

West Cork: Stories of the Revolution, 1916-1923

Cover Sheet – Dreeny National School

Name: Jack and tady Crowley

Age: 12 and 10 years old

School: Dreeny National School, Dreeny, Skibbereen, Co. Cork

Class: 6th and 4th CLASS

Name of person/ people you spoke to:

Neilie Murray

CORK STORIES OF THE REVOLUTION 1916-1923

Stories Collected from Neillie Murray, Union Hall and Bauravilla

Story by Jack and Tadg Crowley, 6th & 4th Class, Dreeny National School

The Black and Tans were officially the Royal Irish Constabulary Special Reserve, they were a force of temporary constables recruited to assist the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) during the Irish War of Independence. The force was the brainchild of Winston Churchill, then British Secretary of State for War. Recruitment began in Great Britain in late 1919. Thousands, many of them British Army veterans of World War I, answered the British government's call for recruits. Most of the recruits came from Britain, although it also had some members from Ireland. Their role was to help the RIC maintain control and fight the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the army of the Irish Republic. The nickname "Black and Tans" arose from the colours of the improvised uniforms they initially wore composed of mixed khaki British Army and black RIC uniform parts. The Black and Tans became known for their attacks on civilians and civilian property.

Legacy of the Black and Tans

Due to the ferocity of the Tans' behaviour in Ireland and the numerous war crimes they committed, feelings continue to run high regarding their actions. The term can still stir bad reactions because of their remembered brutality. One of the best known Irish Republican songs is Dominic Behan's "Come out ye Black and Tans" The Irish War of Independence is sometimes referred to as the "Tan War" or "Black-and-Tan War." This term was preferred by those who fought on the anti-Treaty side in the Irish Civil War and is still used by Republicans today. The "Cogadh na Saoirse" ("War of Independence") medal, awarded since 1941 by the Irish Government to IRA veterans of the War of Independence, bears a ribbon with two vertical stripes in black and tan.

Safe Houses were houses in a secret location, used by spies or criminals in hiding.

Song of the times: Come out ye Black and Tans

I was born on a Dublin street where the royal drums did beat,
And those loving English feet they trampled all over us,
And each and every night when me father came home tight
He'd invite the neighbours outside with this chorus:

Come out ye Blacks and Tans, come out and fight me like a man,
Show your wife how you won Flanders down in Flanders,
Tell them how the IRA made you run like hell away
From the green and lovely lanes of Killashandra.

Come tell us how you slew them poor Arabs two by two,
Like the Zulus they had spears and bows and arrows,
How you bravely faced each one with your 16-pounder gun,
And you frightened them poor natives to their marrow.

Come out ye black and Tans, come out and fight me like a man,
Show your wife how you won medals down in Flanders,
Tell them how the IRA made you run like hell away
From the green and lovely lanes of Killashandra.

Come let us hear you tell how you slandered great Parnell,
When you thought him well and truly persecuted,
Where are the sneers and jeers that you bravely let us hear
When our heroes of '16 were executed?

Come out ye black and Tans, come out and fight me like a man,
Show your wife how you won medals down in Flanders,
Tell them how the IRA made you run like hell away
From the green and lovely lanes of Killashandra.

Well the day is coming fast and the time is here at last,
When each yeoman will be cut aside before us,
And if there be a need, sure me kids would sing, "Godspeed,"
With a verse or two of Stephen Behan's chorus:

Come out ye Black and Tans, come out and fight me like a man,
Show your wife how you won medals down in Flanders,
Tell them how the IRA made you run like hell away
From the green and lovely lanes of Killashandra.

Stories about the Black and Tans in Bauravilla and Union Hall (Recalled by Neilie Murray of Union Hall)

Story 1

Pat O' Driscoll's (Union Hall) house was burnt twice by the Black and Tans he hid under the road in a bridge for two days and two nights. Later he was arrested in Union Hall where he beat up two police officers and escaped.

Story 2

Tadgh O' Driscoll from Rabbit Island off Union Hall used to row in from the Island to the mainland to take part in ambushes on the Tans. He tied a wire rope between two trees, the lorries hit the wire, lost control and the lorries drove into the lake.

Story 3

Mick Herlihy of Brade Union Hall. His house was surrounded by Tans, he killed two Tans but was shot dead himself. He was a noted IRA assassin.

Story 4

Mary Crowley's house in Bauravilla was a safe house used by the IRA. Neilius Connolly, (a relation of Mary Crowley's) a noted IRA activist from Skibbereen often hid there in the out houses. On numerous occasions as the Black and Tans would pass the road through the townland of Bauravilla they would be shot at.

Story of Pat O'Driscoll



Pat O'Driscoll
ahide under the
bridge for 2 days
and
nights



Story of Tadgh O' Driscoll.



WIRE
ROPE