

KERRY'S Fighting Story

1916 — 21



Told By The
Men Who Made It

With a Unique Pictorial Record of the Period

INTRODUCTION BY J.J. LEE

COUNTY KERRY



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**INTRODUCTION BY J.J. LEE
SERIES EDITOR: BRIAN Ó
CONCHUBHAIR**



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PREFACE (2009)

AS WE APPROACH the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising and the Irish War of Independence/Anglo-Irish War (1919-1921), interest among scholars and the general public in these historic events gathers unrelenting pace. Recent years have witnessed a slew of books, articles, documentaries and films, emerge at home and abroad all dealing with the events and controversies involved in the struggle for political independence in the period 1916-1922. While many of these projects have re-evaluated and challenged the standard nationalist narrative that dominated for so long, and indeed have contributed to a more nuanced and complex appreciation of the events in question, the absence of the famous *Fighting Story* series – initially published by *The Kerryman* newspaper and subsequently republished by Anvil Books – is a notable and regrettable absence. First published in Christmas and special editions of *The Kerryman* newspaper in the years before the Second World War, the articles subsequently appeared in four independent collections entitled *Rebel Cork's Fighting Story*, *Kerry's Fighting Story*, *Limerick's Fighting Story* and *Dublin's Fighting Story* between 1947-49. The choice of counties reflecting the geographical intensity of the campaign as Dr Peter Hart explains in his new introduction to *Rebel Cork's Fighting Story*: 'The

Munster IRA ... was much more active than anywhere else except Longford, Roscommon and Dublin city.' Marketed as authentic accounts and as 'gripping episodes' by 'the men who made it', the series was dramatically described as 'more graphic than anything written of late war zones', with 'astonishing pictures' and sold 'at the very moderate price of two shillings'. Benefiting from *The Kerryman's* wide distribution network and a competitive price, the books proved immediately popular at home and abroad, so much so that many, if not most, of the books, were purchased by, and for, the Irish Diaspora. This competitive price resulted in part from the fact that 'the producers were content to reduce their own profit and to produce the booklet at little above the mere cost of production'. Consequently, however, the volumes quickly disappeared from general circulation. Dr Ruán O'Donnell explains in the new introduction to *Limerick's Fighting Story*, 'The shelf life ... was reduced by the poor production values they shared. This was a by-product of the stringent economies of their day when pricing, paper quality, binding and distribution costs had to be considered [which] rendered copies vulnerable to deterioration and unsuited to library utilisation.'

The books targeted not only the younger generation, who knew about those times by hearsay only, but also the older generation who 'will recall vividly a memorable era and the men who made it'. Professor Diarmaid Ferriter notes in the new introduction to *Dublin's Fighting Story* that these volumes answered the perceived need for Volunteers to record their stories in their own words in addition to ensuring the proper education and appreciation of a new generation for their predecessors' sacrifices. The narrative, he writes 'captures the excitement and the immediacy of the Irish War of Independence and the belief that the leaders of the revolution did not urge people to take dangerous courses they were not themselves prepared to

take'. These four books deserve reprinting therefore not only for the important factual information they contain, and the resource they offer scholars of various disciplines, but also because of the valuable window they open on the mentality of the period. As Professor J.J. Lee observes in the introduction to *Kerry's Fighting Story*, for anyone 'trying to reconstruct in very different times the historical reality of what it felt like at the time, there is no substitute for contemporary accounts, however many questions these accounts may raise. We know what was to come. Contemporaries did not.' The insight these books offer on IRA organisation at local level suggest to Dr Peter Hart 'why IRA units were so resilient under pressure, and how untrained, inexperienced men could be such formidable soldiers ... Irish guerrillas fought alongside their brothers, cousins, school and teammates, and childhood friends - often in the very lanes, fields and streets where they had spent their lives together'. In addition these texts reveal the vital roles, both active and passive, women played in the struggle of Irish Independence.

