

Template cover sheet which must be included at the front of all projects

Title of project:

Tomás Malone (alias Seán Forde), (1896-1981)
"Westmeath's Freedom Fighter, 1912-1922"

Category for which you wish to be entered (i.e. Revolution in Ireland, Ireland and World War 1, Women's history or a Local/Regional category)

Revolution in Ireland

Name(s) of class / group of students / individual student submitting the project

Transition Year History Class 2 (T.Y.P. 2) 2016-2017

School roll number (this should be provided if possible)

63310T

School type (primary or post-primary)

(Post-Primary)

School name and address (this must be provided even for projects submitted by a group of pupils or an individual pupil):

St. Joseph's Secondary School
Rochfortbridge
Co. Westmeath

Class teacher's name (this must be provided both for projects submitted by a group of pupils or an individual pupil):

Noel Foynes

Teacher's contact phone number:

(044) 9222176

Teacher's contact email address:

www.mercyrochfortbridge.ie

Tomás Malone (alias Seán Forde), (1896-1981) **“Westmeath’s Freedom Fighter, 1912-1922”**

“We have declared for a Republic. We will live under no other law”

Liam Lynch (1893-1923)

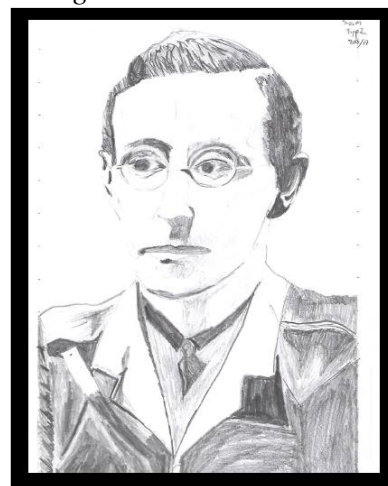
To begin our story and to put it in context, we decided to take a short trip through the Ireland of 1912-1922. It is now deemed the “Decade of Centenaries” with a long list of events to commemorate and remember. However, back then, it was a period of riotous change best typified by the loss of close to five hundred lives over the five days of the Easter Rising and by countless numbers of brave volunteers in every part of the country.

Liam Lynch as our starting quotation proclaims was not prepared to compromise for it is written in Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc’s book “The Battle for Limerick City”: *“Lynch’s record as a guerrilla leader and his determination to secure the Irish Republic against all enemies made him a formidable opponent”*. Tomás Malone, the subject of our essay would also fit into this category. Furthermore, and of equal interest to this study was the position of Co.

Westmeath in this revolutionary period. There is now much evidence to suggest that the Lake County was also a hotbed of activity as described by Russell Shortt in his on-line thesis titled: “I.R.A. Activity in Westmeath during the War of Independence, 1918-21” in which he states: *“True, Westmeath follows the general pattern that occurred in the rest of the country, that of young men joining the Volunteers and becoming increasingly militant against Crown Forces, marginalised to a large extent from their local communities, and working more often than not on their own initiative”*.

Also in agreement in her book, “The Little Book of Westmeath”, local historian, Ruth Illingworth states:

“support grows in Westmeath as elsewhere in Ireland, for Republicanism and Independence.....during the War of Independence, units of Volunteers operate in many parts of the county”.



Liam Lynch, 1893-1923

As a result of examining such material on the struggles within our county brought us to focus more on the Malone family of Meedin, Tyrrellspass and in particular on the role of Tomás Malone, born on the 7th August 1896. Significantly, Tomás’s grandfather had to clear out of Ireland because of his Fenian association and as a result Tomás’s father was born in London. Tomás was educated at the Franciscan College, Multyfarnham where he studied Greek and Irish. His later republican activities led him to adopt the alias Seán Forde and he is invariably described in the pages of the “Westmeath Examiner” as: *“Westmeath’s 1916 Link”*. From the census returns of both 1901 and 1911, we can see that Tomás grew up in a family of six which would have been regarded as a small family in that period of Irish history. His family consisted of his father William and his mother Mary, his two brothers James and Joseph and his only sister Mary. We also observed from these census returns that his great-uncle Andrew and his two cousins Mary and Sarah also lived with them. Most interestingly, we note that by census night 1911, Tomás was by then fifteen years old and described as been: *“fluent in both Irish and English”*.



Conradh na Gaeilge, 1893

have existed in these jails. Her love for the Irish language was great and she became a member of the Gaelic League. The Gaelic League (Conradh na Gaeilge) was founded by Douglas Hyde and Eoin MacNeill in 1893 as Hyde had called for the “*de-Anglicisation of Irish society*”.

As a result of this the Malones came into contact with Laurence Ginnell, the radical nationalist MP for North-Westmeath who would visit in Meedin in order to learn Irish. The highly regarded “*member for Westmeath, member for Ireland*” was to have a great impact on Tomás and on the Malone household.

Consequently, the Ranch Wars waged by Laurence Ginnell greatly impressed the young Tomás Malone but not the British military authorities who were in charge of law and order in Ireland during this period. Notably, a particularly violent incident of cattle driving took place in the area of New Forest, Tyrrellspass in 1908 quite close to the Malone household where fifteen were arrested: “*as Tyrrellspass had always been active*”.

