Cumann Uaigheann na Laochra Gael

Uimhir Bhosca 7105, 74 Sráid Dáma, Baile Átha Cliath 2

National Graves Association

Box 7105, 74 Dame Street, Dublin 2

1926

Caring for the graves of our patriot dead of all generations

2012

Another busy year for the N.G.A.

A chairde,

Bhí an Cumann Uaigheann na Laochra Gael an ghnóthach i rith an bhliain seo caite. D'athchóireamar an uaigh agus an séadcomhartha Uilf Tón i mBaile Bódáin, Contae Chill Dara. Leanann an streachailt ar aghaidh chun sábháil an láthair pháirc an áir 1916 ar Sráid Uí Mhordha, Átha Cliath.

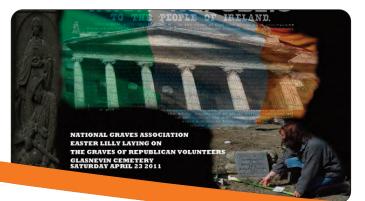
Shocraíomar chun athchóirigh a dhéanamh ar an suíomh 1916 i reilig Ghlas Naíon i rith na mblianta seo chughainn, an áit céanna ina nochtadh trí leachtanna do na bhFíníní. Bhí roinnt ócáidí chuimhneacháin againn, ceann i mBéal Feirste do na stailceoirí ocrais agus ceann do na mairtírí Mhuinseo i nGlas Naíon, comh maith le go leor eile. Bhíomar an bhródúil as an leact a nochtaíomar le John Lavin i gCaisleán Riabhach, Contae Ros Comáin.

Ach 'sé an fíor obair a dhéanaimid ná ag tabhairt aire do na leachtanna agus na huaigheanna dár dtírghrátheóirí ó bhun go barr na hoileáin.

Glacaimid an páirt seo gan cabhair airgeadas ó aon Rialtas nó Páirtí. Breathnaimid ar ár bhfeisirí, ár n-óglaigh 's ár lucht tacaíocht.

Bhí drochscéal comhmaith againn i rith an bhliain agus déanaimid comhbhrón arís le teaglaigh Bhríd Uí Mhathúna agus Florence Griffin, a chuaigh ar slí na fírinne le déanaí. Ar dheis Dé go mbeidh a h-anamacha dílis.

Is mise le meas, Seán Ó Faoláin, Caithaoirleach.



A chairde,

The past twelve months have seen yet another busy year for the N.G.A. We undertook a major renovation of the Wolfe Tone memorial and grave in Bodenstown, Co. Kildare. We continue to fight to preserve the 1916 battlefield site on Dublin's Moore Street.

We have undertaken a serious financial commitment to completely renovate the 1916 burial site and memorial in Glasnevin Cemetery, where we also unveiled three new headstones to Fenian volunteers. We held several commemorations, including one to the hunger strikers held in Milltown Cemetery, Belfast and one to the Mountjoy Martyrs in Glasnevin, Dublin. A high point was also the unveiling of the John Lavin memorial in Castlerea, Co. Roscommon.

But the real major work of the N.G.A. continues to be the day to day care of the many patriot graves and memorials in our care throughout the island of Ireland.

We undertake all these commitments without any financial assistance from government or political parties. We are completely reliant on our members, volunteers and supporters to fund our work.

This has also been a particularly sad year for the Association. I use this occasion to extend once again the deepest sympathy to the families of Bríd Uí Mhathúna and Florence Griffin, both of whom recently passed away.

ls mise le meas, **Seán Whelan, Chairperson.**



Seán Whelan, Speaking at Glasnevin

A chairde.

It is with great sadness this year that I find myself writing the opening few lines of the N.G.A. annual report. This is due to the loss of two of our members, Bríd Uí Mhathúna (wife of our President Donnacha) and Florence Griffin.

Bríd, was a much respected member of the National Graves Association. A fluent Irish speaker, Bríd was always willing to assist those of us with only the cúpla focail. Her belief that our patriot dead should be remembered was always very evident. Both Bríd and her husband Donnacha attended nearly all commemorations over the years. In September 2011 on a rain drenched day in Milltown cemetery at the N.G.A. Hunger Strike commemoration Bríd watched on as her husband chaired the proceedings. Donnacha would always seek her reassurance on how he came across. A quiet, unassuming woman who will be greatly missed. Bríd was laid to rest in Newlands Cross cemetery on Saturday the 11th February 2012. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam.

