



Fingal and the **1916 Rising**

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Comhairle Contae
Fhine Gall
Fingal County
Council



“FINGAL HAS CONTRIBUTED MORE THAN ITS SHARE.”

(Éamon de Valera, on the death of Richard Coleman)

Fingal played a unique role in the 1916 Rising. Men and women from across the county were members of the Irish Volunteers, the Irish Citizen Army and Cumann na mBan and played important roles in these organisations. These men and women contributed to events as they unfolded in Dublin city and in north County Dublin.

They instigated the event that became known as the Battle of Ashbourne – the largest engagement anywhere outside Dublin city during Easter Week 1916. Their story and the story of Fingal and the 1916 Rising is told here, with important locations where actions took place, or that are associated with the events of 1916, indicated on the accompanying map.

Irish Volunteers

There were four companies that formed the 5th Battalion (Fingal Brigade) of the Irish Volunteers: Lusk, Skerries, Swords, St. Margaret's.

1. Skerries

Skerries Company of the Irish Volunteers was formed on 24 May 1914. It was led by Joseph McGuinness initially and later Joseph Thornton.

2. Lusk

Lusk Company of the Irish Volunteers was established on 19 May 1914 and had 40 members under Edward Rooney. The Lusk Company Irish Volunteers trained in Donabate at the home of the McAllister family, leading local nationalists, where they also stored weapons.

3. Swords

Swords Company of the Irish Volunteers was established in April 1914. Richard Coleman was appointed Captain.

4. St Margaret's

St Margaret's Company of the Irish Volunteers was formed in early 1914. James Vincent Lawless was the captain of the St. Margaret's Company.



Irish Citizen Army

5. Baldoyle

A unit of the Irish Citizen Army from Baldoyle had members who were based in locations around the city during the Rising. This was the only Irish Citizen Army unit in north County Dublin. Many of the men from the unit served in St Stephen's Green under Michael Mallin. One of the Baldoyle unit, James McCormack, was killed during the Rising.

Action Sites

Sites of mobilisation of volunteers or troops, engagements with the RIC, attacks on communication lines

6. Ashbourne

On Friday 28th April, the 5th Battalion Irish Volunteers attacked the RIC barracks at Kilmoon, Ashbourne. The RIC defended it for a period of time but the men inside surrendered when the Volunteers threw bombs at the building. As the surrender was taking place a large force of RIC arrived from Slane to reinforce their colleagues and fighting began again. The Battle of Ashbourne, as it became known, was the biggest engagement outside Dublin city during Easter Week and the only battle won by the Volunteers in the Rising. It demonstrated the advantages of guerrilla warfare because even though the Volunteers were outnumbered they managed to successfully take on the larger RIC force. After a number of hours of fighting the RIC surrendered, as they believed the Volunteer force to be greater than it was. There were injuries and fatalities on both sides and Dr Richard Hayes attended the wounded. Eight RIC men were killed, including the County Inspector, Alexander Gray, and the District Inspector, Harry Smyth. Two Volunteers died - John (Jack) Crenigan and Thomas Rafferty. Three civilians were also killed. Molly Adrien, Monica (Dot) Fleming and Eveleen Lawless took part in the battle as messengers and also attending the wounded. Ashbourne was a major victory for the Volunteers and they were shocked when news came through of the surrender of the 1916 leaders in Dublin city with the orders for them to lay down their arms.

7. Garristown

The RIC barracks was attacked late on Easter Wednesday, 26th April 1916. The barracks was empty as the RIC had evacuated to Balbriggan. The communications equipment in the local post office was put out of action.

8. Skerries

On Easter Monday 24th April 1916, the same day as the Rising began, there was a large recruiting rally held in Skerries, seeking recruits for the British forces. Later in the week, rumours of a possible Volunteer attack on the wireless station resulted in the dispatch of 200 British troops to the town, as well as two naval vessels. An attack never took place.

