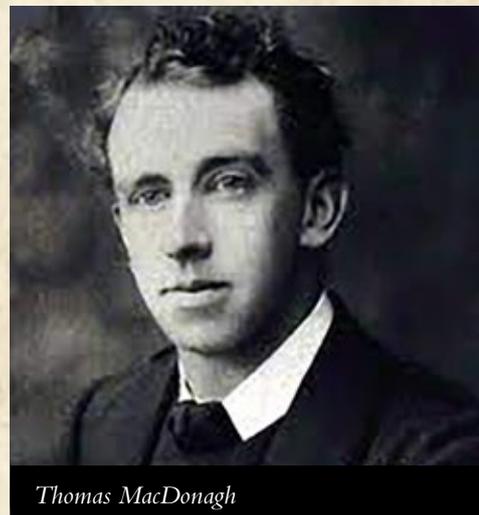
Thomas MacDonagh

Links: www.dib.ie/biography/casement-sir-roger-david-a1532 (Roger Casement)
www.dib.ie/biography/macdonagh-thomas-a5168 (Thomas MacDonagh)

Things were getting really scary during the summer of 1914 as it looked like there could be civil war in Ireland; a fight between nationalists and unionists. 'Civil War' means a fight between people from the same country. However, in August, everyones attention turned to Europe. The First World War had broken out. As Ireland was fully part of the United Kingdom, lots of people joined the Irish regiments of the British Army.

*World War I re-enactment, Kilkenny*   *copyright Ronan McCreevy*

Clogh Irish Volunteers with local Fife and Drum band in 1914

John Redmond encouraged the young men of the Irish Volunteers to enlist and fight in World War One. In response, the British Government passed the Home

Irish Volunteers marching at High Street Kilkenny City on the occasion of John Redmond receiving the Freedom of Kilkenny

Rule act which promised that Ireland would have its own parliament after the war. This caused a split in the Irish Volunteers in Ireland as there were some who believed Irish people shouldn't be involved in any wars Britain had signed up to. However, about 95% of the Irish Volunteers in Kilkenny sided with Redmond's point of view and they became known as the 'National Volunteers'. The majority of these did not enlist, but instead stayed at home with the aim of protecting Irish shores. The small group of 5% kept the name of the Irish Volunteers. It was this small grouping who were involved in the Easter Rising.

Links: Link to Tom Treacy's Witness Statement (Part one) from the Bureau of Military History website, where he describes the establishment and the split of the Volunteers in Kilkenny: www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/bureau-of-military-history-1913-1921/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0590.pdf

As the British Parliament had technically passed the Home Rule Act, it looked like Ireland would have its own Parliament after the war ended for the first time since 1800. Celebrations ensued, and in October, John Redmond was given the Freedom of Kilkenny in City Hall by the Mayor. Hundreds of Kilkenny National Volunteers marched past and saluted him.

John Redmond becoming Freeman of Kilkenny City with Mayor Jack Magennis

The Easter Rising was mainly organised by a secret group called the 'Irish Republican Brotherhood' (IRB). The IRB (also known as the 'Fenians') had actually been founded by Kilkenny man James Stephens in 1858. To them, Home Rule was not good enough. They wanted full independence and complete separation from Britain. As Britain was fighting a war elsewhere, they thought it was the perfect time to launch an uprising against British rule in Ireland. The IRB used the small but dedicated group of Irish Volunteers around the country to initiate a rising on Easter Monday 1916. There were people within the IRB and the Irish Volunteers who did not want a rising as they thought it was a bad idea as too many people would be killed. Because of this divide, not many turned out around the country. The small dedicated group in Kilkenny, led by IRB leader Peter DeLoughry and Irish Volunteer leader Tom Treacy, were willing to 'come out' and fight. They met up every evening of Easter Week 1916. However, because of conflicting instructions, they did not know what to do. Similarly, another dedicated group of Castlecomer and Coon Volunteers also assembled on Easter Week but received no instructions either. Some members from Glenmore and surrounding parishes came out with the New Ross Volunteers during the week too. In addition, some Kilkenny natives living in Dublin joined the fight up there and saw action. At the time it was happening, the rebellion wasn't popular in Ireland. So this group of less than 100 people in County Kilkenny were really brave as they were putting themselves against their families and communities. Over 30 Kilkenny people were arrested in the aftermath of Rising.