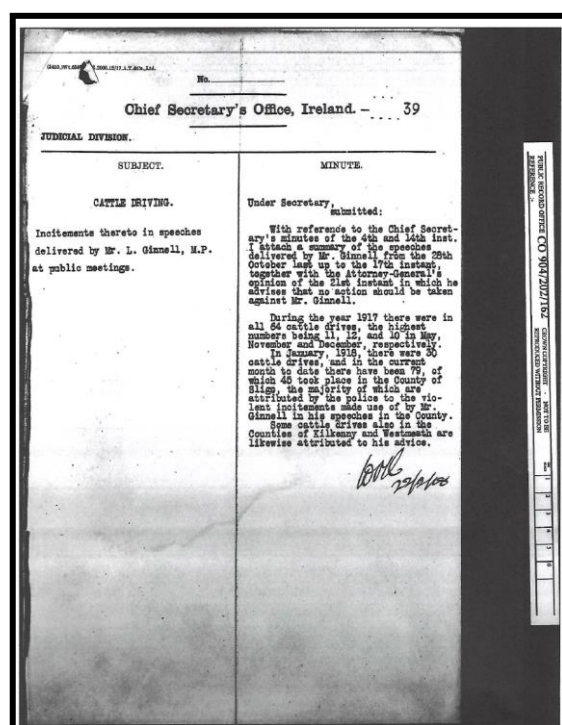
According to Paul Hughes in a “Westmeath Examiner” article of September 2015, he states that: “*on November 14th. such agitation returned to Tyrrellspass, this time on the McKenna estate in Rathgarret. Fourteen were arrested*”. These incidents not alone in our area but country wide were been reported and recorded in the epicentre of British rule in Ireland ----- Dublin Castle. Not surprisingly, in these Dublin Castle Special Branch Files CO 904 (193-216) and titled: “*Sinn Féin and Republican Suspects 1899-1921*”, we find many references to these particular types of incidents in Co. Westmeath over many years.

In the Ireland of 1912-1922, it was quite difficult to remain “*underground*” as easily as one might have expected. It came as no surprise to learn when browsing through these files that the role of Laurence Ginnell (File No. CO 904/202\162) was closely monitored by the British authorities and filed away in Dublin Castle.

Significantly, Tomás was greatly influenced by his mother Máire (nee Mulavin).

She was originally from Castletown Geoghegan and qualified as a national school teacher only eventually to be sacked from her job for teaching children their prayers in Irish. She was subsequently to stage a sit-in at her school only to be eventually removed by the R.I.C. As a result she ended up teaching Irish to children in her home at night.

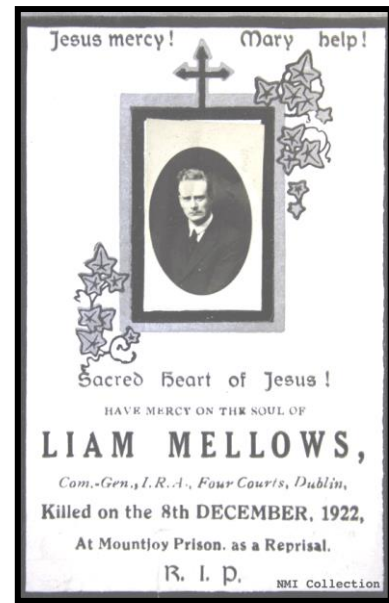
It was no surprise then that her letters to Tomás while in various prisons were in Irish leading to censorship problems that would



Dublin Castle File on Laurence Ginnell

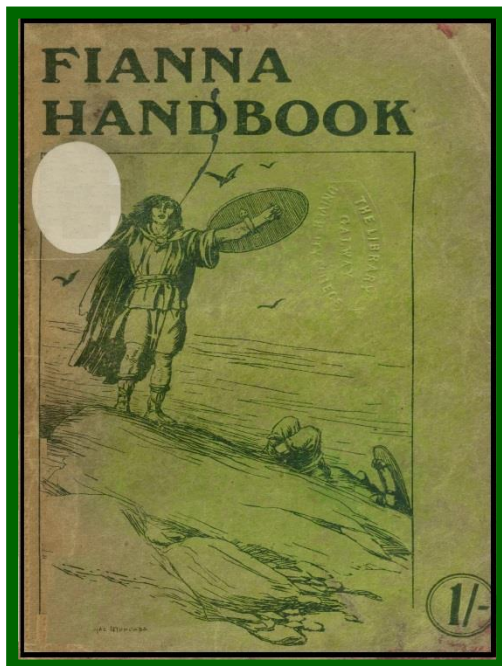
Subsequently, Tomás also became even more radicalised as a result of his meeting with Liam Mellows at a Féis in Mullingar sometime in the years between 1911 and 1913. Liam Mellows saw potential in Tomás and immediately enrolled him in Na Fianna Éireann, a Republican Boys Movement that had been founded by Bulmer Hobson and the Countess Markievicz in 1909.