9. Rathbeale Crossroads, Swords

On Easter Sunday, 23rd April 1916, 120 members of the 5th Battalion were mobilised at Rathbeale Crossroads, before being informed that the Rising was off, following Eoin MacNeill's countermanding order.



10. Knockedan Bridge, Swords

After the confusion caused by the countermanding order on Easter Sunday, Knockedan Bridge was chosen as the rally point for the Volunteers who turned out on Easter Monday, 24th April 1916. An estimated 50 - 70 men turned out, much fewer than had been anticipated.

11. Swords

Swords RIC barracks was attacked on Wednesday, 26th April 1916, by three columns of Volunteers. They overpowered the small number of RIC men, seized a quantity of weapons and ammunition, and put the telegraph machine in Swords post office out of action.

12. Donabate

The RIC barracks was attacked on Thursday, 27th April 1916. One Constable was wounded and a small number of rifles was seized.

13. Rogerstown, Rush

Almost immediately upon being called out on Easter Monday, 24th April 1916, a small group of Volunteers attempted to destroy Rogerstown Railway Bridge with explosives. The bridge was only damaged. Another unsuccessful attempt was made the following Wednesday, 26th April 1916.

14. Howth

A key event leading up to the 1916 Rising was the landing of hundreds of German rifles and ammunition at Howth on 26th July 1914 from Erskine Childers' yacht the Asgard. The Skerries, Swords and Lusk Volunteer Companies were among those which helped to unload and distribute the weapons.

15. Howth

During the Rising the authorities feared an attack on the Howth Head communications cable, which would have hampered communications with Britain. 20 British soldiers were dispatched to guard the area, but no attack ever materialised.

16. Blanchardstown

On Tuesday, 25th April 1916, the Volunteers made abortive attempts to destroy the railway lines at Blanchardstown and Cabra.

17. Tyrrelstown

Around 70 Dundalk Volunteers mobilised on Easter Sunday and, after some confusion caused by Eoin MacNeill's countermanding order, they marched in the direction of Dublin through Slane and Dunboyne. They took over Tyrrelstown House near Mulhuddart and occupied it for several days, from where they could hear the sound of the fighting in Dublin. Once news of the surrender filtered through the Volunteers dispersed and headed back home.

18. Dublin

Many Volunteers from Fingal served in Dublin city during the Rising. Some of the sites where they were positioned are listed but this is not an exhaustive list of all the places where they were posted:

Mendicity Institute

Located on Usher's Island on the South Quays, this was the base of the 1st Battalion of Irish Volunteers. Men from the 5th Battalion (Fingal Brigade), led by Captain Richard Coleman from Swords, fought in the Mendicity Institute after James Connolly asked Thomas Ashe for support. The men served here under Sean Heuston. The building was surrounded and infiltrated by Wednesday 26th April 1916 and Peter Wilson from Swords was killed when the building was finally stormed. The garrison surrendered shortly afterwards.

General Post Office

Men from Fingal were in the GPO, including some of the men sent by Thomas Ashe into the city with Richard Coleman.

Jameson's Distillery

Captain Séamus Murphy and Captain Con Colbert were in charge of the men from the 4th Battalion in Jameson's Distillery on Marrowbone Lane, some of whom were from the Fingal area.

Boland's Mills

The 3rd Battalion under Éamon De Valera occupied Boland's Bakery and Mills. Several men from Fingal were posted here.

St. Stephen's Green

Men from the Baldoyle unit of the Irish Citizen Army served under Commandant Michael Mallin at St. Stephen's Green

Camps

These are the sites where men from the 5th Battalion had billets or camps during Easter Week as they kept on the move.



19. Finglas

This was the first area where the 5th Battalion made camp during Easter Week. On Tuesday 25th April 1916, Ashe sent 20 men into the city following a request from James Connolly. Most of these men were eventually posted to the Mendicity Institute.

20. Killeek

The 5th Battalion moved from Finglas to Killeek late on Tuesday 25th April from where several attacks were launched.

21. Baldwinstown

The camp moved from Killeek to Baldwinstown near Garristown and it was from here that the attacks on Garristown RIC Barracks and Post Office and on Ashbourne were launched.