A few days later we received the sad news of the death of Florence Griffin, wife of our Wexford representative, Eamon Griffin. Florence had a family link with Robert Monteith (Banna Strand). Her involvement along with Eamon on the Casement committee was instrumental to the erecting of the monument to Roger Casement on Banna Strand. Over the years Florence along with her children would regularly attend the annual Bodenstown commemorations and assist the N.G.A. Indeed Florence assisted the committee after the Wolfe Tone memorial was damaged in 1969 by the U.V.F. Florence was a fluent Irish speaker and a member of the Gaelic League. Like Bríd Uí Mhathúna, her commitment and dedication to honouring our patriot dead was without question. Florence was laid to rest on Wednesday the 15th February 2012 in the National Graves Association plot in Glasnevin Cemetery. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam.

The National Graves Association is a voluntary body, with no party political affiliations. We operate as an autonomous body. The National Graves Association is a registered company. Contact details: National Graves Association, Box 7105, 74 Dame Street, Dublin 2. Tel: (087) 2282033 / (01) 8621928. www.nga.ie, email addresses: matt@nga.ie or donations@nga.ie

The committee is made up of people who are dedicated to honouring the men and women of every generation who died in the cause of Irish Freedom.

Each member gives his/her time on a voluntary basis.

In 1980 Luke Kelly wrote the following poem. This poem speaks volumes about the sad state of affairs Ireland is in today, four years before the centenary of the 1916 rising. The poem is most poignant.

FOR WHAT DIED THE SONS OF RÓISÍN

For What Died the Sons of Róisín, was it fame? For What Died the Sons of Róisín, was it fame? For what flowed Irelands blood in rivers, That began when Brian chased the Dane, And did not cease nor has not ceased, With the brave sons of '16, For what died the sons of Róisín, was it fame?

For What Died the Sons of Róisín, was it greed? For What Died the Sons of Róisín, was it greed? Was it greed that drove Wolfe Tone to a paupers death in a cell of cold wet stone?

Will German, French or Dutch inscribe the epitaph of Emmet?

When we have sold enough of Ireland to be but strangers in it.

For What Died the Sons of Róisín, was it greed?

To whom do we owe our allegiance today?
To whom do we owe our allegiance today?
To those brave men who fought and died that Róisín live again with pride?
Her sons at home to work and sing,

Her youth to dance and make her valleys ring, Or the faceless men who for Mark and Dollar, Betray her to the highest bidder,

To whom do we owe our allegiance today?

For what suffer our patriots today?
For what suffer our patriots today?
They have a language problem, so they say,
How to write "No Trespass" must grieve their heart full

We got rid of one strange language now we are faced with many, many more,

For what suffer our patriots today?

The first commemoration of 2011 was held in Celbridge, Co. Kildare to commemotate Volunteer Anthony O'Reilly and the following report gives the details of the event.

Volunteer Anthony O'Reilly Commemoration held on 9th January 2011, Celbridge, Co. Kildare.

By Liam Culbert

A crisp 9th of January morning saw sixty people attend a commemoration for Volunteer Anthony O'Reilly at Donaghcromper cemetery in Celbridge, Co. Kildare. The event took place after a mass held

in his memory at St. Patrick's church, Celbridge. Volunteer O'Reilly was one of a group of five executed by a Free State firing squad on 8th January 1923 after being captured in battle near Leixlip.

At 12.30 a colour party led those assembled from the cemetery gates to the graveside. The commemoration was chaired by N.G.A. president Mr. Donncha Ó Mathúna. A piper opened proceedings with a lament and then wreaths were laid on behalf of the National Graves Association by Mr. Philip Partridge. A decade



of the rosary followed and the main oration was given by N.G.A. P.R.O., Mr. Paddy Lennon.

Paddy gave a detailed account of Anthony O'Reilly's tragically short life along with details of the conditions in which the condemned men spent their last moments. An insight into the state of mind of the men was given through excerpts from their last letters to loved ones. Such clarity and bravery in such young men is impressive. Comparison was then made between the Ireland of Yeat's poem "September 1913" and the Ireland of today. Paddy closed with a heart-tugging rendition of Pearse's poem "The Rebel".