They had taken part in the Howth gun-running in 1914. Significantly, in a History Ireland magazine article (Volume 10 Issue No.1. Spring 2002), Bulmer Hobson was described as: *“the most dangerous man in Ireland”*. All of this was to ensure that the Malone family became an even stronger force in republicanism in Co. Westmeath. In addition, Liam Mellows had been born in 1892 in Hartshead Military Barracks in Ashton-Under-Lyne, Lancashire, his father was a British soldier and Mellows became most associated with the attempted Easter Rising in Co. Galway and as a founder member of the Irish Volunteer Force. He had originally been sworn into Na Fianna Éireann by Thomas Clarke.



Liam Mellows, 1892-1922

Interestingly, after joining Na Fianna Éireann Tomás had the intention of establishing a Tyrrellspass branch, this was according to a statement we found in the Bureau of Military



Na Fianna Handbook

History Archives. This branch of Na Fianna in the end was not formed as Malone himself states: *“we never got as far as doing that because the Volunteers were started then and a Volunteer company was established in Tyrrellspass”*.

The Volunteers that Tomás mentions in his witness statement are the Irish Volunteers founded by Eoin Mac Neill in 1913, having been prompted to do so by Bulmer Hobson and The O’Rahilly. Tomás joined and thus began a fruitful career in the Irish Volunteers. This Volunteer unit in Tyrrellspass was largely led by a local curate, the Reverend Father Patrick Smith who according to Malone in his witness statement was: *“moved from Tyrrellspass sometime before the Rising”*.

This transfer of Fr. Smith went hard on the Tyrrellspass brigade and Malone believed if this had not happened that: *“the Tyrrellspass contribution to the fight would have been more formidable than it*

was”.

It became apparent to us during the course of this study that Fr. Smith clearly had a grip on this particular Volunteer unit in our area. In *“A History of the Diocese of Meath, 1860-1993”*, we found that Fr. Patrick Smith originally came from Dunderry, Co. Meath and was: *“ordained in Maynooth College in 1877”*.

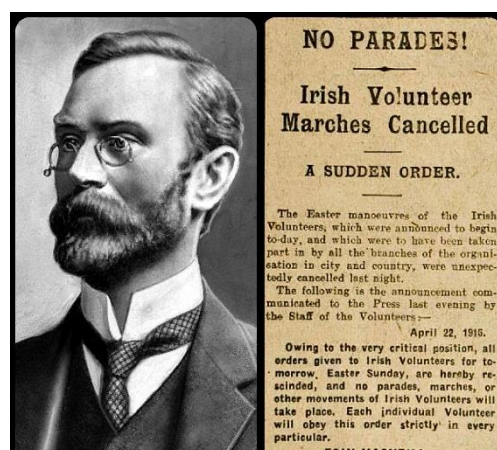


Peadar Bracken

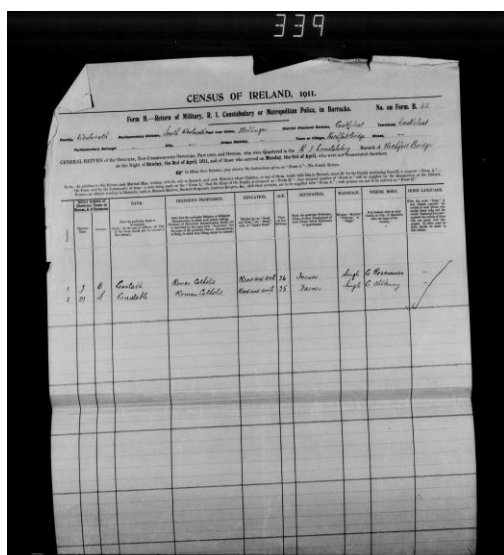
Following the disappointment of the “*New Forest Incident*” and the subsequent transfer of Fr. Smith to Rahan in Co. Offaly, the leadership of the Tyrrellspass Brigade fell to Tullamore man Peadar Bracken. He is credited with firing the first ever shots of the 1916 Rising in Tullamore and was appointed Commandant of the Athlone Brigade of the Irish Volunteers by Pádraig Pearse and it was this appointment that would have brought him into contact with the Malones of Tyrrellspass. Peadar Bracken and Tomás Malone were also to become freedom fighters during the following War of Independence, 1919-1921. In a 2016 edition to mark the centenary of the 1916 Rising and titled: “*Tullamore in 1916*”, author Michael Byrne describes Peadar Bracken thus: “*Bracken was a stone mason as was his father.....he was sworn into the I.R.B. when eighteen years old by William Kennedy.....who was a '67 Fenian man and a native of Edenderry*”.