22. Borranstown

The Volunteers made camp in the Borranstown area following the Battle of Ashbourne on Friday 28th April 1916.

23. Newbarn

The remaining Volunteers were camped at Newbarn, near Kilsallaghan, when orders arrived from Pearse to surrender on 30th April 1916. Richard Mulcahy was allowed to travel into the city to confirm this before they were all arrested and taken into custody.

Places with 1916 Link

Locations with connections to certain events or people linked to 1916

24. Oldtown

Mary (Molly) Adrien was born in Co. Meath and her family moved to Balbriggan when she was young. She lived in Oldtown for most of her adult life. She joined the Ard Craobh of Cumann na mBan in late 1915 and founded a branch at Lusk. Molly played a key role in the success of the 5th Battalion as she carried dispatches daily between the 5th Battalion and the GPO and so was instrumental in keeping the lines of communication open between the two groups. She gave evidence that during the time she spent in the GPO she worked with the Cumann na mBan members based there, and was there when the Linen Hall was blown up and when James Connolly was brought in wounded. Her home became the place where relatives could get messages and clothing to the Volunteers. She was present at the Battle of Ashbourne, where she assisted Dr Richard Hayes in treating the wounded Volunteers and RIC men. After the Rising, she continued to serve the republican cause and opposed the Treaty. She died in July 1949.

25. Saucerstown, Swords

The Lawless family was one of the most important nationalist families in Fingal during the revolutionary period. The family farm at Saucerstown was used as a weapons and explosives store by the Volunteers. Their 1911 census return, completed entirely in Irish, shows Frank and Cáit Lawless living with their ten surviving children. Frank was Quartermaster of the 5th Fingal Battalion and played a key role in arming the Volunteers. His sons Joseph and Colm were also deeply involved in the Volunteers and later the IRA and Free State army. All three took part in the 1916 Rising. His daughters Kathleen and Eveleen were prominent members of Cumann na mBan and were also active during Easter Week 1916 carrying dispatches and supplies, tending the wounded after the Battle of Ashbourne and recovering the rifles hidden at Newbarn after the surrender. Frank Lawless took his seat in the First Dáil for Dublin North in 1919, and was elected again in 1921. He supported the Treaty and was killed in an accident in 1922.



26. Swords

Richard Coleman was born in Swords in 1890. He joined the Irish Volunteers and was captain of the Swords Company of the 5th Battalion. Coleman led the men sent by Thomas Ashe into Dublin city on foot of a request from James Connolly for more men. A few of the group remained in the GPO but most, including Coleman, were posted to the Mendicity Institute to help reinforce it. After the Rising he was sentenced to death but this was commuted. He was imprisoned in Lewes and released under the amnesty in June 1917. He campaigned for Éamon De Valera in the Clare by-election in 1918. He was arrested, imprisoned in Ireland and went on hunger strike. He was released but re-arrested soon afterwards. He was sent to Usk prison, Wales where he died in December 1918 from pneumonia.

27. Corduff, Lusk

Thomas Ashe was born in Kerry in 1885. He took the teaching post of principal at Corduff National School near Lusk in 1908. He was the commanding officer of the 5th Battalion (Fingal Brigade) of the Irish Volunteers, directing the

activities that took place in north County Dublin during Easter Week, including the Battle of Ashbourne. Ashe was an avid supporter of the Irish language and Irish culture. He was a member of the Gaelic League and founded the Black Raven Pipe Band and the Round Towers GAA club in Lusk. Ashe was among the leaders sentenced to death after the Rising but this was commuted to life imprisonment. He was sent to Lewes Prison but was released as part of an amnesty in June 1917. He was rearrested that August on a charge of sedition and imprisoned in Mountjoy. He died on hunger strike in September 1917. His body lay in state in Dublin City Hall and Michael Collins gave the graveside oration. He is buried in Glasnevin Cemetery.