The Kilkenny men arrested and jailed after Easter Week 1916 - includes Peter DeLoughry, Thomas Treacy

The Westminster parliament seat for the Kilkenny City constituency came up for grabs in August 1917. The 'Kilkenny City By-election' made the area a front page news story around Ireland and beyond. Although the Sinn Féin political party

Countess Markieviz speech, Market yard Kilkenny 1917

hadn't been directly involved in the Rising the year before, it had gained much fame in the aftermath. Within weeks of the Rising, the people who had died had become martyrs. Many of the survivors and their supporters joined the political party 'Sinn Féin'. The Sinn Féin movement had been founded by Arthur Griffith in 1905 to support all things Irish. Sinn Fein translates as 'ourselves'. In otherwords, we in Ireland have everything we need and shouldn't need to be importing anything (we have our own language, dance, fashion, sport,

culture, music and industry). In the by-election of 1917, the Irish Parliamentary Party candidate, Jack Magennis, was up against William T Cosgrave of Sinn Féin. Although Cosgrave was from Dublin he had become a hero as he fought in the 1916 Rebellion. Some of the most famous faces of the era visited Kilkenny to support him, including Countess Markievicz, Éamon de Valera and Arthur Griffith. Cosgrave easily won the election

De Valera speaking outside Kilkenny Railway station

and the result was celebrated all over the county. He didn't take his seat in London as was Sinn Féin policy at the time. Cosgrave would later become the first President of the Irish Free State, like the Taoiseach of Ireland.

Countess Markievicz paraded through the streets of Kilkenny on her way to receiving the Freedom of the City

The 'Conscription Crisis' occurred in the spring of 1918 all around Ireland. The British Army needed more soldiers to fight on the frontline, so they were going to introduce conscription (also known as 'the draft'). This meant that all men between the ages of 18 and 51 years in Kilkenny would have to go and fight in World War One, whether they wanted to or not. In other words, it was compulsory. A huge amount of people were against it, including most of the political parties, the Catholic Church, the GAA, and the Trade Unions. In protest, many young men joined the Irish Volunteers all around the county to show that they were against joining the British Army. Every parish in Kilkenny had at least one Volunteer unit if not more. The membership quadrupled. It was so different to the start of the war in 1914 when the Irish Volunteers were seen as outcasts; since 1916, they were seen to be the most patriotic group. Petitions were signed after all the Sunday Masses with thousands stating they were against conscription.

'Lá na mBan' was held in Kilkenny in May 1918. This was another petition but specifically for women, led by 'Cumann na mBan'. This was the sister organisation to the Irish Volunteers which had only women members. By May 1918, the men could have been arrested for leading the anti-Conscription protest. So the women took up the work. Luckily, the list of

Win DeLoughry, President of Cumann na mBan Kilkenny

Hanna Murphy née Dooley, Captain of Cumann na mBan Kilkenny

over one thousand women who signed the Kilkenny petition is available to view for free online *(see link below)*. Cumann na mBan went on to play a crucial role during the War of Independence and Civil War.

1918 August

Following the outcry over conscription, the British authorities in Ireland brought in new laws which said any gatherings of any kind would need to get prior approval from the police. This included GAA matches! GAA clubs all around Kilkenny took part in the nationwide protest on 'Gaelic Sunday' (4th August). It was a really clever idea; all the GAA clubs around the country, including all over Kilkenny, organised hurling and gaelic football matches at the exact same time, 3.00pm, in all different venues. There wasn't enough police in the county to go to all the different GAA grounds to arrest the teams and the spectators, so they just gave up!