However, in the event of a nationwide rising which did eventually come to pass in 1916, Malone’s men were to destroy bridges between the midlands and the West of Ireland. Not surprisingly, a source that supports this view is Tomás Malone’s own statement to the Bureau of Military History which he finalised on the 12th May, 1953. In this we see how Malone reveals in the weeks leading up to Easter Sunday that he and his brother Séamas were: “*busy obtaining gelnite, arms and other equipment ready for the task at hand for Easter Sunday*”. In addition it became clear to us that a local man (a well borer), trained Malone’s unit in the use of gelnite. Significantly, he also supplied this unit with detonators and a fuse both crucial for the job they were about to undertake. We also learned how Malone’s unit received their instructions from Liam Mellows to blow up the bridge at Shannonbridge, Co. Offaly (a provincial border), before going on to join the Galway, Athlone, Drumraney and Tullamore groups to proceed to Galway to take the fight to the British there under the command of Liam Mellows. However, there was to be a twist to this tale.....

As indeed with so many previous militant encounters with the Empire, the twist to this particular tale came in the form of Eoin MacNeill’s countermanding order to the Volunteers for the cessation of all military operations for Easter Sunday 1916. This threw the Tyrrellspass Company and much of the rest of the countryside into disarray yet, sporadic acts of bravery wherever they occurred (for example in Co. Laois and Co. Galway) were due to a lack of “*modern methods*” of communications as much as anything else. It was difficult for us to understand that in this modern era of many different modes of instant communications that a simple message conveyed from Dublin to drop arms might have had a limited success of reaching a Volunteer unit in Co Westmeath.



Eoin Mac Neill's, “Countermanding Order”



1911 Rochfortbridge R.I.C. Census

Interestingly, on this topic and according to Mick O'Farrell in his book, "50 Things You Didn't Know About 1916" in which he states: *"the first shot of the Rising has more than one claimant.....however, one claim that has many supporters is that of the Volunteers of Laois, who destroyed a section of railway track at a place called Colt Wood on the night of 23 April – the day before the Rising began in Dublin"*. In any case this was seemingly not to deter the Tyrrellspass unit too much as according to an article in "The Westmeath Examiner" and titled: "Volunteer defiance in Tyrrellspass, 1916", we read: *"After mobilising at Drumraney, the Tyrrellspass men proceeded to Horseleap and attempted to blow up a bridge.....the demolition effort failed, however. At that point the core of the Tyrrellspass Volunteers, who had heard about the outbreak of*

fighting in Dublin, retired to the Malone household to await further orders".

As a result of the Drumraney mobilisation and the Horseleap incident, the authorities had become precisely aware of the identities of their tormentors. As expected, the R.I.C. attacked the Malone household in Meedin and shots were exchanged on three different occasions during Easter Week 1916. The original R.I.C. men had come from a barracks in Dalystown but later and of much more interest to us a second batch of R.I.C. reinforcements that were required arrived at the Malone farm house from Rochfortbrige. Tomás Malone was later to recall: *"My Mother, who was up, refused to open the door for them. You see, she never opened the door for a raid. They always had to break in"*.

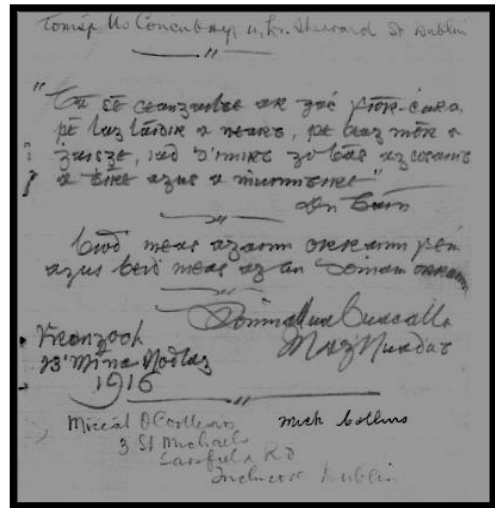
Significantly, just across the road from one of the main gates of our school at that time stood the R.I.C. barracks, a three-storeyed castellated watchtower where these R.I.C. reinforcements would have been sent a matter of just three kilometres north-west to the Malone household. From the census returns of 1901 and 1911, this barracks was policed by a small number of Irish officers from different counties who were only required to enter their initials on these census forms for security reasons and who for the most part described themselves as: *"farmers sons"*. Disappointingly, this lovely building so close to our school was burned to the ground sometime in the 1920's and on its site today stands the local St. Joseph's the Worker Hall built as a community project by the residents of Rochfortbridge and opened towards the end of the 1960's.

Today, it still serves the needs of the local community.



After the 1916 Rising and because of the incidents at his home in Meedin, Tomás was first imprisoned in Richmond Barracks in Dublin, and was later transported to Wandsworth prison in London and from there to Frongoch in Wales where his brother Séamas was also held. According to Tom Malone (son of Tomás) in his book “Alias Séan Forde”, old friendships were renewed as: *“Larry Ginnell the Irish M.P. was a regular visitor to Wandsworth. He was a neighbour and family friend from Tyrrellspass to whom Tomás had given Irish Lessons. He would smuggle in tobacco and matches and in turn would smuggle out letters”*.