The morning came to a close with "Amhrán na bhFiann" played by the piper. Those in attendance were then invited back to Celbridge GAA club for refreshments.

Special mention must be given to Mr. Séamus Ó Mídheach who put so much work into organising the day's events. It was the hard work of Seamus and his team that made this commemoration such a success and hopefully the attendance will be maintained over the coming years.

The second commemoration of 2011 was held to commemorate six Volunteers who were hanged in Mountjoy Jail on March 14th 1921 they were: Volunteers: Patrick Moran, Bernard Ryan, Patrick Doyle, Thomas Bryan, Frank Flood and Thomas Whelan (Glasnevin Cemetery).

Ronnie Plant (NGA) organised a commemoration at the Frank Flood monument Tullow, County Carlow. This was very well attended. (The commemoration was held on Easter Monday).

Also in March, the association held a commemoration in Castlerea County Roscommon to Fenian, John Lavin. The ceremony was well attended with a number of John Lavin's relatives present. Donnacha Ó Mathúna presided. The restored Celtic cross was unveiled by Aidan Cooke and Denis O'Connor. Tommy Mc Kearney's oration stressed the importance of the Fenian movement and the role of John Lavin.

"1916 my friends was not some sudden awakening. 1916 was more as The O'Rahilly had said......the Fenians had lovingly and with integrity and courage had wound that clock and 1916 was when we heard it chime. The Fenian Men and Women, they had sown the seed, they had nurtured the plant and it was their strength and dedication that had ensured that it would flower." "....... He (John Lavin) was part of a movement that took it from the depths of despair and left us far from where we want to go but with the opportunity to get there".

A lone piper played a lament and finished with Amhrán na bhFiann. The National Graves Association would like to thank everyone who contributed towards the cost of the repairs to the monument and to the people of Castlerea and beyond for their assistance with this project. This project would not have taken place without the perseverance of Aidan Lambert. Aidan traveled to Castlerea on a number of occasions, renovated the grave surround and diligently pursued all avenues open to him in relation to tracing relatives.

John Lavin Memorial Castlerea Co. Roscommon.

By Aidan Lambert

The National Graves Association were notified by Aidan Cooke of Dungannon, County Tyrone about the

damaged Celtic cross on the grave of Fenian, John Lavin in Castlerea, County Roscommon. Aidan's grandfather John Silke was a friend of Lavin and



had been a member of the memorial committee established to erect the cross. John Lavin died after a short illness on the 8th March 1899. The memorial committee was formed the day after his funeral and a 12 foot high limestone cross was unveiled eighteen months later by Miss Maud Gonne.



The cross fell and was badly damaged during a storm several years ago. After this was brought to our attention the N.G.A. made a commitment to have it restored and we made an appeal for funds in the local newspapers. We commissioned Gabriel Hawthorne & Son, monumental sculptors from the town of Castlerea with the task of restoring the cross. An excellent job was carried out despite the difficulties of the sheer weight of the cross and the limited access to the grave.

A commemoration and rededication of the memorial was held on the 26th March 2011 at St. Joseph's cemetery. A lone piper led the crowd to the graveside where the proceedings were chaired by Donnacha Ó Mathúna, president of the National Graves Association. The cross was unveiled by Aidan Cooke and Denis O'Connor. Denis is a descendant of John Lavins wife Annie (nee Conry). Father Joseph Fitzgerald, parish priest of Castlerea, then blessed the grave and cross and recited a prayer.

The oration was given by Tommy McKearney. Tommy gave an account of John Lavin's life and he outlined the importance of the Fenian movement being a



strong influence on the men and women of 1916. John Lavin was the leader of the Irish Republican Brotherhood in Roscommon and he had a keen interest in many aspects of Irish culture. He was a member of the Young Ireland Society, a nationalist literary and debating society established in Dublin by veteran Fenian, John O'Leary. He was also the president of his local G.A.A. club named after another veteran Fenian, John Keegan (Leo) Casey. Lavin was very active during the local election campaign just weeks before he died. At a meeting held in Roscommon, he proposed the following resolution. "That we consider it absolutely essential to the

success of the National cause that the Local Government Act should be worked by the people for the advancement of that cause by securing on the new District and County Councils in this county, majorities in favour of conceding to Ireland her inalienable right to self-government, subject to which important provision – which we place in the forefront – we believe representation should be given to minorities" (Freeman's Journal 13th January 1899)



Easter Commemorations 2011



Ray Bateson, Author of "They Died by Pearse's Side".

