

Proceedings 2005

Annual General Meeting 2005

Colonel Donal O'Carroll presided at the Annual General Meeting which took place in the Officers' Mess, Cathal Brugha Barracks at 11.30 a.m. on Saturday 26th November 2005, with some 31 members in attendance. Among those present was Dr Hans S Pawlisch, the Vice President of the US Commission for Military History. Commandant Paul Mullally, Honorary Record Secretary, read the Minutes of the two sessions of the 2004 Annual General Meeting as held on 4th December 2004 and on 8th April 2005.

When the meetings proceeded to the election of honorary officers, the incumbents viz Dr Patrick McCarthy, Captain Padraic Keane, Colonel Patrick Kirby, Commandant Frank McGoldrick, Dr Kenneth Ferguson and Commandant P M Mullally were elected. Elected as ordinary members of Council were: Mr Peter Mulready, Lieutenant-Colonel Ger Aherne, Lieutenant Labhrás Joye, Ms Jane Leonard, and Dr David Murphy.

Lectures:

Audiences in attendance at Griffith College on the Friday of each month during the lecture series had heard the following lectures:

- *Invasion, occupation and resistance: guerrilla warfare and the laws of warfare since the French Revolution*, by Prof John Horne.
- *Ireland in sixteenth century French military strategy: ally or pawn?*, by Dr. Marian Lyons.
- *Connacht Protestants at war - Sir Charles Coote: a case study*, by Ms. Aoife Duignan.
- *Wireless and telegraph in military operations in Ireland, 1916 - 1923*, by Dr. Donard de Cogan.
- *Garrison life in Derry, c. 1600*, by Dr John McGurk.
- *Sir William Butler: scenes from a life*, by Mr Martin Ryan.
- *The treaty ports and the battle of the Atlantic*, by Dr Patrick McCarthy.

Field Days:

The Society's weekend tour in 2005 was to Antrim and Down, where the sites of the major battles of the rising of 1798 were visited, viz., the battle of Antrim town, and the battles of Saintfield and Ballynahinch in County Down. The talks were given by Mr Bill Wilsdon, member of the Society, and author of a guide to numerous places connected with the rising in the north.

On Saturday 4th June, a party of about forty left Dublin by coach and proceeded to Thiepval Barracks, Lisburn, where several other members who had travelled by car joined the party. Lunch was provided in the Officers' Mess by kind permission of the GOC, Northern Ireland. We were met by Lieutenant-Colonel Nigel Whitaker, commander of the senior unit in barracks, and the RSM, 15 Signal Regiment, who had made all the arrangements. After lunch, the now much larger group moved to Antrim town where Mr Wilsdon gave the first of his talks. In Antrim, the group was joined by

Lord O'Neill, whose ancestor was killed in the battle. On Sunday 5th June, the first destination was Saintfield, where Mr Wilsdon gave a talk on the battle from an excellent vantage point over the town. Lunch (which had been arranged by Colonel W.F. Gillespie, member of the society, and chairman of the Northern Ireland Fire Authority) was in the fire station, Ballynahinch. Afterwards, Mr. Wilsdon gave the last of his battle talks but then took the group to visit the graves of Betsy Gray, her fiancé, and her brother, all of whom were killed after the battle.

On Monday 7th June, the party went to Downpatrick and visited the St Patrick Heritage Centre, Down County Museum, the cathedral, St Patrick's grave, and the church at Saul.

The accommodation for the weekend was in the splendid Slieve Donard Hotel, Newcastle, Co. Down, where, on the Sunday evening, a large gathering enjoyed a communal dinner. The organiser of the weekend was Commandant Frank Purcell.

On Sunday 4th September, the Society visited South Kildare where the President, Colonel Donal O'Carroll, conducted a tour of the site of the battle of Kilrush fought in April 1642 between the royalist army under the earl of Ormond and the hastily gathered Leinster insurgents. A total of almost ninety members and friends participated. Lunch was served in the new and very attractive Clanard Court Hotel, Athy. Afterwards the party moved to the White Castle, Athy, where a talk was given by Mr Frank Taaffe, member of the Society. Talks on the battle were given from two stands in the area, after which the party then went to the site of Ballyshannon fort, a few kilometres away. This was the residence of Pierce MacThomas Fitzgerald, one of the leaders of the insurgents. Although it did not feature in the battle, it was the scene of action a few years later.