As many of the leaders of the 1916 Rising were held in Frongoch at this time, it soon became known as: *“The University of Revolution”*. Interestingly, while in Frongoch, Tomás had his autograph book signed by fellow prisoner Michael Collins who at this time gave his address at Inchicore, Dublin; it was also signed by Domhnall Ua Buachalla, a shopkeeper from Maynooth, Co Kildare who would later play a role in the de Valera governments of the 1930’s. Tomás was then jailed at Wormwood Scrubbs where he was mysteriously held for ten days before been released eventually from Frongoch sometime in August 1916.



Tomás' Autograph Book from Frongoch



**Séamas Ó Maoileoin,
1893-1959**

After his release from Frongoch, he returned to Tyrrellspass to reorganise the Offaly Brigade and soon afterwards in early 1917 he was to follow his brother Séamas to mid-Tipperary as a Gaelic League organiser. From there he was sent to East-Limerick on the instructions of Michael Collins to work as a Dáil Loan Organiser on the outside, but his job really was to organise the Volunteers. As Tomás was *“on the run”* from Mountjoy jail at this time for assaulting police at Dundrum, he had to adopt the alias (new name) of Séan Forde, his brother Séamas who was also on the run adopted the name Michael Forde. According to Tomás’ own statement to the Bureau of Military History, he states: *“I was known by this name of Séan Forde from then until the Truce, and all my activities in Limerick were under this assumed name”*.

In addition, during this phase of Ireland’s struggle between 1918 and 1922, Tomás was to become Vice-Commandant of the East Limerick Brigade of the I.R.A. where he was instrumental in setting up the first Flying Column. A Flying Column was described as a small independent military land unit capable of rapid mobility and is usually composed of all arms. It is accompanied by the minimum of equipment as mobility is usually its primary purpose. The Flying Column was originally known as the Active Service Unit. The idea was conceived as a solution to the problem of been captured as they had according to Donnchadh Ó h-Annagain, Commanding Officer of the East-Limerick Brigade of the I.R.A.: *“the desire to be fully armed in daylight and could travel such a long distance without fear and capture”*.



[illegible]

1911 Ballyanders R.I.C. Census

men were killed and the barracks was completely destroyed. Another R.I.C. man Sean Meade who was seriously injured recovered but only after a considerable length of time. According to the 1911 census for Ballyanders R.I.C. barracks, we found it was policed at that time by one sergeant and three constables and similar to Rochfortbridge, they were all described as: *"farmer's sons"*. In reprisal, the Black and Tans went on the rampage in Limerick city.

Likewise, Tomás also headed the attack on Kilmallock R.I.C. barracks which was incidentally burned to the ground; a similar fate befell our local R.I.C. barracks in Rochfortbridge sometime in the 1920's as already referred to in this study.

The attack on Kilmallock took place on 28th. May, 1920 and was noteworthy as Tomás explained: *“it was our first experience of meeting the Tans. It was the first time they had been seen around there”*. After a long battle that was waged through that summer night, one constables of the R.I.C. were wounded.

There were also three unnamed casualties burned beyond recognition. The three unnamed casualties were Black and Tans. Liam Scully of the Kerry I.R.A. lost his life in this struggle while another J.J. O'Brien is said to have had a lucky escape from been blown to pieces.

Interestingly, Kilmallock was also to see further action in the ensuing Civil War (1922-1923) for in his book, "The Battle for Kilmallock", John O'Callaghan states: *"in short it was a rather mundane locale for events that were anything but mundane"*.



Subsequently, in June 1920, British Major General Cutbert Lucas was captured by the I.R.A. in Fermoy, North-Cork and was held for a time by the West-Limerick, Mid-Limerick and East-Clare I.R.A. Brigades until he finally escaped from the Mid-Limerick Brigade. In his statement to the Bureau of Military History, Tomás described General Lucas as: “*a nice fellow and everyone liked him*” and this despite the fact that Tomás (alias Seán Forde) was wounded in East-Clare during General



Lucas' temporary escape and re-capture. The entire episode with General Lucas lasted four weeks in total until he was eventually released by the I.R.A.

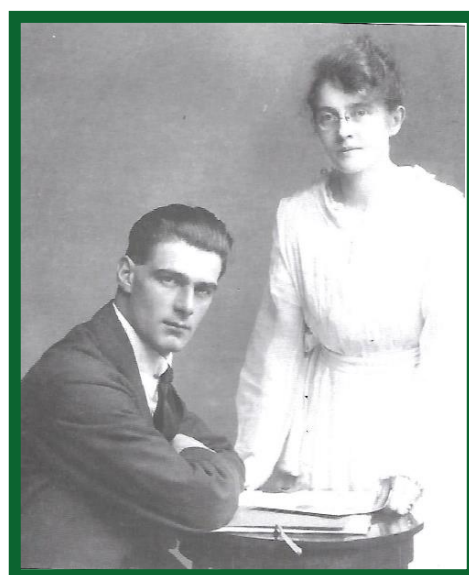
Another story of intrigue involving Tomás revolves around his unsuccessful effort to rescue an injured Tom Crawford of the East-Limerick Brigade following a confrontation with the Black and Tans at Ballyanders as a reprisal for the barrack attack that had taken place the previous April. Consequently, Tomás dressed as priest a "*Fr. Ryan from Ballyanders*" entered the military hospital in Limerick wishing to speak with the injured Tom Crawford. Unfortunately, the British officer in charge on the day explained to Tomás that General Head Quarters forbade such visits and thus ended this attempt at a rescue.