To mark the 95th anniversary of the Easter Rising a commemorative lecture was held in the Teachers Club, Parnell Square, Dublin on the 19th April 2011. The lecture was given by Ray Bateson author of the book "They Died By Pearse's Side" The Association's President Donnacha Ó Mathúna, on opening the lecture, made reference to the significance of the Parnell Square location. He told the lecture that eighty five years ago the National Graves Association was formed a few doors down in number 41 on the 21st August 1926. Mrs. Thomas Clarke presided at the first meeting. Ray Bateson gave a detailed account of the role of the rank and file Volunteers. He gave a background to Easter week and the aftermath. The lecture was very well received.

Glasnevin Cemetery, Easter 2011.

On Easter Saturday the 25th April 2011 the National Graves Association held a commemoration in Glasnevin cemetery to mark the 95th anniversary of the 1916 rising.

The format was different from the standard commemoration in that a single Easter lily was placed on each Volunteer's grave (Over fifty in total).

A number of relatives were in attendance. Ray Bateson delivered a brief account on each Volunteer. The commemoration was made all the more memorable by Ray's in depth knowledge and passion for the fallen patriots.

N.G.A. Kerry Easter Commemoration.

Easter Commemoration, Robert Monteith, County Kerry. To mark the 95th anniversary of the Easter Rising the National Graves Association held a commemoration in Gleenageenty, Ballymacelligott, Tralee, Co. Kerry on Easter Monday April 25th at 2.30pm. John Houlihan N.G.A. Kerry representative was the main speaker. Stephen Gilligan also spoke along with John Lenihan.

John along with Mike Mitchell have travelled the length and breath of Kerry; checking out the condition of Volunteers graves and memorials and assisting local groups where necessary. John has always stood firm on National Graves Association issues and at times has had to challenge and take on people/groups that have tried to undermine the important role we play in honoring our patriot dead. The committee has always fully supported John and will continue to do so.

NATIONAL GRAVES ASSOCIATION List of Events 2012

January:
February:

March: Arrangements re; work parties for

Bodenstown. Contact 087 2282033. Saturday 28th: Easter commemoration

April: Saturday 28th: Easter commemoration
Glasnevin cemetery. Assemble Saint Paul's

Section at 2pm. For more details please

contact 087 2282033.

May: Tour of Glasnevin Cemetery 13th May.
Loughgall Martyrs commemoration 25th

anniversary. Location and date to be decided.

June: Tour of Glasnevin cemetery 10th June.

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Time to be arranged.

Bodenstown commemorations. Not N.G.A.

July: Tour of Glasnevin Cemetery 8th July.

Time to be arranged.

General Liam Lynch commemoration.
For details please contact 087 2282033.

July: Tour of Glasnevin cemetery 12th August.

Time to be arranged.

General Liam Lynch commemoration.

For details please contact 087 2282033.

September Tour of Glasnevin cemetery.

Time and date to be arranged.

Volunteer Thomas Ashe 95th anniversary commemoration 22nd September Glasnevin cemetery. For details contact 087 2282033.

October: *Weekend commemoration County Kerry. November: Sunday 4th - National Graves Association

Annual Mass for all those who died in the cause of Irish Freedom. Church St., Dublin 7. Annual Forgotten Ten commemoration,

Glasnevin Cemetery. Assemble at main gates

of Glasnevin at 12:30pm.

18th November - 90th Anniversary Civil War commemoration, Glasnevin Cemetery.

For details contact 087 228 2033.

December: Wreath laying in Glasnevin Cemetery - 90th

anniversary of the executions of Volunteers: Rory O'Connor, Liam Mellows, Joseph

McKelvey and Richard Barrett.*

Tours/Commemorations - Please note as dates may change.

Please contact 087 2282033 if you have any queries.

* Committee to decide later in the year.

British Queen's visit to the 26 counties

In May the largest ever security operation in the 26 counties was put in place for the visit of the Queen of England. The letter below was printed in the Irish Times newspaper and explains the N.G.A. position.

Letter Page Editor, 12th April 2011

A Chara,

The National Graves Association opposes the upcoming visit to Ireland by British Queen Elizabeth Windsor.

