

A.9.

REMINISCENCES OF :

MR. LIAM McMULLAN -

ST. LAURENCE'S ROAD,
CLONTARF,
DUBLIN.

EASTER MONDAY - 19th APRIL, 1965.

"Where was your rascality carried out mostly?"

"Oh from Portrush to Ballycastle on one side and from Ballycastle to Ballymoney on the other side."

"Did you ever meet the late Paddy McLogan?"

"Oh surely" -

"But was he organising Antrim?"

"Ay, East Antrim" -

"That is where the new brigade was formed!"

"Yes, that's right."

"It was formed in Gulladuff?"

"Yes, his headquarters were Glenaven and he married one of the Dobbys."

"He did, he married Seamus' sister, and he had been down in Marraborough."

"I know that, yes."

"In the old days too, I think Seamus had two aunts there - the Steensons?"

"Yes."

"And I think that was how maybe they got friendly, but she died, she was Minnie, was she?"

"Yes, Minnie Dobbyn - she died and then he re-married, but eh, you know Seamus well?"

"Not very well - Mullaglass wasn't in our area."

"No. Well, you wouldn't know any of the Newbridge ones then - you never met Hugh Gribbin?"

"Hugh Gribbin?"

"Ay, he is the father of those footballer Gribbins that you read about. He was interned in Frongoch. Were you in Frongoch?"

"No, no, we had no organisation in pre '16.

"Well, I have reminiscences of Dinny McCullough's - did you ever meet Archie Hern, and eh, what did you call the other one - aw from Belfast. - At any rate they went down to Coalisland on Easter Saturday or Holy Saturday, 1916, 142 of them, and they stayed round Coalisland, but they were the only ones in the North that were under arms."

"No organising in the North?"

"None whatever. I think that was entirely due to what do you call him - Erne Blythe."

"I remember Erne - well I don't remember the episode because I was too wee, but he came to Toombe to distribute arms to the volunteers, and on his word too and on his appearance on television, he went back down and stayed. There was no use in bothering about the North - didn't he?"

"That's right."

"And he probably spoiled it."

"He spoiled it certainly, yes. Sure there was no organisation at all in the North only Pat McLogan came around."

"Yes, well then it is an odd thing, Dinny McCullough maintained that although in the Glogher dioscian record this year, Dr. McCartan's papers have been published."

"Yes."

"He maintained that they were not allowed really to have any firm insurrection in the North; Connolly said 'No' - 'you will make sectarian Rising out of this if you start in the North'. Would you know anything about that?"

"No I wouldn't. I never heard anything about that. I never heard but I knew there was plenty of fellows would be ready to go if they got a chance."

"Well, did you know Pat McCormack - he was from up Ballycastle?"

"Pat McCormack, aw yes, I knew him well."

"He was Pat Casey, ~~xxxxxxx~~ - alias Pat Casey?"

"That's right."

"He is dead about two years. They envailed a memorial to him. Did you know anything about Pat? I think he was a colourful character?"

"He was, oh yes".

(here Mrs. McMullan interjects)

"Parliament Pat?"

"Well he didn't just use that soubriquet."

"Well he was a cousin of my mothers."

"We are in home ground now! Which of the Nine Glens are you from?"

"Glenarme."

"You would have known Master Flatley?"

"Ay, he was in Cushendall. He was teaching in Cushendall. He came from the West of Ireland."

"My mother taught in Carnlough - she was Glenanne to her own name. She taught there in 1903. It might be before 1903. Fr. Hamill was the Parish Priest at the time."

"Ay, that might have been. I must look at the headstone the next time I am in Carnlough."

"Harphall School was the school."

"My aunt was principal in Harphall Girls'"

"Is that right? Oh Seamus, you have introduced me to a very interesting pair of people. I am at home now!"

"I'll tell you, my father's people are buried in Carnlough. I will find out now, and we will compare notes."

"Then your maiden name was?"

"O'Boyle."

"Well, now, I didn't hear my mother talking about a Miss O'Boyle or Mrs. O'Boyle teaching at that time. She stayed in McCauley's."

"Yes."

"My mother was lodged in McCauley's - there is a kind of a bridge on it - in the middle of the village - it is not a bridge, it is a gateway."

"Charlie McCauley's?"

"I think he was at sea with Charlie."

"It could have been, but then they always had a pub in Carnlough, just over the ~~xxxx~~ bridge there."

"Carnlough has gone down now, they used to have a good lime industry but it has gone down. Carnlough then, as a counter blast of that, it has become a great tourist attraction."

"Ah, it's only a wee ---!"

"We'll not let it interrupt with this battle, but they had a big battle over the sea wall. They were trying to raise it and the people of Carnlough didn't want it."