Not surprisingly, because of the suspicion aroused by "*Fr. Ryan's visit*", Tom Crawford was transferred later that day to

Dartmoor prison in England where he remained until after the Truce was signed on 11th July 1921.

Abbey Theatre Plays c.1920's

Indeed, on a personal level, Tomás took time out to marry Margaret (Peig) Hogan of Templederry Co. Tipperary in August 1920. She also came from a strong nationalist background. They were married in St. Joseph's Church, Limerick with a guard of honour provided by his comrades at that time. According to Tom Malone's book "*Alias Seán Forde*", he explains: "*while in Dublin they attended a play at the Abbey Theatre*".

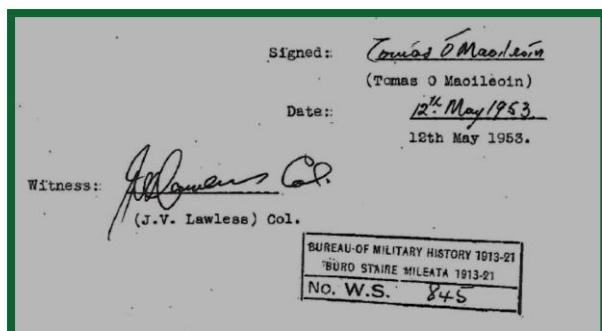


Tomás and Peig's Wedding Photograph

Continuing on with this extreme phase in the War of Independence, 1919-1921 (The Black and Tan War); Malone was also involved in the attack against British forces at Grange on the road between Bruff and Limerick city. This occurred on the 7th November, 1920. The I.R.A. had a big number of men mobilised for the attack yet arms were just available to those who made up the Column. The Flying Column was placed inside a big demesne wall. They were prepared for two lorries of soldiers that were supposed to be coming from Limerick but instead a convoy came from Kilmallock, Mitchelstown or Kilworth towards Limerick. This was Malone's first experience of fighting against armoured cars. Malone would later claim that in the first lorry that came everybody in it was killed because: "*it stopped right beside me*".

This ambush at Grange was a great boost to morale for the I.R.A., having successfully engaged over two hundred well armed and seasoned troops whose casualties numbered in the high twenties. The I.R.A. then retreated to Lough Gur with only two wounded.

Furthermore, the next stage of this guerrilla war took place at Glenacurrane, Co. Limerick located two and a half miles from Mitchelstown on the road between Mitchelstown and Tipperary town. Glenacurrane was described as a textbook ambush site or from Tomas' own statement to the Bureau of Military History: "*a great place for a fight*". The ambush at Glenacurrane on December 17th 1920 became Grange in reverse because a large convoy of



altercation with the Black and Tans who had found him in possession of a small amount of ammunition.

During a very bruising interrogation and

Bureau of Military History Statement

“Malone from Westmeath” rather than his alias Seán Forde for obvious reasons as this name had become very well known to the British authorities in Munster. Malone was eventually court-martialled and sent to Cork jail.

After a failed attempt to escape from Cork jail Tomás along with a number of other Republican prisoners were transferred to Spike Island.

From further study we found that Spike Island (Inis Píc) in Cork Harbour is an island of one hundred and three acres and was originally a monastic settlement. The island’s strategic location within the harbour meant it was used in the past as a defence and as a prison. It would also have a later place in history as it became a bone of contention during the Anglo-Irish

military vehicles was expected; yet, only one car and two lorries showed up. In the following encounter four military were killed and several wounded.

Furthermore, close to Christmas, 1920, it was decided to abandon the Flying Column for a few weeks to allow the men to return to their families and for Forde (Tomás) to continue his interrupted honeymoon. While in Cork, Tomás was imprisoned after an

torture at both Union Quay Barracks and the Cork Bridewell, Tomás admitted he was:



debates of 1921 as Britain wished to hold on to it along with Berehaven, Co. Cork and Lough Swilly, Co. Donegal as naval bases. Significantly, as a result of the Anglo-Irish Trade agreement of 1938, the then

Spike Island Escape Route

Taoiseach Eamon de Valera managed to secure the return of these three naval bases thus ensuring the twenty-six counties neutrality during World War II, 1939-1945. In addition, Liam Lynch as mentioned in our starting quotation organised Forde’s escape from Spike Island. According to various Irish Press and Irish Independent newspaper articles in the past that commemorate this ambitious escape, we read: *“three prominent I.R.A. officers Sean MacSwiney (brother of the martyred Mayor of Cork), Tomas Malone and Con Twomey achieved the seemingly impossible feat of escaping from the prison on Spike Island.....this first attempt was made possible only by the co-operation of*



“Newspaper Clippings”

an I.R.A. unit on the outside. A boat flying a Union Jack, but carrying a number of Volunteers from Cobh steered close to the island where the three prisoners were doing outdoor work for which they had volunteered with an eye to escape”.