Dinner that evening was in the Officers' Mess, Ceannt Barracks, Curragh Camp, by kind permission of the GOC, Defence Forces Training Centre. The organiser of the field-day was Dr Patrick McCarthy.

Membership:

Colonel Patrick Kirby reported that regular membership of the Society stood at 663 at the start of December 2005 compared with 699 at the start of the corresponding period in 2004. During 2005, there had been 11 deaths and 15 resignations. 38 had been struck-off for non-payment of subscriptions, and contact had been lost with a further 6 members. 32 new members had been welcomed into the Society. In addition to ordinary members, *The Irish Sword* was sent to 66 life/honorary members, 83 subscribing and 9 honorary institutions, 13 copyright libraries, and 11 bodies with which there is an arrangement for the exchange of journals. 76 further copies are distributed through the Department of Foreign Affairs, giving a total of 921.

The President availed of the opportunity to thank Colonel Kirby and Captain Keane for their work on an essential aspect of the Society's business.

Accounts:

The adjourned session of the 2004 AGM was held at Griffith College on Friday, 8th April 2005, following the public lecture. Its purpose was to approve the 2004 accounts and appoint an auditor, as these items had been held over from the AGM held in December 2004 due to the death of the Society's auditor, the late Bill Stone. The accounts, which showed an excess of €1,049 of income over expenditure for the year and a balance forward in the Capital Account of €58,345 compared with €54,296 in 2003, were approved. The meeting was informed that Tully Ward, Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors had succeeded to Mr. Stone's practice and it was agreed that Mr. Gerry Tully of Tully Ward should be appointed as the Society's auditor.

At the 2005 AGM, the Honorary Treasurer reported that the 2005 Accounts showed a deficit of €14,867 of income over expenditure. However, he reported that the cost of four issues of the *Sword* had been included in the 2005 financial year. The balance forward in the Capital Account was €43,478 which left the Society in a healthy financial position. The accounts were approved, as was the re-appointment of the auditors, now named Rynne Tully Ward.

The Irish Sword:

Dr. Kenneth Ferguson reported that the two issues of *The Irish Sword* for 2005, Nos. 97 and 98, had been substantially prepared, but that delay attended the placing of an order for printing them. It had been discovered during the year that members of the Society overseas, and particularly in North America, had not in general received the four preceding issues of the journal when published. The Society, acting through Colonel Kirby, had been compelled to incur the substantial cost of a repeat mailing. It was unclear where the responsibility for the postal mishap lay, and the Honorary Treasurer was seeking evidence from the printer that he had incurred the relevant expenditure on postage.

In giving a foretaste of the content of the forthcoming issues, the Editor mentioned that No. 97 would contain an amply illustrated article on the German prisoner-of-war camp at Limburg, written by the son of a Royal Munster Fusilier who had been an inmate there.

Alluding to a matter with which he had not been directly involved, Dr. Ferguson reported that two volumes of articles from *The Irish Sword* had been published by Irish Academic Press in October 2005. The Council had promoted this project, and had selected the articles to be included. The Society was consequently entitled to a small royalty from sales, but it was not otherwise responsible for the publication, which was a commercial venture by Irish Academic Press. General Patrick Purcell and Colonel O'Carroll had borne the burden of dealing with the publishers. Dr. Harman Murtagh had written an introduction for each volume, and forewords had been provided by Professors Tom Bartlett and Keith Jeffery respectively. It was hoped that publication of the two volumes of essays would redound to the advantage of the Society and reputation of its journal, and be reflected in an increase in the number of members; but disappointment was registered that the books had been produced merely by using photocopies of the original articles.

The Society still held copies of most back issues, and members who sought to complete their holdings of the journal would be facilitated.