The establishment of Anvil Books in 1962 saw a reissuing of certain volumes, Cork and Limerick in particular. The link between *The Kerryman* and Anvil Books was Dan Nolan (1910-1989). Son of Thomas Nolan, and nephew of Daniel Nolan and Maurice Griffin, he was related to all three founders of *The Kerryman* newspaper that commenced publishing in 1904. His obituary in that newspaper describes how he 'was only a nipper when he looked down the barrels of British guns as His Majesty's soldiers tried to arrest the proprietors of *The Kerryman* for refusing to publish recruitment advertisements. And he saw the paper and its employees being harassed by the Black and Tans.' On graduating from Castleknock College, he joined the paper's staff in 1928 replacing his recently deceased uncle, Maurice Griffin. His father's death in 1939 saw Dan Nolan become the paper's managing director and

his tenure would, in due course, see a marked improvement in its commercial performance: circulation increased and ultimately exceeded 40,000 copies per week, and advertisement revenue also increased significantly. Under his stewardship *The Kerryman*, according to Séamus McConville in an obituary in the paper, 'became solidly established as the unchallenged leader in sales and stature among provincial newspapers'. Recognising his talent, the Provincial Newspaper Association elected him president in 1951. Among his projects were the Rose of Tralee Festival, Tralee Racecourse and Anvil Books. Founded in 1962 with Nolan and Rena Dardis as co-directors, Anvil Books established itself as the pre-eminent publisher of memoirs and accounts dealing with the Irish War of Independence. Indeed the first book published by Anvil Books was a 1962 reprint of *Rebel Cork's Fighting Story* in a print run of 10,000 copies.

Conscious, no doubt, of the potential for controversy the original foreword was careful not to present the *Fighting Stories* as 'a detailed or chronological history of the fight for independence', and acknowledged 'that in the collection of data about such a period errors and omissions can easily occur and so they will welcome the help of readers who may be able to throw more light upon the various episodes related in the series. Such additional information will be incorporated into the second edition of the booklets which the present rate of orders would seem to indicate will be called for in the very near future.' Subsequent editions of *Rebel Cork's Fighting Story* and *Limerick's Fighting Story* did appear in print with additional material as O'Donnell discusses in his enlightening introduction to *Limerick's Fighting Story*, but the proposed *Tipperary's Fighting Story*, as advertised in the Limerick volume with a suggested publication date of 1948 and a plea for relevant information or pictures, never materialised. This 2009 edition adheres to the original texts as first published by

The Kerryman rather than the later editions by Anvil Books. A new preface, introduction and index frame the original texts that remain as first presented other than the silent correction of obvious typographical errors.

The preface to the final book, *Dublin's Fighting Story*, concluded by noting that the publishers 'would be satisfied if the series serves to preserve in the hearts of the younger generation that love of country and devotion to its interests which distinguished the men whose doings are related therein'. The overall story narrated in these four books is neither provincial nor insular, nor indeed limited to Ireland, but as Lee remarks in *Kerry's Fighting Story*, it is rather 'like that of kindred spirits elsewhere, at home and abroad, an example of the refusal of the human spirit to submit to arbitrary power'. The hasty and almost premature endings of several chapters may be attributed to the legacy of the Irish Civil War whose shadow constantly hovers at the edges threatening to break into the narrative, and in fact does intrude in a few instances. Lee opines that writers avoided the Civil War as it 'was still too divisive, still too harrowing, a nightmare to be recalled into public memory. Hence the somewhat abrupt ending of several chapters at a moment when hopes were still high and the horrors to come yet unimagined.'

Ireland at the start of the twenty-first century is a very different place than it was when these books were first published. Irish historiography has undergone no less a transformation and to bridge the gap four eminent historians have written new introductions that set the four *Fighting Stories* in the context of recent research and shifts in Irish historiography. Yet Lee's assessment in reference to Kerry holds true for each of the four volumes: 'Whatever would happen subsequently, and however perspectives would inevitably be affected by hindsight, for better and for worse, *Kerry's Fighting Story* lays the foundation for all subsequent studies of these foundation years of an

independent Irish state.’ As we move toward the centenary of 1916, the War of Independence, the Anglo-Irish Treaty and the Civil War, it is appropriate and fitting that these key texts be once again part of the public debate of those events and it is sincerely hoped that as Ruán O’Donnell states: ‘This new life of a classic of its genre will facilitate a fresh evaluation of its unique perspectives on the genesis of the modern Irish state.’