(Liam) "No, it wouldn't be very good to raise it anyway because the street would slide into that!"

"True, it's true."

"Did you know Fr. Smith, by any chance?"

"Ay, he is not long dead, if that is the one that I have in mind. Joe Smith?"

"Joe Smith is my brother-in-law. Fr. Smith was his brother."

"I see."

"Fr. James Smith."

"He was a great little historian and his pockets were always full of bits of paper - making mental notes."

"And he never recorded them."

"That's the thing. He wasn't taking any chances!"

"Well Fr. Smith said he gave a lecture on Glenarme and it was very interesting, so much that he had to repeat it. Then the people of Carnlough, they asked him to give a lecture on Carnlough - Fr. Terry Toal is in Carnlough - you know him?"

"That's right, oh, indeed I do - a wee delicate man."

"Yes, and they asked Fr. Smith to give the lecture in Carnlough. Fr. Smith agreed and he opened his lecture by saying that:-

"Carnlough has no historical background and it is very hard to give a lecture about it. It is not in the same class as Glenarme at all!"

(laugh)

"Aw well, I think I would have to concede that."

(Liam) "Aw yes".

"I would concede that Glenarme was a big place." (laugh)

"It has a better background on history anyway!"

"Aw, it would surely. Look at that noble frontispiece going into the castle - sure it's lovely, that gateway."

"Fine."

"Ay fine, I couldn't think of the word."

(Mrs.) "Your'e not making fun, are you?"

"I'm not making fun - I'm not in the habit of making fun."

"The town is dead Father; the town is dead. Could a town die?"

"It all depends on what you mean by the word "dead". I mean it would be a damned good thing if half the world was dead in the same way for there is too much bustle and rush. See what I mean? The whole West of Ireland is dead but nevertheless you are finding out the deadness of the west in coming to it because ~~it~~ they won't unwind."

"Aw, yes, just what I was telling you about Bunclouidy. We were down in Bunclouidy yesterday and it is a lovely quiet wee place. Do you know it Father?"

"I do not know where it is but you will have to fixate me where it is."

(Liam) "You must have heard of the 'Streams of Bunclouidy'?"

"You will be welcome there if you go and there is history around there too."

"Well the history I am seeking today is a more personal history. It is Liam's history I seek. I will have to come back a second time as Mrs. Liam has a history too!"

"We haven't got our dinner yet."

"Oh you haven't got your dinner yet - oh it's not fair."

"We don't mind. We eat when it suits us."

"Well that's an example of the life of deadness because some people think they are not alive until they do everything according to the clock, while those who do the thing that pleases themselves are really living regardless of clocks. But that it was only grey haired people that saw life like that."

"I am glad somebody agrees with me."

(Liam) "I'll eat when I'm hungry; I'll drink when I'm dry and if moonshine don't kill me I'll live 'til I die."

"Well Liam, we went on there for a bit. I interjected with Pat McCormack. Pas was in the I.R.B. in Scotland and he came over for the Rising in Tyrone."

"Yes, that is true."

"He was one of the few that was in Tyrone although he wasn't a Tyrone man."

Well, was there any activity then in Antrim - none you said?"

"None, aw none at all."

"Well, I suppose they were all parliamentarians?"

"No, they weren't, they were Sinn Feiners."

"Is that right?"

"Yes, oh yes."

"Well, what were the first beginnings of Sinn Feiners as we know it? Like, the Griffith type, as you knew it up there?"

"Well, that goes back to my very young days."

"Well, if you remember, tell me."

"The first Sinn Fein meeting - I have heard of Sinn Fein, and I used to work in a place in Ballycastle; it was called 'An T'uair im leag' - 'The Spinning Wheel' and the boys of that -

"Let me interject here please. They started a tweed industry, I think it is in Glenarme?"

(Mrs.) "In Cushendall."

"Cushendall, is it?"

"The boys of that place is: Stephen Clarke, eh he used to run along with Dinny McCullough, and Francis Joseph Bigger and that crowd from Belfast. Of course McCullough and them ones were members of the Dungannon Club and I went with Stephen Clarke to an exhibition in Dublin - it was held in the 'Rotunda'. Aonuch na nN Noahlaigh and Roger Casement was at that. The second night I was there we went to a Sinn Fein meeting in a hall in O'Connell street. The hall was above the shop of a man called Deighan, a chemist - oh there was a very colourful crowd there. Cathal O'Shannon spoke."

"Oh I heard Cathal was there."

"And eh, Roger Casement spoke and Tom Clarke spoke and a few of those ones that were executed."

"McDermott spoke."

