

# Flyer Nyhan on the run.

The War of Independence in Ireland during the years 1919-1921 was a violent time for many Irish people. Many suffered at the hands of "the Black and Tans" who were drafted into Ireland to help the British already here. They were noted for their lawless beatings and random killing of Irish civilians. It was during time that Tom Barry and his flying column came to the attention of the British. His tactics of guerilla warfare in Ireland was proving to be very successful particularly with his Ambush in Kilmichael on the 28<sup>th</sup> November, 1920. 17 British soldiers were killed on the roadside. One escaped but he was later found and killed and buried in a bag.

Tom Barry's right hand man in his flying Column was John 'Flyer' Nyhan. He was known as Flyer Nyhan because of his speed on the hurling pitch. (In fact the South west Junior A hurling championship cup is named after him). During the Kilmichael Ambush he is said to have saved Barry's life. He too was a man on the run from the British forces and he attained the rank of 'staff Captain'. After the Kilmichael Ambush the British Forces in west Cork took their revenge by burning many houses, shops and barns in in Kilmichael, Johnstown and Inchigeela including the houses around the Ambush site. Martial law was declared in Cork, Kerry, Limerick and Tipperary and travel became very difficult.

At this time my great grandfather Con Lucey was farming in Inchigeela. He was a member of the IRA but not the flying Columns. Whenever help was needed he would help out. He remembered being armed with a gun and taking Flyer Nyhan in the back of a horse and cart hiding under hay from Inchigeela to Ballingacry to

Meet the rest of the group. Elyer Nyhan remained hidden on the journey as it was too dangerous to be seen. Thankfully for my great grandfather on that day the journey went well with no checks by the Black and Tans. The two of them would probably have been shot if they were found. However he eventually captured by the Black and Tans on St. Stephen's Day, 1921 and only imprisoned as they didn't recognise he was released after the Truce and Treaty and joined the Republican side in the civil war.

By Maureen Keating

I got this story from my Grandpa  
Sean Lucey.  
Dooniskey  
Lissarda  
Co. Cork