Newspaper clippings from "Gaelic Sunday"

Links: www.gaa.ie/the-gaa/history/gaelic-Sunday

1918 November

The First World War came to an end on 11 November 1918. Through some great research published during the Decade of Centenaries, we now know that over 3,000 people associated with Kilkenny joined the fight. It included people from every single parish in County Kilkenny. Women also enlisted to provide nursing services, while men and women at home supported the Red Cross and also helped injured soldiers recover. We also now know that over 800 people associated with Kilkenny sadly died during the First World War (1914-1918), bringing heartbreak to their families.

Thomas Woodgate - youngest WW1 fatality monument

Further reading: 'The Kilkenny War Dead' by Tom Burnell
'Kilkenny Families in the Great War' by Niall Brannigan and John Kirwan.

The 21 January 1919 is the date given as the start of the Irish War of Independence as the first ever Dáil met and the fighting started. Within two weeks of it starting, a Kilkenny man, Peter DeLoughry, played a vital role in helping Éamon de Valera escape from prison. De Valera was then the most well-known person within the Irish independence movement having been the sole surviving Commandant of the 1916 Rising. A cake was used to smuggle a key and some metal files into Lincoln Prison in England. DeLoughry, who was a metalworker by trade and also Mayor of Kilkenny at the time, managed to make a master key that opened every door in the prison. De Valera simply walked out, much to the embarrassment of the British authorities. Michael Collins

De Valera speaking at baseball stadium in Boston

was waiting on the other side of the jail to whisk him away. De Valera became like 'Where's Wally' because there were rumours of him popping up in Europe, Australia and the US! Eventually he appeared in New York and made speeches to tens of thousands of people in baseball stadiums and other venues across the US. This encouraged many Americans to support Ireland's call for independence.

Kilkenny People being surpressed by British
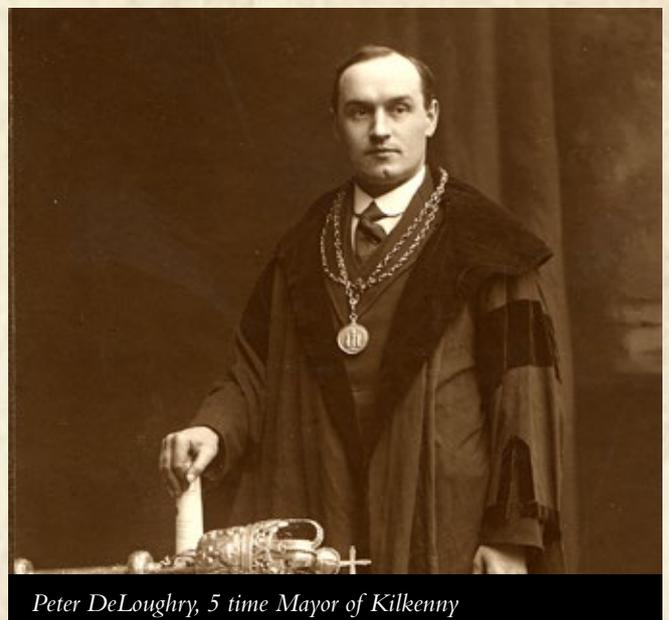
Peter DeLoughry, 5 time Mayor of Kilkenny

Hugginstown RIC outside the barracks. Hugginstown barracks was captured and later destroyed by the local IRA during the spring of 1920

Although the first year of the War of Independence was relatively quiet in Kilkenny, this all suddenly changed in March 1920. The Irish Volunteers were renamed the 'Irish Republican Army' (IRA). Tom Treacy led a group of Kilkenny IRA men one Monday night to attack the remote Hugginstown police barracks. The barracks was captured by the IRA which was a big achievement by these local men who had very little training. They were ordinary people with ordinary jobs. It was only the third barracks to be captured by the IRA anywhere in the whole of Ireland up to that time. One misfortunate policeman inside the barracks, Thomas Ryan, originally from Limerick, was killed during the attack.