Irish Commission for Military History:

Mr J. P. Mulready, Secretary General of the Irish Commission for Military History, reported to the AGM on the activities of the International Commission in 2005. The Annual Congress, the XXXIst, had been held in Madrid from 21st to 26th August 2005 on the theme "Terrestrial and Naval Power at the time of the Battle of Trafalgar". The Society was represented by its President, Colonel Donal O'Carroll, who presented a paper entitled "*The Defence of Ireland in the Age of Trafalgar*", which was well received. Mr Mulready and Dr. David Murphy were among the 266 delegates and accompanying persons from 37 countries who attended.

The *Bibliographie Internationale* of the International Commission, published annually, consists of several hundred summary reviews of the latest military history books. The Society had contributed, as usual, to the *Bibliographie*, and reviews of eleven books of Irish interest were submitted for inclusion in Tome 27, to be published in 2006.

The XXXIInd Congress will be held in Potsdam, Germany, from 20th to 25th August 2006 on the theme "Nation State, Nationalism and the Military".

Overseas Tours:

The Society 19th overseas tour, to Budapest, Vienna, and Prague, took place in September / October 2005. A group of sixty-one (with two extra in Vienna) covered 3,000 kilometres by coach without mishap or casualties, and with little sickness. The following historic and routine tourist sites were visited:

Hungary: Military Museum Budapest; Eger Castle, site of Turkish siege; tour of main sites of the Hungarian Revolution 1956; visit to Budaörs German/Hungarian 2nd World War cemetery; Pannonhalma Monastery; the 'Weeping Madona of Gyor', a painting brought to Gyor in penal times, by Bishop Lynch of Galway; and the vineyards of Eger district.

Austria: Military Museum, Vienna; Wiener Neustadt Military Academy; the Kahlenberg Heights, Vienna (lecturer Col O'Carroll, guide Colonel Walter Macdonald; and Durnstein, site of the incarceration of Richard the Lion Heart. In addition, there were two tours of Vienna; of the Danube Valley and Melk Abbey; a visit to Baden; and an opportunity in Vienna to hear Mozart's "Kronungsmesse".

Czech Republic: Austerlitz (en route); Battle of the White Mountain (introductory talk on The Thirty Years War by Mr Terry Stewart, and lecture on battle by Colonel O'Carroll); visit to Lidice (village razed by German Forces after the assassination of Heydrich); tours of Prague; and a visit to UNESCO-listed site of Kutna Hora.

The organisation of the tour, a large and burdensome undertaking, was ably discharged on behalf of the Society by Brigadier-General J Saunderson (to whom the Annual

General Meeting recorded its gratitude) with the help of the President, Colonel O'Carroll. Appreciation was also expressed for the help received from the Irish ambassadors of the three countries visited (their Excellencies McMahon, Donohoe and Hamill) who with their staffs, both Irish and national, were of immense assistance in advising, suggesting, arranging and smoothing problems which arose. Colonel Macdonald was thanked for his guide duties both during the reconnaissance visit and the tour itself. Mr Terry Stewart and Colonel O'Carroll were thanked for their lectures, and the members of the tour for their good humour, patience and companionship.

Annual Dinner:

On the evening of Saturday 26th November 2005 the Society's annual dinner, the 50th, once again enjoyed the ambiance and gracious surroundings of St. Patrick's Hall, Dublin Castle. Over 120 members and guests partook of a drinks reception and a superb dinner provided by *With Taste Banqueting Services*. Guests were piped into dinner by a military piper, who also led members of the Presidential party to their table. The Chief-of-Staff, Lieutenant-General James Sreenan, was the main speaker. Dr. Harmon Murtagh, Vice-President of the Society, proposed the toasts to the guests. Compliments were paid to the Dinner Committee, under the chairmanship of Commandant Martin Lenihan.

Acknowledgements:

In his report to the Annual General Meeting, the Honorary Record Secretary expressed the Society's gratitude to: Mr Dermot Hegarty; the President and Governing Body of UCD; the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Defence; the Defence Forces in general; the General Officer Commanding 2nd Eastern Brigade, and the Officer Commanding Cathal Brugha Barracks, in particular.