"McDermott spoke; I knew him very well too."

"Was he organising in the North too?"

"He wasn't organising in Antrim but he was very often in Antrim. I cycled with himself and Bulmer Hobson from Ballycastle to Cushendunn on Easter Monday, and McCullough was there too; not Dennis - his brother Joe, who -
(interjection)

"I didn't know him."

"He is dead. He was a Jesuit."

"Well now, before we go, what do you think of Casement, God rest him?"

"What do I think of him?"

"Ay."

"I think he was the best man I ever met."

"Good. Dinny McCullough thought the same. Did you ever hear him saying about being buried in Murlough?"

"I did not."

"Dinny maintains that he said it to him."

"He said it to him, I know that, but I never heard himself say it, but he always said Murlough was the finest part of Ireland."

"It is a very nice spot, right enough."

"It would be, yes, aw yes. Dennis McCullough always said that Casement wanted to be buried at Drumnakeel, that is a very, very old graveyard at Murlough."

"Yes. Do you pass it when you are going up the big high hill?"

"You do not; you don't pass it anywhere except you're on the boat!"

(laugh)

"There you are, I haven't seen it at all."

"Aw the spot when you are going up the hill is where the memorial cross was erected."

"Yes, that is the one I mean, but I interrupted there - this Sinn Fein meeting : now what were the aims of that crowd?"

"Was it Arthur Griffith was speaking?"

"Ay, but it carried on the 1782 principles."

"Aw no, it was eh, something like that, yes."

"No physical force?"

"Aw, physical force - a fair amount."

"I thought that didn't creep in until later."

"Oh yes, it was there by that time. The Dungannon Club crowd thought of that."

"Was the connection not broken between '67 and that period?"

"Well, it was to a certain extent, but the Sinn Fein movement - it was to carry on a tradition of that period."

"Yes, but was there any living connection?"

"Tom Clarke."

"Oh, Tom Clarke of course, made white with prison blight. (laugh). Oh yes, I forgot."

"Yes, oh yes, and he was there at the meeting and speaking."

"Aw, well then that is true. Was he a little man that you see depicted in the Limerick Bridge the re - did you see that statue of him in Limerick?"

"No, I haven't been to Limerick yet."

"Do you know it Seamus?"

"Yes."

"Was he a slight little man?"

"Very slight, and very very delicate looking."

"Yes."

"He was a great worker as a man. He was all over the Trade Unions."

"It is a wonder they didn't hold this meeting ~~in~~ his tobacco shop?"

"Well, he didn't own the upper part of the shop you see."

"Oh, I know, but what I meant, it is above Nelli gans - it is above Deighan's, you meant?"

"Yes."

"What number would that have been?"

"It was just at the corner - oh I don't remember the number. It was just at the corner of Parnell Street, or it was Great Britain Street at that time, and O'Connell Street."

"I see."

"Just nearly where the Parnell monument is."

"The general tenor of the discussion was that they were going to do something."

"Break the connection with England."

"Wolfe Tones aims."

"Yes."

"What year would that have been?"

"That would be, I'd say 1912."

"Ay, well then Sinn Fein had been in existence from 1903."

"Yes, oh yes, I mean that was my first attack. "

"I see. Well now, I am not enquiring of your age - were you young at that time?"

"I was about I'd say twelve or thirteen. I am sixty-six now."

"Well you were so young in politics - really active in politics."

"Well I wasn't active in politics. I was just brought to the meeting by Stephen Clarke. Stephen Clarke, by the way, was one of the first men arrested and tried for retreasing - that would be somewhere around 1912 or '14. I think Dinny McCullough was arrested the same time."

"Yes, he was; Dinny was interned in '15 or in July in 1915."

"Aw no this was - I wonder who was the other fellow. I think it was one of the Mellows."

"Yes."

"They were arrested and tried for treasing felony and the offence was ~~xxxx~~ sticking up anti-recruiting posts."

"Ay, well then that would be 1918."

"Aw, indeed it wasn't."

"Anti-conscription?"

"No, anti-recruiting."

"Aw, I mistook the word there."

"There was a crowd of the British Army tearing ~~xx~~ the whole of the province at that time on a recruiting

parade and one night every stone and every post in the place was covered with sticking poster - the backing was gummed and there was in the right-hand corner, a red hand and a big notice. The post was about 7" x 12" and the inscription was:-

"ANY IRISH MAN JOINING ANY
OF THE BRITISH ARMY, NAVY
OR POLICE FORCE, IS A TRAITOR
TO HIS COUNTRY AND AN ENEMY
TO HIS PEOPLE."

"Another point - who would have printed those - it was very difficult to get those printed at that time. There was nobody favourable to you to print them?"