Links: Kilkenny Library podcast link of Hugginstown Barracks attack: kilkennylibrary.ie/eng/our_services/decade-of-centenaries-resources/

The Dublin Castle based British authorities began a policy of mass arrests in early 1920. Some of these prisoners went on hunger-strike in protest (that means going without food), as they believed they didn't commit a crime. In support of the hunger-striking prisoners who were getting sicker, there was a nationwide workers strike enacted on 13 April 1920. This would affect the economy and the profits of business people, who in turn, were sure to be angry with the government. Many Kilkenny workers were part of a trade union. These unions fought for better rights for workers. During previous decades, trade unions had won many rights for workers that we take for granted today. For instance; better levels of pay, the idea of 'a weekend' and other days off to spend time with your family, the idea that a certain amount of work should be guaranteed per week, bank holidays were also secured, leave from work with pay when you are sick or time off when you had a baby were other things unions campaigned for. Most of these things are now considered basic rights. Trade union membership in Kilkenny went from 1,000 to over 4,000 members during World War One. Different types of workers were members of unions, including factory workers, shop keeping staff and even farm labourers who were in the lowest paid jobs. These Kilkenny employees went on strike in solidarity with the prisoners, much to the annoyance of many of their employers it should be said.

Strike

Michael Collins and Eamon De Valera had bad luck in December 1920 when one of their best fighters was captured in County Kilkenny. Ernie O'Malley had been training men all over Ireland and attacking British barracks. He was sent

Ernie O'Malley

to Kilkenny to attack the officers there known as the Auxiliaries, who had made the mansion of Woodstock House in Inistioge their headquarters. That is a cool place nowadays to go explore the forest and for younger kids to play in the playground. But in 1920, no one got in there too easily! The capture of O'Malley was a big blow to the IRA in Kilkenny as he had a notebook on him that contained many of their names and addresses.

Just four days before Christmas, one of the saddest tragedies of the War of Independence took place. Margaret Ryan, who ran a pub and shop in Callan, was shot through the door of her business by a passing Auxiliary officer. In every war that happens around the world it is civilians, that means innocent people who are not involved in the fighting, who get caught in the crossfire. They often suffer the most and pay the biggest price.

Wreath and message in tribute to Margaret Ryan, placed in Callan on the centenary of her death - December 2020
courtesy of Callan Historical Society

1921 January - July

The final six months of the War of Independence wasn't great for the Kilkenny public/the civilians. 'Martial Law' was enforced by Crown Forces. This meant all the cool stuff like GAA, rugby and soccer matches, fairs, cinemas, circuses and theatre shows were not allowed to go ahead without the British army commander's permission. Most weren't allowed to go ahead. Even worse, a 'curfew' was in place, which meant everyone had to be indoors by nightfall and not allowed to leave until the following morning. If you were caught outside after that time you were arrested, as the Crown Forces believed you were up to no good. It was kind of like the Covid lockdown but even worse !

1921 Feburary

The only ambush to occur in Kilkenny City happened on Friary Street, just off High Street, on 21 February 1921. The local IRA were going to sneak up behind a British Army patrol that used to pass by there everyday. They wanted to steal their guns and run off with them. Two IRA men tried to take the guns from two soldiers who were dawdling behind but because some locals
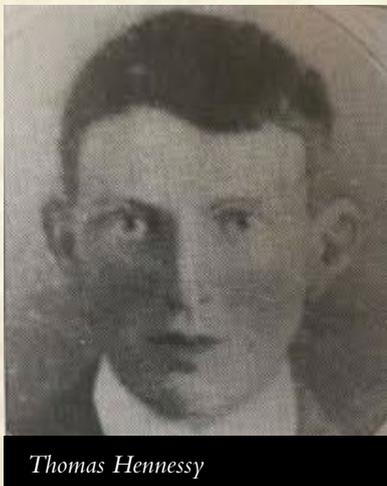
Thomas Hennessy

on the street started screaming it alerted their friends in the patrol. These soldiers opened fire on the IRA men. The two IRA men were killed, Tom Hennessey and Michael Dermody, and so too was a passer-by, Thomas Dullard, who was just passing on his way to work. A very tragic Monday morning in Kilkenny.