With Tomás now back safely with his comrades in the East-Limerick Column and continuing his role as Vice-Officer in Command of this Column another ambush occurred at Kilfinane a small market town to the south-east of Limerick city where a military cycle patrol left their bicycles and took to the fields. This incident took place on the 8th February, 1921. Tomás would

eventually be appointed as Director of Operations for the Second Southern Division, a post he was holding at the time of the Truce in July, 1921. Towards the end of the campaign he was to experience a few more frightening encounters including a brush with cavalry near



Anti-Treaty side.

He reverted to his real name of Tomás Malone and while he did not actively take part in any military activities during the Civil War (1922-1923), he nonetheless was arrested in Nenagh in June 1922 as

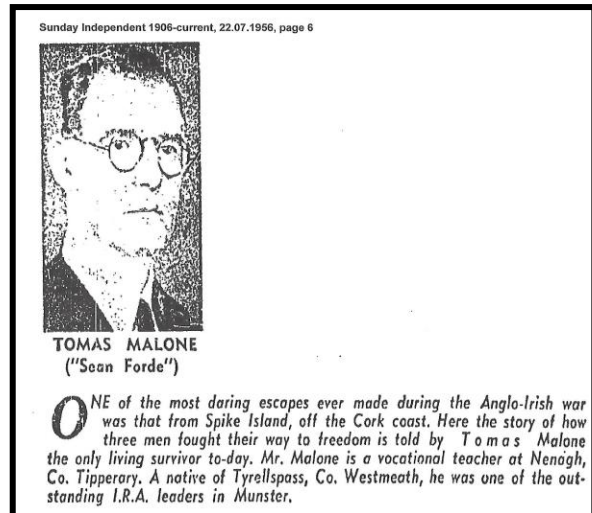
Béal na mBálth, August, 22nd. 1922

“the most dangerous man in Munster”. This time Tomás found himself in Maryborough (Portlaoise) prison. While incarcerated there, he was visited by Michael Collins who asked him to use his influence in order to bring the now bitter Civil War to an end.

This Maryborough visit in August 1922 was also significant as one of the final acts of Michael Collins as he was later ambushed and assassinated in his own native county at Béal na mBláth (translating as mouth of the flowers/blossoms) Co. Cork on 22nd. August, 1922.

Many of the details of the death of Michael Collins have only recently come to light.

Many of the eye-witness accounts of the ambush were contradictory. In Brian Hanley’s book: “The I.R.A. – A Documentary History 1916-2005” it is stated that: “this Civil War ambush was fortuitous” as most of the anti-treaty I.R.A. had withdrawn from their positions believing Collins had taken an alternative route. The six anti-treaty I.R.A. Irregulars were now in a position to challenge Collins’s thirty-two strong Column who eventually cleared a barricade



Birdhill and another incident in Hassett’s public house where

day Independent, July 7th. 1956

he was almost recognised by a number of Black and Tans who had called there. On a further occasion, Tomás, Ernie O’Malley and Eamon Price were involved in an exchange of shots with the R.I.C. in the village of Oola, Co. Limerick.

After the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, Séan Forde took the

General Richard Mulcahy of

the Free State Army had referred to him as:

TIPPERARY OFFICERS

TOMAS MALONE, who was unanimously re-elected Chairman of the North Tipperary Convention yesterday, said that although in general they had a very successful year, there was, he regretted to say, still room for improvement in various directions.

He should like to see the Gaelic spirit more in evidence with regard to support of their national language and their national dances. He thought, too, that the rules of their Association ought to be more strictly observed, so that during the coming year they would have less of what had become a very disagreeable feature of their meetings—objections.

In spite of these the standard of the G.A.A. in North Tipperary was one of which they had reason to be proud.

Mr. M. Moylan was re-elected Secretary. Elections:—Vice-Chairmen, T. Reddin and Bob McGann (Nenagh); Registrar, T. Cleary; Gate Checker, P. O'Brien; Assistant Checker, Michael O'Donnell (Newtown); Hon. Treasurers, Matt Hogan and Michael Kelly; Delegates to Congress, S. Burke and R. J. Nealon.

Delegates to Munster Convention, T. Malone and Sergt. Rice; Co. Board Delegates, J. Burke, Dan Carey, Roddy Nealon, Timothy Ryan; Co. Board Nominations: President, Rev. J. J. Meagher; Hon. Secretary, Capt. John Leahy; Munster Council Representatives, Seamus Gardner (Borrisokane) and John Leahy.

and made their escape, but by then it was too late and according to Hanley: “*Collins was dead*”. Meanwhile, and not for the first time, Tomás Malone escaped from the Curragh Camp Military prison (in a rubbish skip), having been moved there as a result of setting fire to Maryborough prison as a protest at the appalling conditions there.

From 1923 onwards, Tomás made Nenagh in Co. Tipperary his home where he worked as a school teacher eventually becoming Principal in Nenagh Vocational School after some controversy.