"They were printed in Belfast. I don't know who printed them."

"Well Liam, I have already enquired about your knowledge of Casement and was pleased to hear your assessment of him. It was his wish to see him buried in his own country."

"It was."

"Were you there at the funeral?"

"Yes."

"God, they were great men at that funeral, to stand that snowy day. Great stuff you were! Oh, it was dreadful even to hear it or to see it."

(Mrs.) "And they came from the Glens - if you had to see them coming in - they came on the Sunday."

"Was that the ones that brought the sod?"

"Aw no, these were just people from Cushendall. People who were connected with Pat McCormack's memorial. Joe McMullan and Charlie McAllister - you know these lads who were shot in 1921?"

"Yes, I know. They proclaimed that meeting yesterday, the authority."

"Aw they proclaimed it. They wouldn't let them march the half mile or so; they said they would let them go from the school at Waterford, but they wouldn't let them parade on the road, so there was no incident. We read it in the 'Press' today, but it is proclaimed to all intensive purposes. It was only a 100 yards they were allowed."

(Mrs.) "They were to march from the school to the grave-yard?"

"They were."

"We were up there about a fortnight ago and they were expecting it would be proclaimed, as the local publicans, it was said, were against the proposal saying it would interfere with their trade, on Easter Sunday."

"Well, divil the much harm it would do them in a place like Waterfoot on Easter Sunday since they are not supposed to open on Sunday."

"That is what the people said."

"Blacknebbed Presbyterians?"

"Oh, it wasn't Presbyterians or Orangemen in Waterfoot that objected."

"There are not many of them there."

"No."

"It was proclaimed to that extent, but I think that brought on to something else - McAllister - is that a brother or a nephew of the one that was shot in '20?"

(Mrs.) "Yes,"

"Ay."

"Em, Charle McAllister, -

"What relation was he?"

"Oh, he was a nephew."

"I see, yes."

(Liam.)

"Charlie McAllister was one of my crowd eh in Waterfoot."

"Was Dr. Boylan in the movemtn at that time? He was from Garva."

"Yes."

"He wouldn't be an active volunteer but he would have helped you medically."

"No, he wasn't in the movement but if anyone needed medical attention, he assisted and he got the assistance of a doctor from Portrush to help with an operation."

"Did he?"

"He did."

"Well, now, an operation carried on under those conditions, like we hear of ones being treated but it must have been primitive almost."

"Aw not at all - the man was carried into the house

and Dr. Boylan attended him and drove to Portrush to get this other fellow to assist."

"It was good of the other doctor too, wasn't it?"

"Yes."

"You don't remember his name?"

"I think it was Dr. Porter - I am not certain of that."

"It was very commendable when you think of that."

"Aw yes, and this lad is alive and well now, and his name was McCaughan from Glenshask."

"Is that right - had he a brother a vetenary surgeon?"

"Aw no, it wasn't that McCaughan."

"He was in Sligo, was he?"

"Yes."

(Mrs.) "Did you know his sister, Peg?"

"Yes. Hugh the vet, died three years ago. I remember getting a red setter from him and I called it "Ruadh". But he went mad. Some of these inbred dogs go mad. Aw he got the head staggers in a big way. But McCaughan was the volunteer that was treated."

"McCaughan was a relative of Hughie's of course. They were all related to each other but sure everybody in the Glens are related to each other."

"Well then, that brings us to another point - Pat McCormack, was he wounded in Scotland - wounded in the army?"

"Eh, I never noticed."

"Did you not? Well the muscle of it was somewhat weakened."

"Aw it could have been an accident that happened, because as far as I know he was shot at a couple of times but I never heard of him being wounded."

"There was a story I heard from another who was interned on the "Argenta" with him and in Larne work-house later on in the period."

"Yes."

"A fellow called Eddie Boyle, from South Armagh, and they were great bodies and he told him that he thought that Pat was wounded in the army in Scotland. He was raiding for dynamite or some of these things and ti was a lady - a woman shot him with a shot-gun - the wife of a caretaker who wasn't there, and discovered them. Well, I don't know - that might have been many years after even the other trouble - seeing that he was still in the trouble in '23."

"Aw yes, it could have been, yes. He was still in the trouble in '23."

"Well, I met him two or three times and the last time I met him was at a relation's funeral - another McCormack. I think he was a postman in Ballycastle, but he has a son in the post office at the moment yet another McCormack."

"I didn't know any McCormack in the post-office."

"No, maybe it is because that the Ballycastle McCormack has a son now in Newry Post Office that I considered that this Ballycastle man was also in the post office there. They lived up past the chapel. Up in the higher part of the town."