

## **Proceedings 2006**

### **Annual General Meeting 2006**

Colonel Donal O'Carroll presided at the Annual General Meeting which took place in the Officers' Mess, Cathal Brugha Barracks, at 11.15 a.m. on Saturday 25 November 2006. Commandant Paul Mullally, Honorary Record Secretary, read the Minutes of the 2005 Annual General Meeting, which were approved, and the Treasurer and other officers made their accustomed reports. The incumbent honorary officers, viz., Dr. Patrick McCarthy, Captain Padraic Keane, Colonel Patrick Kirby, Commandant Frank McGoldrick, Dr. Kenneth Ferguson, and Commandant P.M. Mullally, were re-elected. Re-elected as ordinary members of Council were Commandant Martin Lenihan and Commandant Victor Laing. Mr. Gerry Tully, of the firm of Rynne Tully Ward, was re-appointed as auditor.

The Meeting was informed that, although his term of office had not expired, Commandant Eamonn Kiely had indicated his desire to retire from the Council. Living in Kilkenny, he was not in a position to attend as hitherto. Formerly, when resident in Cathal Brugha Barracks, Commandant Kiely had been a stalwart of the Council's monthly meetings.

New Rules for the Society, which the Council had proposed, were approved.

### **Annual Dinner**

On the evening of 25<sup>th</sup> November 2006 members were privileged to dine in St. Patrick's Hall, Dublin Castle, the venue for the 51<sup>st</sup> annual dinner. The Director of the National Museum, Dr. Patrick Wallace, was the principal speaker, a choice which honoured the achievement of the Museum's plans to open military galleries at Collins Barracks. The Dinner was organised by a committee, under the chairmanship of Commandant Martin Lenihan, on which Colonel Patrick Kirby and Commandant Louis O'Brien also served. Commandant O'Brien acted as Master of Ceremonies.

### **Lectures**

The audiences which gathered at Griffith College on Fridays during the lecture seasons in spring and autumn heard lectures on the following themes:

- 'Belligerents and neutrals: the politics of coal in the Second World War', by Mr. Peter Rigney.
- 'The baronial context of the Irish civil wars of the 1640s', by Professor Jane Ohlmeyer.
- 'Brian Boru: the battle of Clontarf revisited', by Dr. Ailbhe Mac Samhráin.
- 'Major John MacBride and the Transvaal Irish Brigade', by Mr. Anthony Jordan.
- 'Scots mercenary forces in Tirconnell', by Miss Muiríosa Prendergast.
- 'The Battle of Dublin, 1916', by Professor Charles Townshend.
- 'The Somme, ninety years on', by Professor Keith Jeffery.

## **Field Days**

The Society's summer weekend tour took place over the holiday weekend 3-5 June, and was to Limerick, where Colonel Donal O'Carroll, President, conducted tours of the sites of the sieges of King John's Castle, 1642, of Bunratty Castle, 1647, and of the city, 1650-51. The tour also included optional visits to the Bunratty Folk Park and to Damer House in Roscrea. The communal dinner was at the Castletroy Park Hotel, where most members of the tour were accommodated. Gratitude was expressed to the President, to the Officer Commanding Sarsfield Barracks, Limerick for the use of the dining facilities for lunch, and to Colonel G. Aherne, member of Council, who organised the weekend.

The autumn field day took place on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2006, when members of the Society travelled to County Longford to tour the battlefield at Ballinamuck, scene of General Humbert's surrender in 1798. Our guide was Lord Longford, a Vice-President of the Society, who, as Thomas Pakenham, was author of the comprehensive account of the period *The Year of Liberty* (1969).

An oak tree was planted in the Ballinamuck Garden of Remembrance to commemorate the 208<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle. The group then visited several locations in and around the village where more detailed information on the battle and key personalities involved, including an earlier Lord Longford, was provided.

Access by the group to viewing points, battlefield monuments, and the village's heritage centre was facilitated by the chairman of Ballinamuck Community Enterprise Ltd, Commandant Terry McKenna.

In addition to the above, our thanks extend to the Officer Commanding 4<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiment, who facilitated an excellent dinner in the Officers' Mess, Columb Barracks, Mullingar, and to the organiser of the field-day, Major Michael Kirby, member of Council.

## **Membership**

Colonel Patrick Kirby reported to the AGM that regular membership of the Society stood at 655 compared with 663 at the start of the corresponding period in 2005. During 2006 there had been 11 deaths and 11 resignations, and 7 persons had been struck-off for non-payment of subscriptions. The greater part of these losses had been made good by an accretion of new members. *The Irish Sword* is sent not only to the ordinary members, but to life and honorary members, and to numerous institutions and libraries. The current circulation is 913, a figure eight fewer than the total of 921 recorded in 2005.

## **Accounts**

The Honorary Treasurer reported that the Society was in a healthy financial position. Income during the year was €29,856 (compared with €30,237 in 2005). Expenditure was €20,875 (compared with €42,485 in 2005, when payment for four issues of *The Irish Sword* had been made). The accounts disclosed an excess of €10,118 of income over expenditure for the year and a balance forward in the Capital Account of €58,345,

compared with €43,478 in 2005. The accounts were approved, as was the re-appointment as auditor of Mr. Gerard Tully, of the firm of Rynne Tully Ward.