Michael Dermody

There was tragedy in the hills of Tullaroan in the townland of Knocknagress in May 1921. A group of IRA from both Kilkenny and Tipperary had joined forces and were moving around the countryside in a 'Flying Column'. This meant they moved around in one big group (a column), that could move quickly from one place to the other (in other words they could 'fly' around the countryside quickly on foot). One day, the British Crown Forces were tipped off about where they were staying in Tullaroan and they surprised the Flying Column in the morning. The IRA men ran into the fields and in the chase, two men, Pat Walsh from Dunnamaggin and Seán Quinn of Mullinahone, lost their lives.

Pat Walsh's memorial Dunamaggin village - Cumann na mBan escort   *Inset: Pat Walsh (left), Sean Quinn (right)*

Something similar happened in Coolbawn, just outside Castlecomer in June 1921. A different IRA Flying Column was trying to ambush a British army patrol that passed the road. A local woman tipped off the British soldiers in Castlecomer and they in turn ambushed the IRA by sneaking up behind them! Two IRA men sadly lost their lives, Nicholas Mullins of Thomastown and Seán Hartley of Glenmore. However, on the same day, the IRA in Kilkenny got a boost in their confidence when the Mooncoin IRA ambushed Black and Tans at Sinnott's Cross. They fatally wounded one Constable and captured his gun.

Coolbawn monument today

NICHOLAS MULLINS SEAN HARTLEY

DIED

FOR

IRELAND

COOLBAWN, KILKENNY, 18th JUNE, 1921.

Podcast: The Coolbawn Ambush and The Sinnott's Cross Ambush
    kilkennylibrary.ie/eng/our_services/decade-of-centenaries-resources/
    Also, link to 'Images of the Decade' from the Resources page.

1921 July

To the delight of everyone, on Monday 11 July 1921 at 12.00pm, a truce was declared between the Irish and British sides. People partied the night away like it was an All-Ireland victory! There was now no curfew and no police to bother them. Bonfires were lit all over the county. Unionists in the north of Ireland also celebrated, as they got their own parliament opened in Belfast which would be separate from any Dublin parliament.

1921 November

Kilkenny made the front pages of newspapers all around the world during November 1921. In what was like a Hollywood movie, 44 IRA prisoners in Kilkenny Jail managed to escape by digging a tunnel under the prison and beyond the prison wall to the street outside. It was the largest ever jail break in any Irish or British prison up that time. What made the story more crazy was that one of the jailbreaking prisoners was a priest! Fr Delahunty, who supported the independence movement in Callan, was a prisoner and managed to crawl his way out of the tunnel too. The prisoners entered the tunnel according to how much time they had left in their prisoner sentences. So those who had the longest got to go first, which was a nice thing to do as they would have a better chance of getting away if they were first out. Two prisoners actually had been sentenced to death, so they were allowed go first !

Kilkenny Jail, which was on St Rioch's Street, demolished in 1948

Booklet: 'The Kilkenny Jail Escape'
Podcast: 'The Great Escape' part 1 and 2
        kilkennylibrary.ie/eng/our_services/decade-of-centenaries-resources/

With the signing of the Treaty agreement in London between the British and Irish sides, most Kilkenny IRA prisoners were set free by the British government. They had all been arrested during the War of Independence prior to the Truce in July. This included Tom Treacy, the original leader of the Irish Volunteers/IRA in Kilkenny, who had been arrested and sent to a prison camp in Ballykinlar, Co Down. Street parties, bonfires and homecoming celebrations were held all over Kilkenny as loved ones got home just in time for Christmas.

THE KILKENNY PEOPLE

Circulates in the Counties of Kilkenny. Carlow, Tipperary. Leix, Waterford and Wexford.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1921

The Voice of the People.