The invitation has been extended by President, Mrs. McAleese, who herself is claimed as a "subject" by the British monarchy. Therefore under British law our president is expected to offer unswerving loyalty and obedience to Mrs. Windsor.

Eamon O'Cuiv (Fianna Fail) on the recent B.B.C programme Spotlight, informed viewers: "All heads of state on state visits lay a wreath at the Garden of Remembrance in memory of those who gave their lives for Irish Freedom". It would be an insult to our patriot dead if the Queen of England who is claiming sovereignty to a part of our country was permitted to visit the memorial. It would be a direct challenge to what our patriots died for, "A 32 County Republic".

In 1900 Queen Victoria visited Ireland. Then, as now, she did not



The Garden of Remembrance

receive an over enthusiastic welcome. Dublin Corporation, however, was at the head of the band "bending the knee". Motions were put and carried condemning "the slavish attempt of Lord Mayor Pile and the other members of the corporation who voted a loyal address to the queen of England, in as much as such action is an endorsement of England's policy in Ireland and a repudiation of the principles of Nationalism". Another resolution called on people to repudiate the action of those who voted the address and recommended the taking of steps "to free Ireland from the disgrace of being misrepresented by renegades who seek castle favors at the cost of national honour". Sound familiar?

The Men and Women who died trying to free our country can only be fittingly honoured when Ireland is united and free. Come that day the British monarchy may be welcomed to visit us as neighbours and as equals. Not until that day.

Is Mise, Matt Doyle, National Graves Association.

Bodenstown, County Kildare.

During the summer months major restoration work was undertaken by the committee in Bodenstown, burial place of Wolfe Tone. The work involved the removal of some existing structures which had deteriorated over the years. The work took over two weeks to complete and was done to a very high standard. Kenny Burke and Sons (stonemasons) from Drogheda, County Louth carried out the work on behalf of the N.G.A. Kenny has on a number of occasions assisted the Association.



The committee would once again like to thank Noel Domnican for the painting of the gates and memorial area. We are also indebted to Liam Ó Culbáird for the excellent work he carries out in Bodenstown over the year. Liam, liaises with all political parties to arrange commemorations and is responsible for the upkeep of the Wolfe Tone memorial. Liam is also operating the N.G.A. facebook page which has proven to be a big success.

Cathal Quinn, County Mayo. R.I.P

In July the association received the sad news of the passing of Cathal Quinn of Killala, County Mayo. Cathal was a life long republican and had over the years worked with the National Graves Association. Loretta Clarke represented the N.G.A at the funeral and ensured that the Tri-Colour was placed over Cathal's coffin. On behalf of the National Graves Association I would like to offer my sincere condolence to the Quinn family. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

General Liam Lynch.

The General Liam Lynch commemoration was held on the Knockmealdown mountains county Tipperary. The committee would like to thank Catherine Harney and her committee for the excellent work they do. They have over the years kept alive the memory of General Liam Lynch.

Manchester Martyrs Files.

On behalf of the association I would like to thank Maura Fogarty for donating a set of files on the Manchester Martyrs. Maura travelled to Ireland and made available the collection. There is a lot of very interesting information contained in them.

Hunger Strikes Commemoration.



On Sunday the 25th September 2011 the National Graves Association held a commemoration in Milltown cemetery Belfast to mark the 30th anniversary of the 1981 hunger-strikers. The date chosen marked the 94th anniversary of Ireland's first republican hunger striker Thomas Ashe. Former hunger striker

Tommy Mc Kearney's oration was a comrades rallying defence of the struggle for Irish Freedom. Peggy Galligan (N.GA trustee) read the Hunger Strikers Roll of Honour.

The selfless sacrifice made by the 22 hunger strikers should never be forgotten.

The National Monument on Moore Street, Dublin.

10 years ago the National Graves Association began a campaign to save the last headquarters of the 1916 provisional government. Today, the national monument still stands as a run down dilapidated building. Recently a farmer in Co. Kerry was fined €25,000 at the Circuit Criminal Court in Tralee for destroying a 1,000 year old ringfort that was on his land. The ringfort was a protected national monument of historical importance. Judge



Carroll Moran said ownership of property is a right, but this right was not "unfettered" and was qualified by the fact that property was held in trust for the culture of the country.