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DR BRIAN Ó CONCHUBHAIR

INTRODUCTION (2009)

DISPARAGING COMMENTS WERE sometimes made about the degree of activity against British physical force in Kerry during the War of Independence, not least by Eoin O'Duffy in his unstable Blueshirt period in 1933, perhaps reflecting the less than hospitable reception he had received in the county. It is certainly still true that Kerry is much better known for the horrors of the Civil War there, which saw some of the worst atrocities of that terrible and tragic period, than for the struggle in the preceding years. Indeed it is likely that reluctance to open up the wounds of the later period led to a neglect of the earlier period for fear of where it might lead. Some who were active in the Civil War carried their silence with them to the grave, or spoke only on condition that their accounts would not become available to the public until after their deaths. *The Kerryman* newspaper therefore rendered an important service to historians when in 1947 it collected some of its earlier reports on the struggle for independence, garnished by recollections of activists of the time. But the Civil War itself was still too divisive, still too harrowing, a nightmare to be recalled into public memory. Hence the somewhat abrupt ending of several chapters in this volume at a moment when hopes were still high and the horrors to come yet unimagined.

Nevertheless the subtitle of the book, 'Told by the men who made it', is a shade disingenuous. For of course only a fraction of those 'who made it' can have contributed to the volume, often under pen-names. It is extremely important as far as it goes, but it is not complete, from even within the IRA, much less from outside it. Ironically, if the title promises rather more than it delivers - much though it does deliver - in this regard, it actually delivers more than it promises in several important respects, making it even more valuable than appears at first sight.

Firstly, it dates its coverage only from 1916, whereas it really begins in 1913, with the formation of the Irish Volunteers. Indeed, the long first chapter on the spread of the Volunteers in Kerry before the 1916 Rising is among the most valuable in the entire book. It was through the Volunteers that Austin Stack, already renowned as a footballer in a county laying the foundations of its illustrious contribution to the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), would like many others rise to prominence in republican ranks. The description of the struggle against John Redmond's National Volunteers after Redmond's call in September 1914 for recruits to fight anywhere in the world for Britain, is particularly useful.

Kerry of course found itself very much in the news on the eve of the 1916 Rising when the saga of the *Aud*, with the German weapons aboard, and of Roger Casement's arrest after coming ashore at Banna Strand on his quixotic mission, directed eyes, as well as squads of soldiers and police, towards strange happenings in the Kingdom. Clearly sensitive to charges of incompetence over the failure to get the guns ashore, contributors seek to refute in detail, in further valuable contributions, charges of local blundering.

Kerry's Fighting Story is not only a record of fighting, useful though that is. In fact most of the account from 1916 to 1918, while paying proper attention to the ordeal in 1917 of Thomas Ashe from Lispole, who died on hunger

strike from forced feeding, deals with the political build-up to the 1918 general election, a period full of hard organisational graft whose importance is sometimes overlooked in the light of the more spectacular public events to come, but which was indispensable in laying the basis of a Sinn Féin organisation to supersede the Home Rule/Irish Parliamentary Party.

The title too does not quite reveal the full promise of the contents, in that it contains no reference to women, for its account of Cumann na mBan, though brief, is packed with useful information, to say nothing of the evidence scattered throughout of the involvement of women in a variety of rebel activities.