THE IRISH FREE STATE.

Freedom's battle once begun
Bequeath'd by bleeding Sire to Son
Though Baffled oft, is ever won.

ONE of the greatest and most heroic fights for freedom ever put up in ancient or modern history by any small nation has ended in a victory as complete and as striking as any nation, great or small, has ever achieved. The Treaty completed and signed in the fateful early hours of Tuesday, December 6, 1921, between the representatives of the British Government and the plenipotentiaries of the Irish nation is a great Charter of Freedom. It means the emancipation of Ireland from the thraldom of centuries In all the things that matter it invests Ireland with all the attributes and essentials of full Nationhood It makes Ireland the mistress of her own destinies It makes the Irish people masters in their own house "I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul"—thus when the Treaty becomes operative, Ireland can proclaim to the world with unchallengeable truth.

Kilkenny Military Barracks, which had been a British Army Barracks for over 100 years, was handed over to the Irish government . It was another great day of celebration in Kilkenny as lots of local IRA soldiers marched in and took control, with their parents outside the gates cheering them on. The Barracks is there today on the Castlecomer Road. Known as James Stephens Barracks now, it still houses a Battalion of the Irish Defence Forces. Some of these soldiers went around the schools of Kilkenny in 2016 giving out Irish flags.

3rd Batt Kings Royal Rifles
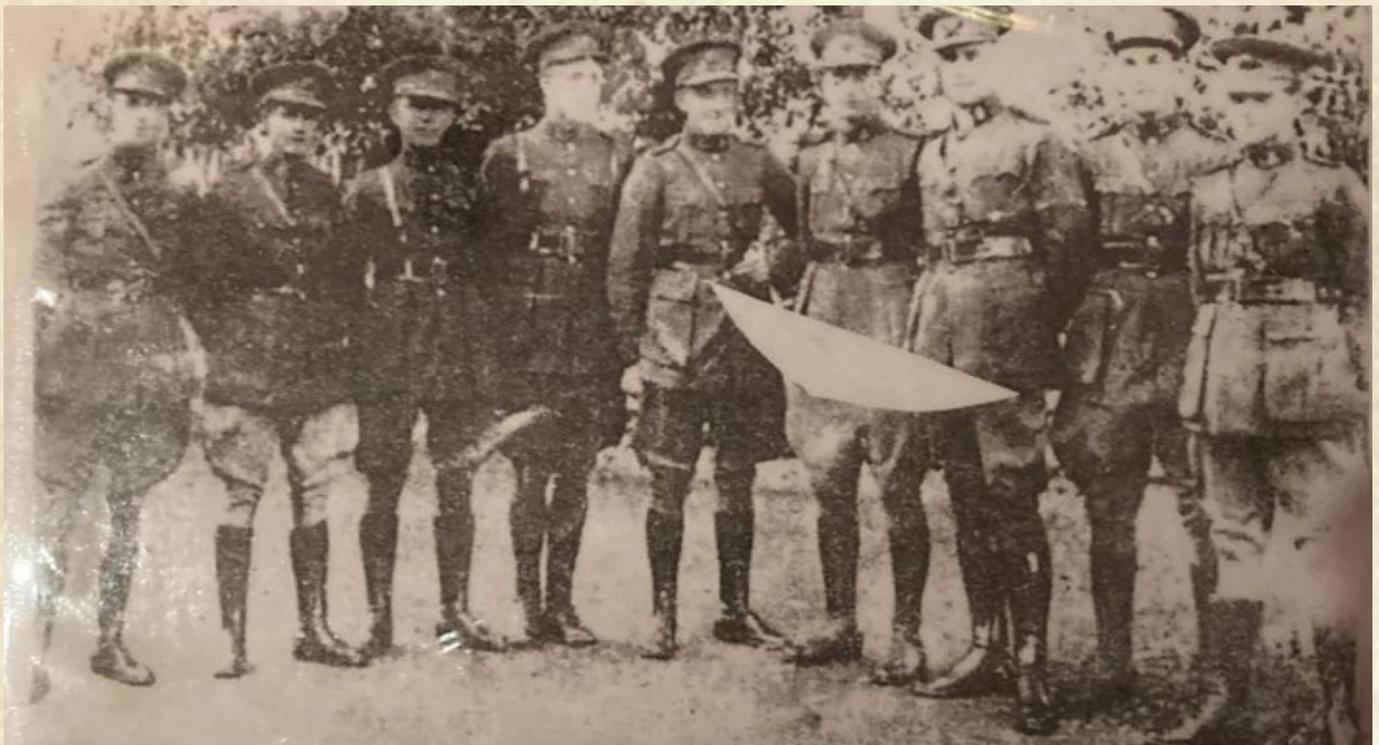
'THE NEW GUARD" (left to right) Lt. Michael Boyle (Dublin), Lt. Paddy Lennon (Kilkenny), Capt. Martin Cassidy (Kilkenny — ather of Maj.-Gen. B. Cassidy), Lt. Michael Connolly (Kilkenny), Comdt. James Hanrahan (Kilkenny, Capt. Denis Lennon Kilkenny), Rev. Fr. Drea (Kilkenny), Lt. Paddy Quinn (Kilkenny), Lt. Michael Kealy.