28. Lusk

Dr Richard F Hayes was born in Bruree, Co. Limerick. He studied medicine and became the dispensary doctor at Lusk House. He joined the Irish Volunteers in 1913 and was the first commanding officer of the 5th Fingal Battalion. He handed command over to Thomas Ashe just before the Rising broke out. He was present at the battle of Ashbourne and treated the wounded on both sides. He was imprisoned at Lewes after the Rising and released in July 1917. He was rearrested in 1918 and sent to Reading Gaol, from where he was elected Sinn Fein MP for Limerick East. He supported the Treaty and retired from politics in 1924. He died in 1958.

29. Hazelbrook, Portmarnock

Eoin MacNeill, Commander-in-Chief of the Irish Volunteers, lived in Hazelbrook House in Portmarnock until 1908. He was born in Antrim in 1867. He helped found the Gaelic League with Douglas Hyde in 1893 and was appointed Professor of Early Irish History at University College Dublin in 1908. An article he wrote advocating the formation of a national volunteer force led to the creation of the Irish Volunteers in 1913 and he was made Chief of Staff. After the Irish Volunteers split in late 1914 MacNeill became their leader. He only learned of the planned armed rebellion for Easter Week a few days beforehand. On hearing of the capture of Roger Casement and the loss of the German guns, MacNeill countermanded the order for the rebellion and

this reduced the number of Irish Volunteers that were subsequently mobilised. He did not take part in the Rising but was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment. He was released in 1916, elected as a Sinn Fein MP in 1918 and took his seat in the First Dáil. He held a number of ministerial posts but lost his Dáil seat in 1927. He died in 1945 and is buried in Kilbarrack Cemetery.

30. Howth Junction

Richard Mulcahy was born in Waterford in 1886. He was in college in Dublin when he joined the Irish Volunteers in November 1913 and was appointed 2nd lieutenant in the 3rd Dublin Battalion. On Easter Monday 24th April 1916, Mulcahy went from the city centre to Howth Junction to cut the communications cable to Belfast and London and was to report back to the GPO afterwards. He was unable to return to the city and joined up with Thomas Ashe and the 5th Battalion at their camp in Finglas. Ashe immediately made him second-in-command. He was present at the raids on Swords and Donabate RIC barracks, and was key in persuading Ashe to engage the RIC at Ashbourne, rather than withdraw. After the surrender, Mulcahy was interned in Frongoch and was released in December 1916. He was in charge of the ceremonial aspects of Thomas Ashe's funeral, following Ashe's death on hunger strike. In March 1918 Mulcahy was made the first Chief of Staff of the Irish Army and held the post until January 1922 when he became the first Minister of Defence of the Provisional Government. At the outbreak of the Civil War in June 1922 he again took over as Chief of Staff until the end of the Civil War. He had a long career in politics after the revolutionary period, holding a number of ministerial posts and serving as leader of Fine Gael from 1944 to 1959. He died in 1971.

31. Mulhuddart

Private Michael Carr of the 3rd Battalion Royal Irish Regiment was the only known Irish member of the British army with Fingal connections killed during the Rising. His birthplace is unknown, but he resided at Mulhuddart and was killed in Dublin on 24th April 1916.

32. Carpenterstown, Castleknock

A number of Irish Volunteers from the Blanchardstown, Castleknock, Clonsilla and surrounding areas were members of battalions that were active within Dublin City during Easter Week. Thomas Carty from Carpenterstown was one such man. He was a member of the 4th Battalion of the Irish Volunteers and served in Jameson's Distillery with Con Colbert. He was imprisoned in Knutsford after the Rising. He re-joined the Irish Volunteers after 1916 and fought in the IRA during the War of Independence.

33. Clonsilla

William Evelyn Wylie of Clonsilla House was appointed a Kings Counsel in 1914 and was a member of the Officers Training Corps that defended Trinity College during the Rising. He was unexpectedly appointed a Crown prosecuting officer during the courts martial of the 1916 leaders. He famously described Éamon de Valera as an unimportant schoolmaster thus saving de Valera from the firing squad.