In short, relevant though all the contents are to the actual fight, over half the text is in fact devoted to the preparations for that fight, rather than to details of the military struggle itself. Far more information has become available since 1947, including notable studies dealing directly with many of the events recorded in the 1947 volume. T. Ryle Dwyer's *Tans, Terrors and Troubles: Kerry's Real Fighting Story 1913-23* (Mercier Press, 2001) carries the story down to the end of the Civil War, and Sinéad Joy's *The IRA in Kerry, 1916-21* (Collins Press, 2005) explores many new sources. Other highly informative contributions include the pioneering studies by Fr Anthony Gaughan, indefatigable biographer of Kerry personalities, two of whom feature frequently here: Austin Stack, and the Home Rule MP for West Kerry, a strong opponent of Sinn Féin and the Volunteers, Tom O'Donnell. Both were published by Kingdom books, in 1977 and 1983 respectively, as was his *Memoirs of Constable Jeremiah Mee* (Kingdom Books, 1975). Some of the personalities who feature in these volumes can also be found, from rather different perspectives, in the letters of a prominent Tralee family, the Moynihan Brothers in *Peace and War 1909-1918*, edited

and introduced by Deirdre McMahon (Irish Academic Press, 2004).

Given all the new research contained in these volumes, as well as in other publications of the past sixty years, including good work in local journals, like the *Journal of Cumann Luachra*, one's initial impulse may be to wonder if reprinting the 1947 volume serves any useful purpose. But the initial impulse should be resisted. The volume deserves reprinting for several reasons. In trying to reconstruct in very different times the historical reality of what it felt like at the time, there is no substitute for contemporary accounts, however many questions these accounts may raise. We know what was to come. Contemporaries did not. But they knew, in a way we cannot, what they hoped the sunrise would bring. One has to drink deep from contemporary reports of conflict to capture not only details, however important, but also feelings, one might even say 'all that delirium of the brave', the feelings that accompany awakenings of the spirit, 'Bliss was it in that dawn', etc. Great historians may be able to reconstruct those feelings, or great novelists or poets intuitively divine them, like Yeats at times, as in 'September 1913', or in his Easter 1916 poems. But that is still different from the words of the participants themselves. And in this case, even when the accounts were composed after the Civil War, which estranged so many former comrades, it seems that an attempt was generally made to remain true to the record of the time.

Contemporary newspaper accounts must always be treated with a degree of suspicion until one has winkled out what lies behind them. What were the biases of the editors and reporters? What was their ideological line? How far did they have to write to satisfy the beliefs of their readers – how well did they know, or intuit, what those beliefs were? How did they determine what their readers wanted? How far did they reflect, how far create, public opinion? The

critical analysis of newspapers as sources has begun only very recently among students of the Irish media. Interesting here too will be the study of foreign reporting, like that by Hugh Martin of the *Daily News*, whose influential reports from Ireland included accounts of the Black and Tan terror in Tralee in November 1920, cited in *Kerry's Fighting Story*, and whose experience is recorded in Maurice Walsh's *The News from Ireland: Foreign Correspondents and the Irish Revolution* (I. B. Tauris, London, 2008), a book from which students of the Irish media could learn much.

Yet having warned of the pitfalls of over-reliance on contemporary newspapers, some of the issues are fairly straightforward. *The Kerryman* took great pains to list as many of the participants as possible at the musters of the Irish Volunteers. They are unlikely to have been inaccurate, either in terms of inclusion or exclusion. The paper's credibility would have suffered seriously and rapidly if it omitted genuine participants, or included bogus ones. The lists of participants at the various demonstrations and parades in the different towns, which may seem unnecessarily detailed, in fact provide basic raw material about the identity of activists on which further inquiry can be based. So do the long lists of the names of assentors and nominators of Sinn Féin election candidates, including several curates. Students of the priesthood in Kerry will find much to ponder here.

It is often overlooked how much social history can be found in the accounts of political events. The Volunteer gatherings were often festive occasions, enlivening somewhat drab daily routines with their parades, often headed by 'the faithful Strand Street Band' of Tralee, in demand outside as well as inside Tralee, though several other towns had their own bands. The place of music in brightening up sometimes dreary existences deserves much further enquiry in our social history. There could be too a

certain grim jocularity to the differences which emerged between the rival Volunteer groups, as in the struggle in Killorglin for control of the town band. What images of communal harmony are called up by the report that on 18 July 1915, the Killorglin brass band 'was for the first time entirely made up of Sinn Féiners', the Redmondites having 'previously failed in an attempt to take possession of the instruments'. On the other hand one may be inclined to wonder how deep the divisions ran in some places, when one finds both groups of Volunteers marching together in Caherciveen in 1915.