Grateful reference was made to the appearance as an item in the accounts of a bequest of €1,000 received, through his widow, Mrs. Valerie Hogan, from the estate of the late Brigadier General P.D. Hogan, a past President.

### **The Irish Sword**

Dr. Kenneth Ferguson reported that the two issues of *The Irish Sword* for 2005, Nos. 97 and 98, had been circulated together at Easter 2006, along with the Table of Contents for Volume XXIV. The printing contract had been placed with Mullen Print of Blanchardstown, a firm to which the Society's former printer in Maynooth had lately delegated the greater part of the printing work entrusted to him. The new arrangement was working satisfactorily, and discounted terms had been agreed.

A further innovation was that the recent issues of the journal had been mailed directly by the Society, a change which brought advantages of control and certainty, as well as savings in postage, at the cost of considerable additional labour for those members of Council who had volunteered to assist in the stuffing of envelopes and the portage of mail sacks. The Editor expressed his great gratitude to Colonel Patrick Kirby, who had borne the brunt of this work, and to Dr. Patrick McCarthy and others who had assisted. It was noted that the journals intended for Irish addresses, North and South, had been posted locally in Rathmines, while those for Great Britain and other destinations overseas, some 190 items, had been posted in Newry. The differential between the postal rates of the Royal Mail (which are still intricately related to weight and speed of service) and of the Irish Post Office (which have been reduced to broad categories and expensive round sums) is considerable, and a saving of more than €500 had been realised by posting in Northern Ireland. It was believed that all the *Swords* mailed had been duly received.

Speaking of forthcoming issues, the Editor stated that Nos. 99 and 100 would be general issues, and might be expected together in the spring of 2007. Alluding to their content, he mentioned that Eoghan O hAnnracháin's work in French archives had yielded a study of Irishmen who had served as slaves in the French galleys.

The Editor remembered Dr. John de Courcy Ireland, who had died in April. The last of the Society's founding members, J. de C. I. had been a prolific contributor to *The Irish Sword*. Successive editors had been the recipients of his articles on naval themes, contributions which were distinctive because they were handwritten. The fact that J. de C. I. did not type meant that the arrival of his articles was apt to provoke foreboding. Transcribing (and sometimes deciphering) handwritten material involves effort and time. In fairness to the handwriting of the late J. de C.I., the Editor said that his manuscripts gave rise to few instances of insoluble difficulty. He reflected that the intellect that had contributed so much to *The Irish Sword* had been served by a hand that wrote with remarkable fluency. The writing hand had been a good servant to a well-stocked mind with a brimming desire to find expression.

### **Irish Commission for Military History**

Mr. J.P. Mulready, the Secretary General of the Irish Commission for Military History, reported to the AGM on the activities of the International Commission in 2006. The XXXIIInd Annual Congress, devoted to the theme 'Nation State, Nationalism and the Military', took place in Potsdam, Germany, during the week of 20-25 August 2006. The Society's speaker was the former Chief-of-Staff, Lieutenant-General Colm Mangan (who has recently been elected a Vice- President of the Society). He presented a paper entitled 'Multi-national commitments to Peace Support Operations. A small state's experience'. The paper outlined Ireland's involvement in peace support operations from Lebanon in 1958 to present-day Liberia. The Congress was attended by 251 delegates and accompanying persons from 37 countries. 51 papers were presented, 28 of which were in English. Mr. Mulready was present, as were Colonel Donal O'Carroll and Dr. Jorit Wintjes, a German member of the Society, who attended as a member of the Irish Commission. Mrs. Sheila O'Carroll and Mrs. Margaret Mangan accompanied their husbands. Once again gratitude is due to the Minister for Defence for the subvention which covers the cost of sending a speaker to this important annual event without the need to call on the Society's resources. The Department also pays the annual subscription of 650 Swiss Francs due to the International Commission, a payment that is now transferred electronically.

The annual Congress in 2007, the XXXIIIrd, will be held in Cape Town, South Africa from 12<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> August, and will be on the theme 'Regions, Regional Organisations and Military Power'. Trieste, Italy is expected to be selected as the venue for the XXXIVth Congress in August 2008.

The *Bibliographie Internationale* of the International Commission, published annually, contains several hundred summary reviews of the latest military history books. Dr. Patrick McCarthy, Chairman of the Books Committee, has contributed reviews of ten books of Irish interest for inclusion in Tome 28, which will be published in 2007.

Issue 86 of the *Revue Internationale* was published in August. This volume has the theme 'Military Recruitment in Modern Times (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century)', and contains a paper from the Society contributed by Dr. Patrick Callan, entitled 'Rags, Rag-Makers and Rag-Pickers: Anti-enlistment sentiment in Ireland, 1899- 1918'.

### **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, and the General Officer Commanding 2 Eastern Brigade, and the Officer Commanding Cathal Brugha Barracks, in particular.

*P M Mullally*