Irish army officers who took control of Kilkenny Barracks after it was handed over by the British Army

Civil War unfortunately means Irish people fighting each other. So it was brothers against brothers and sisters against sisters. Some families fell out over it. Ever since the Treaty was signed with the British, there were some Irish people who did not agree with it. This was mostly because Ireland was not allowed to have a 'Republic', which meant complete independence from Britain. Instead, Ireland was to be known as a 'Free State', with a lot of freedom, like our own government and army, but the King of England was still to be King of Ireland. This was something that some of the fighters of the 1916-1921 period found too difficult to accept. So a Civil War broke out in June 1922. It was between those in favour of the agreement with Britain (who were known as the 'Free State' or 'Pro-Treaty' side) and those against the agreement with Britain (who were known as 'Anti-Treaty' or 'Republican' side).

Eamon De Valera canvassing in Mooncoin in June 1922, on the eve of Civil War

The Irish Civil War nearly started in Kilkenny! Anti-Treaty IRA men and women took over a lot of buildings in Kilkenny, including Kilkenny Castle and St Canice's Cathedral. It was in protest over the way the new Free State commander of Kilkenny, Commandant Prout, was managing things in Kilkenny. The Free State launched an attack against them to get them out of the buildings. Rifle and machine gun bullets flew all around Kilkenny between the two sides. One little boy, who was playing hurling on James Green, even got hit by a bullet in his foot, by accident. He was alright after going to hospital. Eventually the Free State side managed to get all the anti-Treaty fighters out of the buildings and arrested them. Civil War had broken out for two days in Kilkenny, but it was stopped and a ceasefire was agreed between both sides. Kids then came out of their homes and started collecting bullet cases all along John's Bridge and The Parade so they could keep them as souvenirs!

Free State Leadership - Battle of Kilkenny, May 1922

Commandant George O' Dwyer

Colonel-Commandant John Thomas Prout

Anti-Treaty Leadership - Battle of Kilkenny, May 1922

Ned Aylward,
Anti-Treaty IRA Brigade O/C

Dick Brennan,
Anti-Treaty IRA leader
inside Kilkenny Castle

Hannah Dooley (Murphy),
Kilkenny Cumann na
mBan leader

Battle of Kilkenny City
(2nd/3rd May 1922)

1   Workhouse Hospital
2   Imperial Hotel
3   Workingman's Club
4   St Canice's Cathedral
5   Thomas Phelan's Home
6   City Hall
7   John Lucey's Home
8   O'Rourke's Shop
9   Wilsdon's Grocery & Bar
10 RIC County Inspector's Home
11 Fleming's Provisions Stores
12 Bottling Store
13 Kilkenny Castle
14 John's St. RIC Barracks
15 Parliament St. RIC Barracks
16 Kilkenny Military Barracks
17 Railway Station
18 Kilkenny Jail
19 Bank of Ireland

