

## Stories of the Revolution

In 1916 the majority of Irish people were very poor, they owned nothing and were tenants. They were evicted if they couldn't pay their rent. Padraig Pearse and his comrades wanted freedom for Ireland, they decided to have an uprising, they were to be backed up by volunteers from Cork and Kerry, but a man by the name of McNeill decided to cancel at the last minute, so no one from Cork and Kerry was involved in the Rising which took place at Easter 1916. The British brought in a big contingent of soldiers to defeat them. Padraig Pearse and 15 of his comrades were executed and it caused outrage throughout all of Ireland.



Kilmainham Jail, place of the execution of the leaders of the 1916 Rising

### **Nelius Connolly**

In Skibbereen after the Easter Rising, Nelius Connolly and eleven others spent months collecting for the National Aid Fund. In June 1917 they set up a Sinn Fein branch in Skibbereen with about 30 members who belonged to the Skibbereen Volunteers. They were known as the Skibbereen Company. Michael Collins came to Skibbereen in August 1917 and Eamon De Valera visited the town in December 1917.

Jasper Wolfe died in 1952 and is buried in a tomb in Aughadown Graveyard. Himself and Neilus Connolly got on better in later years and were known to take a drink together.

### **The Black and Tans**

The Black and Tans were mostly former British soldiers who were sent to help the RIC to defeat the IRA. They were called Black and Tans because of the colour of their uniforms. They were very cruel and rough. There were ambushes and casualties on both sides. Warner's Lane, off Townsend Street is named after an RIC man that was shot by the Black and Tans.

If the IRA were being followed by the Black and Tans they used gelignite to cut the roads. If an IRA man was killed accidentally or otherwise, his body was hidden in case it gave away the company's location, and they came back when it was safe to get the body. A lot of guns and ammunition were smuggled into Ireland and some were brought ashore at Reenadunagh, to be used locally.



### **Safe Houses**

There were safe houses where the IRA hid when they were on the run from the Black and Tans, sometimes they only checked the outhouses and took the owners word that nobody was hiding in the house. There were informers on both sides who did it for the money. The IRA gave informers the chance to have a Priest's blessing before being shot, at times the Priest was successful in his pleading to let the informer go free.

## Michael Collins

Michael Collins, who grew up in Woodfield near Lisavaird, worked in the Post Office in England and collected a lot of information. He was elected as a Sinn Fein candidate for the Skibbereen constituency.

When Sinn Fein refused to take their seats in the House of Commons they set up Dail Eireann, the first Irish Dail.

He was ambushed and killed at Kilmichael on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1922.



Irish revolutionary leader Michael Collins (1890-1922) working the crowd in Dublin in 1922.

At this time also families started to use the Nationalist form of their surname rather than the Anglicised form, e.g. some older members of the family might be christened with the surname Donovan while the younger members of the family would have the surname O'Donovan.

By ; Edwin Collins

5 th Class

Lisheen N.S

I got help from my neighbour Kitty Griffin