It is naturally difficult to recreate accurately historical reality long bathed in a warm retrospective glow. Later generations are more conscious of internal differences and tensions in the Kerry of the time, some of which would explode horribly in the Civil War. Some of these revolved around differences of material interests, which in turn revolved mainly around land issues, thus at times leading to different profiles of rebel activity between broadly North Kerry, with its bigger farms, better land, and higher ratio of landless labourers, and South Kerry. The account here of the disturbance in Listowel in May 1918 concentrates on conflict over land distribution and redistribution, an issue scarcely confined to that locality alone, but which features only fleetingly in many contemporary accounts, anxious to project an image of complete revolutionary solidarity. Other conflicts could, as always, reflect smouldering tensions either within or between families, even more difficult to reconstruct at this distance.

We are sometimes told that those too close to events cannot see them in proper perspective. That can indeed often be the case, but distance from events can in turn lead to distorted disenchantment with some of the more idealised or romantic conceptions of ages of rebellion and revolution, in Ireland as in every other country. For if distance can clarify and illuminate, it can also blur, making

it difficult to recapture atmospheres of expectation and excitement, and this in turn can sometimes lead to an excess of cynicism about idealism among those who have never experienced the exhilaration of a new vision of a new earth. It is of course true that a good deal of reading between the lines can be necessary with contemporary recollections, influenced as they often are by personal relations, or factional loyalties, as well as ideological differences. But then later accounts, not excluding those by academics, can be affected by varieties of unscholarly impulses as well, often concealed behind the guise, or disguise, of allegedly academic impartiality. Contemporary and participant accounts therefore provide indispensable raw material for recapturing psychic reality, even if they cannot speak from hindsight. For if they do not enjoy the advantages of hindsight, neither do they suffer the disadvantages.

There are different possible interpretations of these eventful years. Varieties of perspectives on Kerry's fighting story can be found in several other publications. But this *Kerryman* volume remains basic, containing indispensable information that had never been published previously in book form, or some of it in any form, including evocative pictures of many little known, as well as better known, actors in the drama - though one is provoked to wonder at the full story behind the photo of the Boherbee company 1st Tralee battalion, Kerry No. 1 brigade. As the caption coyly comments: 'Its capture by the crown forces, who used it for identification purposes, seriously impaired the fighting powers of a unit from which great things were expected.'

Given the growth in interest in local history, *Kerry's Fighting Story* contains splendid raw material for reconstructing evocative episodes of history in close-knit Kerry communities. There could be few more vivid examples of the potential of local history than the events of

these years. Local knowledge of continuity and change, of shops and houses in particular streets, of the bands that played, of the churches where people sought succour and reassurance, of major local events that once transfixed and transformed the participants, and whose anniversaries should surely be celebrated locally, of the terrain of ambush sites, of routes of advance and retreat, of the deeds that were done, the sacrifices made, the defeats and disappointments suffered, the victories won.

Some of the world out of which the resistance fighters came has disappeared for ever. Some of that world can be romanticised in retrospect. But every generation is the richer, and bestows upon later generations a richer legacy – whatever they may do with it – for having in it men and women who refused to bow the knee to those who thought of themselves as the natural born rulers of mankind. Not all of course shared that view. Some may be born to servility, even in Kerry. Some are inevitably eager to ingratiate themselves with their betters, real or presumed. Others reluctantly but inexorably resign themselves to the service of their masters as the best option the accidents of place and date of birth have dealt them. All of that is understandable given human nature. But however mixed the motives of resistance may sometimes be, however unfulfilled some of the dreams, however high the human cost, for themselves and others, Kerry's fight for freedom will always remain, like that of kindred spirits everywhere, at home and abroad, an example of the refusal of the human spirit to submit to arbitrary power.

In the light of the wealth of evidence of the widespread resistance in Kerry recorded here, and despite a fair share of human frailties among the activists, Eoin O'Duffy's comment, as quoted by Ryle Dwyer, that 'Kerry's entire record in the Black and Tan struggle consisted in shooting an unfortunate soldier the day of the Truce', must count among the most fatuous even O'Duffy ever made. Whatever

would happen subsequently, and however perspectives would inevitably be affected by hindsight, for better and for worse, *Kerry's Fighting Story* lays the foundation for all subsequent studies of these foundation years of an independent Irish state.