→ Movement of Free State Troops

Military
Barracks

16

Castlecomer Road

ul's
ery

Hebron Road

1

17

9

Railway

Dublin Road

14

Maudlin Street

John Street Lower

R I V E R   N O R E

2

The
Parade

19

13   Castle

Patrick Street

0	100	200	300	400
Scale				Metres

After the Civil War, Woodstock House in Inistioge was burnt down by the anti-Treaty side. They wanted to stop the Free State from moving into it again. If you visit Woodstock today you can still see the outside walls of the old house. Many houses were burned down over the War of Independence and Civil War years. It was for different reasons. It may have been either to punish the owners for helping the other side or to stop the Free State or anti-Treaty side moving into the house and using it as a base.

Auxilaries at the back of Woodstock

Woodstock House

Podcast: Woodstock House, a history
kilkennylibrary.ie/eng/our_services/decade-of-centenaries-resources/

Thomas Prout wedding to Mary Conba in St John's, Kilkenny, on 12 July 1922, just two weeks after the Civil War started

All eyes turned to south Kilkenny in July 1922. Commandant Prout brought his Free State Army from Kilkenny down to Kilmacow and Ferrybank. From the hills over looking Waterford City, he launched an attack to get the anti-Treaty side out of Waterford. He then moved to Piltown from where he launched an attack on Carrick-on-Suir, Co Tipperary, to get the anti-Treaty side out from that town. Lots of Kilkenny men and women were involved in these big battles on both sides.

An anti-Treaty flying column passing through Main Street, Graiguenamangh, July 1922 (colourised by Rob Cross)

Podcast: Summer 1922
kilkennylibrary.ie/eng/our_services/decade-of-centenaries-resources/

1922 was a bleak autumn and winter in Ireland. There was fighting all over the country. The anti-Treaty side ambushed the Free State forces in rural parts of County Kilkenny. In retaliation, the Free State side arrested many men and women who were sympathetic or helping the anti-Treaty forces in any way. Most of these ended up in prison, some went on hungerstrike. The club and county hurling championships didn't go ahead at all as fighting was going on all over the country. In addition, train lines were dug up and bridges blown up by the anti-Treaty side to slow down and annoy the Free State side. This affected lots of people as the train was the main way of getting around at the time and also to transport food and supplies. Even for short journeys from village to village, such as from Ballyhale to Kilmacow, or Kilkenny to 'Comer, people would often use the train. There were a lot more stations back then than they have today. This was because there were hardly any cars. You had to be rich to afford a car!

Callan Bridge Blown up by retreating anti-Treaty forces

Ned Awylard - OC Kilkenny Brigade anti-Treaty IRA 1922-23

Podcast: 'Everyday life in 1922', 'Guerrilla war returns to County Kilkenny' and 'The anti-Treaty fight back' kilkennylibrary.ie/eng/our_services/decade-of-centenaries-resources/

The final months of the Civil War saw even more of the anti-Treaty side put into prison camps and jails. Many of the general public were just sick of the fighting of the previous years; from World War One, to the War of Independence and now the Civil War, they had enough. The Civil War officially came to an end in May 1923, as too many of the anti-Treaty side were imprisoned, and the public just had enough and wanted to try and rebuild their lives. So ended an eventful, dramatic, transformative and tragic decade in the history of Ireland. It was, however, the foundation of the democratic country we live in today, which has now become, 100 years later, one of the most prosperous and contented country's in the world.

Fiddown RIC Barracks 1915 - gutted by fire lit by anti-Treaty IRA in 1923

I wonder what our ancestors of one hundred years ago would think of it if they were around today?!

Train derailed by anti-Treaty IRA at Dunkitt, Kilmacow

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