

By Seán O'Connor 6th class

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I have passed the Crossbarry and Upton monuments daily and never really understood their significance. Now I know a lot more about our local history and its richness from researching archives and discovering about the men who fought for freedom in our area.

I live in Upton near Crossbarry in the south west of Cork. My late grandfather grew up here during the years of the War of Independence. It is an area steeped in history as both Crossbarry and Upton were ambush sites in the year of 1921, during the War of Independence.

It so happens that my maternal grandmother grew up in Kilmichael near Macroom and like the song about the lonely woods of Upton she was familiar with the tune of the boys of Kilmichael. (There was a successful ambush there in November 1920). I have included both songs in this assignment.

Where the train ambush took place.

Charlie Hurley was the officer commanding of the 3rd Cork Brigade of the Irish Republican Army. He was a friend of Tom Barry the commander of the West Cork Flying Brigade. Charlie Hurley assembled

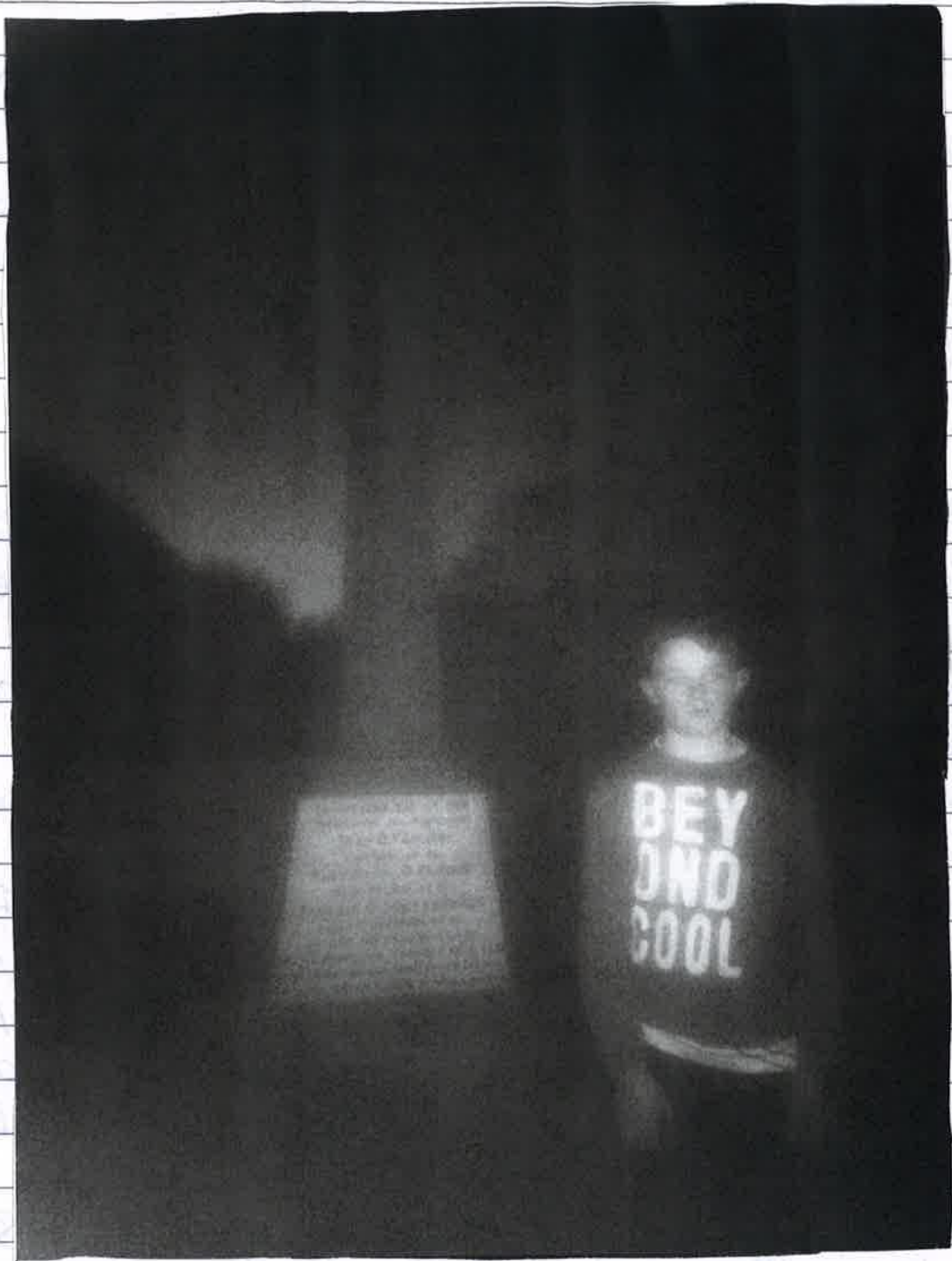
The Scratch group. He had received a report from the IRA in Cork City that 20 British soldiers from the Essex Regiment would be traveling to bandon in one carriage. He was after a successful mission a few days earlier in Drishanebeg near Mill Street where he had led a similar train ambush a few days earlier.

It is said that fifty unforeseen English troops got on the train at the Kinsale Junction a few miles east of the station and despite efforts of a scout to cycle back and report this to the men lying in wait at the station it was too late.

The gunfire lasted 10 minutes. It is reported that the British troops mingled with civilians on the train (maybe they had learned from the attack in Drishanebeg a short time previously).

Two IRA men lay dead and others fell away wounded. Charlie Hurley himself was shot in the face but survived. British casualties noted were six wounded three seriously but the IRA claim there were more. There were civilian casualties also.

The following month on the 19th of March 1921/200 British troops moved in from Bandon, Kinsale, Cork and Macroom to



encircle the freedom fighters. Charlie Hurly who was staying at Ballymurphy north of Innishannon was injured since the Upton ambush was flanked by British troops and was fatally shot as he tried to escape.

Later that morning the Irish Column overcame the first approaching troop and seized their weapons and burned their trucks.

against the odds of 10 to one they broke through the encirclement and made their escape.

Picture of the Crossbarry Monument in remembrance of the day in March 1921 that the Irish men bravely fought the large RIC constabulary



Recent 6th class field trip to the old railway station in Upton,