PROFESSOR J.J. LEE
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APRIL 2009

FOREWORD

ALMOST THIRTY YEARS ago a small body of men engaged in combat with the armed forces of an empire. Militarily they were weak. Their strength lay in their faith in their cause and in the unflinching support of a civilian population which refused to be cowed by threats or by violence.

For almost two years these men successfully maintained the unequal struggle and finally compelled their powerful adversary to seek a truce. The battles in which they fought were neither large nor spectacular: they were the little clashes of guerrilla warfare - the sudden meeting, the flash of guns, a getaway, or the long wait of an ambush, then the explosive action, and death or a successful decision. And the stake at issue was the destiny of an ancient people.

Before the war years imposed a restriction upon newsprint, as upon other commodities, *The Kerryman*, in its various Christmas and other special numbers, told much of the story of these men, the men of the flying columns, the Active Service Units of the Irish Republican Army. It now gathers these stories into book form together with others hitherto unpublished. First in the series was *Rebel Cork's Fighting Story*. Now *Kerry's Fighting Story* is presented.

All the stories in these Fighting Series booklets are either told by the men who took part in the actions described, or else they are written from the personal narrative of

survivors. The booklets do not purport to be a detailed or chronological history of the fight for Independence, but every effort has been made to obtain the fullest and most accurate information about the incidents described. The Publishers are conscious, however, that in the collection of data about such a period errors and omissions can easily occur and so they will welcome the help of readers who may be able to throw more light upon the various episodes related in the series. Such additional information will be incorporated into the second edition of the booklets which the present rate of orders would seem to indicate will be called for in the very near future.

The publishers believe that the younger generation who know about those times by hearsay only will find these survivors' tales of the fight of absorbing interest, while to the older generation they will recall vividly a memorable era and the men who made it. In short, they feel that *Fighting Story* series, the story of the Anglo-Irish War county by county, is a series that will be welcomed by Irish people everywhere. For that reason, so that the booklets may have the widest possible circulation, they are being sold at a price within the reach of everyone. To sell these booklets, with their lavish collection of illustrations of unique historical interest, at the very moderate price of two shillings, the publishers were content to reduce their own profit and to produce the booklet at little above the mere cost of production. They will be satisfied if the series serve to preserve in the hearts of the younger generation that love of country and devotion to its interests which distinguished the men whose doings are related therein.

The Editor

FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE VOLUNTEERS

by OLD SOLDIER

TO PRESENT A clear picture of events in Kerry during the period 1916 to 1921 it is first necessary to trace the trend of developments in the country at large, and in Kerry in particular, from the introduction of the Home Rule Bill of 1912 to the Rising. Under the Home Rule Bill the Irish parliament was to have no influence on foreign affairs, no part in the fixing or collection of customs and excise, very little control over finance and no control over police for six years. Ireland was to have no army or navy of her own. Compared with previous abortive bills of 1886 and 1893, the 1912 measure promised Ireland less immediate financial autonomy, but control of her police at an earlier date. As regards representation at Westminster, she had one hundred and three representatives under the Union, she would have had none at all under the bill of 1886,