Over the years the national monument in Moore Street has seen fire places stolen, slates removed from 16 Moore Street and more recently the partial destruction of some of the buildings. Serious questions need to be asked of both the Irish Government and Dublin City Council who are obliged to protect the national monument. If the courts can fine Mr O'Mahony for destroying a ringfort, the same should apply to the owners of the national monument in Moore Street. National monuments belong to the Nation!

October Fenian commemoration and 85th anniversary of the founding of the National Graves Association.

On Sunday the 16th October the National Graves Association marked the 85th anniversary of the association by unveiling new headstones over the graves of three Fenians, Matthew O'Neill, John Roche and Edward Russell. It was a fitting way to celebrate the anniversary as two of our founding members, James Stritch and J.W.O'Beirne were veterans of the Fenian movement.

A crowd of over one hundred people attended the commemoration on an exceptionally sunny day in Glasnevin Cemetery. A lone piper led the crowd to each grave for the unveilings. The proceedings were chaired by N.G.A. chairperson Seán Whelan. The memorial to Matthew O'Neill was unveiled by his great grandson David Whelan. Matthew had been involved in the prison rescue of the Fenian Chief, James Stephens from Richmond Prison in November 1865. He had been one of the twelve armed volunteers outside the prison walls on the night of the rescue to ensure its success. O'Neill was one of the Dublin leaders and an active Fenian throughout his life, he spent some time in prison using the alias James Byrne. Matthew O'Neill died on the 5th January 1904.

Edward Russell's headstone was unveiled by his great grandson Gerry McNamara and John Roche's was unveiled

by Aidan Lambert of the N.G.A. Russell and Roche both played an active part in the Fenian rising at Tallaght in March 1867. John Roche received a serious gunshot wound to his right leg; he was arrested and brought to the Meath Hospital where his leg was amputated. Roche died on the 29th of May 1894. Edward Russell's last wish was for a soldier's funeral which he duly received. Russell died on the 20th of December 1931. Both men remained loyal to the national cause and the Fenian faith to the end. Matthew O'Neill, Edward Russell and John Roche were the type of men referred to in Padraig Pearse's speech at the grave of another Fenian buried in Glasnevin, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa.



.... "Our foes are strong and wise and wary; but, strong and wise and wary as they are, they cannot undo the miracles of God who ripens in the hearts of young men the seeds sown by the young men of a former generation. And the seed sown by the young men of '65 and '67 are coming to their miraculous ripening today. Rulers and Defenders of Realms had need to be wary if they would guard against such processes. Life springs from death: and from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations. The Defenders of this Realm have worked well in secret and in the open. They think that they have purchased half of us and intimidated the other half. They think that they have foreseen everything, think that they have provided against everything; but the fools, the fools, the fools! - they have left us our Fenian dead, and, while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace."

The oration was given by Michael Kenny from the National Museum of Ireland. Michael has recently retired from the museum after thirty seven years' service. The committee of the National Graves Association would like to wish Michael all the best for the future. We would also like to thank all those who attended on the day and we would like to give a special mention to George McCullough CEO of Glasnevin Cemetery and Robbie McGowan of Glasnevin Monument Works for their co-operation and help in making this event possible.

Mountjoy Martyrs

The annual Mountjoy Martyrs commemoration and mass were well attended. The last event for 2011 was a wreath laying in memory of Rory O'Connor, Liam Mellows, Joseph McKelvey and Richard Barrett.

Saint Paul's National Graves Association 1916 Plot.









We are less than four years away for the centenary of the Easter Rising. The National Graves Association has over the last year held a number of meetings regarding the condition of the 1916 Plot in the Saint Paul's section of Glasnevin Cemetery.

The committee has decided that the monument area should be fully refurbished by 2016. This is a huge undertaking for the association. A finance committee has been setup to spearhead a program for raising the funds needed. The committee will produce a leaflet detailing the work of the finance committee and the progress. We envisage that the cost for the work will run in the region of one hundred thousand euros.

On behalf of the committee I would like to thank all associate members for their support in these difficult times. I would also like to thank all committee members for their support over the year and for their contribution to the annual report especially Aidan Lambert and Liam Ó Culbáird. Any associate member who has any ideas for the website or facebook or any comment good, bad or indifferent please feel free to contact me.

Is Mise, Matt Doyle, Secretary.





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