He resigned from this position in 1960, although he continued to teach and promote Irish and Irish Dancing. He also became active in the Gaelic Athletic Association becoming Chairman of the North Tipperary Board from 1939 to 1945. His wife Margaret died in 1977 and Tomás

died in 1981.

In conclusion, Tomás Malone alias Seán Forde was a freedom fighter of great significance as the title of our study suggests. His adventures took him around Ireland during this decade of unrest.

His brave attempt at rebellion in 1916 marked Westmeath out as the only

county between Dublin and Galway where bullets were fired in a bid for sovereignty. As Vice-Commandant of the East-Limerick I.R.A. Brigade and Second-In-Command of the East-Limerick Flying Column his engagements with the forces of occupation were even more intense. Perhaps the last words on this brave effort should be left to the subject of our story as in an interview he gave in 1980 to Uinseann MacEoin, author of “*Survivors*”, Tomás states:

“I see no difference in the fight being waged against English domination of the country today and the fight we fought in Westmeath in 1916 and East-Limerick in 1920 and 1921. As far as I’m concerned, they are the same people at grips with the same enemy”.

Nenagh Headmaster's Resignation

At a meeting of North Tipperary Vocational Education Committee, the Department at Newport on Wednesday, the C.E.O. referred to the matter. The question of Mr. Malone's resignation of Mr. Tomás Malone's pension went back before the enactment of the 1930 Act. School. He said at the last meeting that Mr. Malone pointed out he had intended to give three months' notice, but from the actual wording of the letter the Committee accepted his resignation as headmaster from March 1 and the medical certificate came in from the end of March. He (C.E.O.) went into the matter with the Department, and he would recommend the Committee to accept the resignation as headmaster and teacher of Irish and general subjects as from the end of March. That was reasonable enough.

Mr. Meagher—Is that satisfactory to Mr. Malone? C.E.O.—There is a final medical certificate at the end of March and beyond that you cannot go. On the proposal of Mr. C. Lucy, seconded by Mr. Meagher, Mr. Malone's resignation was accepted. The C.E.O. said there was a proposal put through asking the Department to go into the matter vice. Mr. Malone's pension, to take recognition of his national service, Gaelic League, secondary and part-time teacher of Irish to the Department to this effect.

Mr. Malone, he said, had 23 years' service with North Tipperary Committee as a permanent whole-time teacher and he would be allowed his pension for those years. His services as Gaelic League teacher, national service, would be dealt with later. He asked the Committee to agree to award Mr. Malone a temporary pension and a temporary lump sum for his 23 years' service. The Committee unanimously agreed to the C.E.O.'s suggestion and a recommendation was made and part-time teacher of Irish to the Department to this effect.

The Nenagh Guardian, May 14th. 1960

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Byrne, Michael:- "Tullamore in 1916" Esker Press, Tullamore, 2016
2. Curran, Olive C.:- "A History of the Diocese of Meath, 1860-1993"
Volume 2, Criterion Press, Dublin, 1995
3. Hanley, Brian:- "The I.R.A. – A Documentary History, 1916-2015" Gill & Macmillan, 2005
4. History Ireland Magazine:- "Bulmer Hobson...the most dangerous man in Ireland"
(Volume 10 Issue No.1. Spring 2002)
5. Hughes, Paul:- "Volunteer defiance in Tyrrellspass, 1916" Westmeath Examiner, 26/09/2015
6. Illingworth, Ruth:- "The Little Book of Westmeath" The History Press Ireland, Dublin, 2016
7. MacEoin, Uinseann:- "Survivors" Argenta Publications, Dublin, 1980
8. Malone, Tom:- "Alias Seán Forde" Elo Press, Ltd., Dublin, 2000
9. Malone, Tomás:- "The Bureau of Military History, 1913-1921 Witness Statement"
No. W.S. 845 Signed:- May 12th. 1953
10. O'Callaghan, John:- "The Battle For Kilmallock" Mercier Press, Cork, 2011
11. O'Farrell, Mick:- "50 Things You Didn't Know About 1916" Mercier Press, Cork, 2009
12. Ó Ruairc, Pádraig Óg:- "The Battle For Limerick City" Mercier Press, Cork, 2010
13. Shortt, Russell:- "I.R.A. Activity in Westmeath 1918-21" On-Line Masters Thesis NUI Maynooth, 2001
14. "Sinn Féin and Republican Suspects 1899-1921"
Dublin Castle Special Branch Files CO 904 (193-216) (Eneclann)
15. www.censusnationalarchives.ie
16. www.irishnewsarchive.com
"The Irish Press" Dated:- 15/01/1940
"The Sunday Independent" Dated:- 07/07/1956
"The Nenagh Guardian" Dated:- 14/05/1960

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the Art, Irish, English, and Geography Departments in our school for their help in putting this essay together.

We would also like to thank the following:-

Gretta Connell, Assistant County Librarian, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

Danny Dunne, N.T., Past-Pupil and Local Historian

Paul Hughes, Mullingar-based journalist and PhD student at Queen's University, Belfast

Mary Timmins, Archivist, Rochfortbridge Parish, Co. Westmeath