eighty under the bill of 1893, and under the bill of 1912 forty-two - rather more than half of what would have been appropriate on a reckoning according to population. The Bill, which would never have been accepted as a final settlement of Ireland's national aspirations, passed through the House of Commons by a substantial majority at the beginning of 1913, but having been rejected by the House of Lords it could not pass their veto till the summer of 1914. By that time the situation had been completely changed by Ulster's determination to resist the measure by force of arms. As early as 1912 a solemn covenant had been signed throughout Ulster and drilling by Sir Edward Carson's Ulster Volunteers had begun. In 1913 there were armed parades and the establishment of a Provisional Government with a military committee attached. During the spring of 1914 there was a threat of mutiny by leading British officers if commanded to march against Ulster, and the great gun-running into Larne. Meanwhile, the south had retaliated and the Irish Volunteer movement was launched at the Rotunda Rink, Dublin, on 25 November 1913. Barely a week later the British government issued a proclamation prohibiting the importation of arms into Ireland. For at least twelve months previously the Ulster Volunteers organised by Carson had been receiving large supplies of arms and ammunition, provided and paid for by English Tories, with the openly defiant purpose of opposing the application of the Home Rule measure to Ulster. 'Ulster Unionists', declared the *Irish Times* in its issue of 6 December 1913, 'are convinced that the action of the Government has come too late, and that there are now sufficient arms in Ulster to enable effective resistance to be made to any attempt to force Home Rule on Ulster'.

Two days later the same newspaper, referring to the prohibition of the importation of arms into Ireland, added, 'It, of course, puts an end to the arming of the Irish Volunteers.' Thus the *Irish Times*, despite its feint, summed

up accurately the real object of the government's proclamation. In January 1914, the estimated strength of the Irish Volunteers was in the neighbourhood of 10,000. By June of that year more than 100,000 men had attested, but, as was proved by subsequent events, some of these had no intention of fighting, especially against Britain. In the meantime the Defence of Ireland Fund had been launched with the express purpose of arming Ireland's manhood. The fund was intended only to facilitate the purchase of fighting material in quantity, as each Volunteer paid for his own equipment. In London, Roger Casement had gathered around him a small committee of Irish people who by their subscriptions and influence made available a considerable sum of money to supplement the drive for funds in Ireland. One thousand five hundred Mauser rifles and 49,000 rounds of ammunition were purchased by Erskine Childers and Darrel Figgis in Hamburg, and it was decided to land some of the guns at Howth Harbour on 26 July 1914, and the remainder at Kilcool, County Wicklow. Erskine Childers landed 900 rifles and 29,000 rounds of ammunition at Howth, from his yacht, *The Asgard*, which he manned with his wife. The arms and ammunition were handed over to the Irish Volunteers and successfully distributed despite interference by the police and detachments of the King's Own Scottish Borderers. On their return from Howth the Scottish Borderers, under Major Haig, fired on unarmed civilians in Bachelor's Walk, with the result that four people were killed and thirty-eight wounded. A week later the second consignment of arms, which comprised 600 rifles and 20,000 rounds of ammunition, was successfully landed at Kilcool. Thomas Myles and James Creed Meredith were the navigators of the yacht, *Chotah*, which accomplished the gun-running, and Seán Fitzgibbon and Seán T. O'Kelly were in charge of the Volunteer party who took delivery. The arms and

ammunition were successfully distributed without serious incident.

Meanwhile, in June 1914, an amending bill had been added to the Home Rule proposals. In principle it meant that there would be no attempt immediately to force Home Rule on north-east Ulster. Whilst Home Rule had been placed on the statute book, it was not to come into force till a year after the Great War, and as a pledge had been given that Ulster was not to be coerced, Carson had won his campaign against the measure.

TRALEE

GREAT MOVEMENTS SOMETIMES spring from small beginnings. When a group of Tralee men gathered in the Irish Club, High Street, one November evening in 1913, few could have guessed that the tiny seed of National Resurgence was about to be sown in the town. A few days previously Matthew McMahan, law clerk of Boherbee, whilst in Dublin with some friends, witnessed the inaugural parade of Volunteers march to the Rotunda Rink. McMahan attended the meeting which followed the parade, made himself known to the organisers, and brought home to Tralee some Volunteer membership cards which he showed to Tom Slattery, of Rock Street. In the Irish Club a few nights later Slattery declared that it was time to form a branch of the Volunteer movement in the town, and he was supported by Jerome Slattery, of Blennerville, who appealed to the young men to rally to the ranks. Chairman of the Irish Club at that time was patriotic Fr Charlie Brennan, then a curate in Tralee, and the name of Austin Stack was also on its membership roll. Following Tom Slattery's address to the members of the club it was decided to make contact with Volunteer headquarters in Dublin, and Diarmuid Crean,