

1916

to

1923

History project.

# 1916

My great grandad, on my mothers side, was Denis Kelly from Clogher in Dunmanway. Like his brothers Michael and William, he was involved in the 'Co' Company, 1<sup>st</sup> battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Cork Brigade, in the Old I.R.A. in the fight for Irish freedom after 1916. Some of Tom Barry's Flying Column often stayed in their safe-house or near by safe-houses, when they trained in the local area. The British used to raid houses in the area and the Kellys often had to go on the run.

## William Kelly

Like his brothers, Denis and Michael, William Kelly, my great-uncle was also in the (old) I.R.A. William trained as a carpenter, and when he had finished his apprenticeship he went to live in a flat in Cork City. He travelled alot to find work. His travels included trips to England and when he was coming back he smuggled in bullets for the I.R.A. One method was to hide them in a hollowed out part of a carpenter's mallet. During the Civil War, he supported the Anti-Treaty side. He was captured along with a friend of his Denis Lucey from Kilnamatra, ~~while~~ while <sup>they were</sup> on active duty in New Ross on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1922.

He was imprisoned in the Curragh, Co. Kildare. His brother Michael Kelly cycled from Dunganway to visit him in prison. Michael was not allowed to see his brother and returned home. About half-way down from Kildare, he received news of William's death in the Curragh. William died on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 1923. He was 27 years old. Later on, his family found out that William had been taken out by two Free State Officers and told to swear an oath of allegiance to the Free State, but he had refused, replying "Death before dishonour", and he had been bayoneted. He died a short time later, and the family believed it was a result of the wounds he had received for not swearing the oath and for his refusal to sign a statement declaring he would not take up arms: they did not believe the cause of death, as officially given, was ill health.

## HIS BURIAL

William's remains were brought to Cork City but, because of the Bishop's excommunication of I.R.A. soliders, no church would accept his remains. After a lot of argument with the church officials, my great-grandfather, Denis Kelly, who knew one of the priests personally, managed to have William's remains

allowed into St. Peter and Paul's Church.

However, this was conceded only on condition it would take place after 11 o'clock at night and that they would be gone before first light the following morning. William could have been buried in the Republican Plot in St Finbarr's Cemetery but the family preferred a burial with family members in Kilmichael Cemetery (now known as the 'old cemetery' in Kilmichael).

# AFTER

Shortly after William's death, the Civil War ended and the prisoners were released. His friend, Denis Lucey, made his way to Clogher to sympathise with William's parents and, later on emigrated.





William Kelly, Clogher, Dunmanway,  
'G' Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Cork Brigade, IRA. Died 15/4/1923.

AFTER

1923



# DENIS

Later on, after the war my great-grandfather, Denis Kelly, married Kathleen Carroll and they had three children, Michael, Ciaran and Denis (my grand-dad). They lived in Cork City where he found work as a national teacher. He had ~~trained~~, trained in De La Salle college in Waterford and his first job was as a trainee teacher in Coolmountain, Dunmanway. His work was highly praised. A newspaper account at the time read:

"Brilliant Success of National School Monitor  
We are pleased to be able to record the brilliant success of a monitor of a local National school in the person of Denis Kelly, son of Mr Michael Kelly, Clogher, Dunmanway, until recently a monitor at Coolmountain (Dunmanway)." He went on to teach in a number of Cork City schools, before becoming principle at Joghher B.N.S. He was very involved in GAA activities, especially with Lees Hurling and Football Club, many of whose members came originally from West Cork. He was also one of the founding members of Cork Primary School Sports, and was their treasurer for many years. The cup presented each year to the school performing best at the sports is called the Corn

Uí Cheallsigh and is named after him.

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### BRILLIANT SUCCESS OF NATIONAL SCHOOL MONITOR

We are pleased to be able to record the brilliant success of a Monitor of a local National School in the person of Mr. Denis Kelly, son of Mr. Michael Kelly, Clogher, Dunmanway, until recently a Monitor at Coolmountain (Dunmanway) N.S., of which Mr. William J. Murphy, N.T., is Principal. At a King's Scholarship examination held in Cork, in Easter week, young Mr. Kelly distinguished himself highly, and has been called to a two years' course of training in De La Salle College, Waterford, in consequence. He came high in the successful list of candidates, taking Irish as an optional subject, in which he scored very high marks. Such a success reflects the greatest credit on master and pupil alike. Mr. Murphy is a well known and highly capable teacher, who has also distinguished himself in Gaelic League circles, and on Gaelic League platforms as a charming vocalist both in Irish and English. He deserves the congratulations of his many friends on the occasion.

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-- text of a newspaper clipping (possibly *The Southern Star*)