

"Aw, I didn't know them. Of course it is a long time since I was in Ballycastle."

"Well, when you are up round the Waterfoot it is a wonder you wouldn't go to Ballycastle!"

"Transport was the trouble."

"Well then, did they get any arms and ammunition from Scotland over that way?"

"No."

"Never did?"

"Never."

"How did you get your arms and ammunition?"

"Raiding houses and barracks all over the place."

"What barracks would you have raided in Co. Antrim?"

"Ballycastle barracks, and em, what is this the name of the place?"

"Glenarme?"

"Aw no, we got no arms there."

"Is there not even arms in the barracks in Glenarme?"

"Armoy?"

"Oh, yes, we raided Armoy."

"Well you wouldn't have much help in the raiding of these places there, would you?"

"I didn't need much help."

"I grant you!"

"I'll tell you how we got Ballycastle raided. Of course we had to get in fellows from Loughguile to assist in that. People that wouldn't be known."

"Excuse me, I interject there -

Was Brid MacCamphill from Loughguile?"

"Naw, she was from Dunloy. I used to stay in their house in Dunloy."

"I suppose so, yes."

(Mrs.) "Is she Mrs. McCauley?"

"No, she is Seamus Dobbyn's wife."

(Mrs.) "I knew that Seamus Dobbyn was married to some of them."

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"Well, they came from Loughguile - what names would be there?"

"Oh, there was a Gribbin and a McAllister and Martin - there was two McAllisters. Aw, I have forgotten their names but a couple of them went into the garage afterwards."

"Is that right, yes."

"But the first thing, we organised a sports meeting for Ballycastle for that day."

"Yes."

"And eh, -
(interjection)

"Aw, this was a cover, I suppose?"

"Yes, as a decoy to get the police away from the

barrack."

"Aw I see, yes I see."

"Then two Ballycastle lads - they knew the sergeant there, you see."

"Who was the sergeant?"

"The sergeant was Boyce."

"Boyce?"

"He died in Cushendall."

"I see."

"No, not in Cushendall, he died in Letterkenny. He was a Donegal man."

"Aw he would."

"So these two lads strolled up by the barrack when everybody was away at the sports meeting and the sergeant was standing at the door and they got into conversation with him, and they sat on the window-sill and wasn't there very long 'til three cars drove up and a crowd of fellows hopped out of the cars and held up the three of them, you see, with revolvers, and into the barracks and come out with loads of rifles and ammunition and police uniforms - every damned thing they could get!"

"Cleaned them out?"

"Cleaned them out! and put it into the cars and went back into the barracks and threw all the documents and everything on the floor in a pile and set fire to a table and away with them!"

"It was a well done job."

"It was - nobody ever saw them!"

"Come or go?"

"Come or go. I was waiting for them up on the top of the Glens mountain and stored arms at the back of a hedge and mounted guard over them til they could be removed, and during the time that I was doing that of course eh, a couple of them and myself held up the traffic on each side of the place. "

"With the arms, yes."

"And em, got through safely. Nobody ever heard another word about the arms! (laugh)

"Very good. That was done in day-light now - was that done in broad day-light?"

"It was done between ~~xxx~~ 2 and 3."

"That was a very well done thing."

"Well you see, that was the way Pat McLogan organised the place. Not too many years after that - oh, I was working in Lynn's garage in Ballycastle - I had a car came in - eh stopped, and he wanted the hooter changed on the car, so I was doing the job and this lad came along and he says:-

"How are you going on since?"

So I never saw the boy before as far as I know.

"Since when?" says I.

"Ah, since I last saw you."

"I don't remember ever seeing you before," I says.

"Aw, do you not remember stopping me here on the top of the Glens mountain with a gun, and em, four cars were held up, two on each side?"

"Aw I remember that all right. What car were you in?"

"I was in the car" he says, "That you stopped."

and he gave me his card - Ivor Russell - Proprietor of the Northern Constitution."

"At Colraine?"

"Ye, and from that day to this he never spoke of it."

"Is that so? It was great remembering on his part."

"Wasn't it."

"But this would be three or four years after?"

"That was in 1918, and it was - I was on the hills for three years and I was in jail for three years, and it was after that."

"Ay, that was six years."

"Ye, more than six years."

"Well then, what jails were you in?"

"I was in Derry Jail, Belfast Jail and Maidstone."

"Maidstone - you're the first ever that I have yet - honoured Maidstone."

"Oh, Develere was there."

"That's true. Well now, in Derry, were you there in Derry when they attempted to gas the warders?"

"No, it was after that."

"Was Leonard and O'Shea in it at that time - under sentence of death?"

"They were in the upper tier."

"I see. Who was the Governor at that time?"

(interjection)

"McShea was the name, not O'Shea."

"Was it. Well eh, who was the Governor at that time?"

"Oh, I couldn't tell you. I never saw him."

"Well, the Governor in Belfast when you were there, who was he? There was some Governors very hard, I remember hearing."

"Well, the only time that I encountered the Governor was when I was put on a report for talking while on exercise, so I couldn't tell you who he was."

"Well, who now, of those we have been talking about or those that we may not have been talking about, but may yet, who were prisoners with you in Derry and in Belfast?"

"In Derry there was a crowd in the - eh, I was in the ~~ie~~ lower tier - in the second tier there was a crowd from eh - they were internees - that is the crowd that McShea and Leonard - the were - now they were in the upper tier. The next tier there were internees from Tyrone amongst them - men called Tracey, Grogan and Rogers."

"Was it Hugh Rogers?"

"I knew Hugh. I think he is dead now."

"Yes, he is."

"He had been sentenced to death in connection with a shooting affair at Gilford. Myself and a man called Frank O'Brien were arrested following the death of a bank official at Gilford. I think they had been staging a hold-up in the bank there."

Frank O'Boyle still runs a motor business here in Dublin. They ran a bus service for a while."

"Well, to get back to the personnel amongst the prisoners - Guest of His Majesty! Was there a Dr. Gillespie in from Cookstown?"

"Yes, he was in the upper tier."

"Was there any of the Murnaghan's from Omagh, prisoners?"

"No, you see Father, there was very little fraternizing permitted between the internees and convicted prisoners."

"Well then, indeed it was a tough prison because I had heard that even in Mountjoy prison there was considerable laxity regarding the both sets of prisoners."

"Oh, it was a tough prison. You see Father, Derry jail is shaped like a horse-shoe, and during the time they had smashed all the windows in the cells. They used to sit on the windowills and sing and shout to each other, and there was a doctor a prisoner. Now it wasn't Gillespie was his name - I cannot remember the name now, but each evening he used to give out the Rosary at a fixed hour and the sounds of the Rosary re-echoing in the prison walls was indeed a very impressive affair.

There was a prisoner in Derry called McWhinney who ~~xx~~ had been on the prison ship, the "Argenta" and there was also another prisoner called McCrossan who was also in Derry at the time. McCrossan and McWhinney were released from the "Argenta" and on the day of their release they were thoroughly searched on the way out, and McWhinney found a despatch which he was carrying to the O.C. Derry. Both of them were promptly re-arrested and sent to Derry prison."

"Was Tom Larkin imprisoned with you?"

"He was."

"Tom died recently, God rest him. He died in Derry but not in the prison. He died in the Gransha hospital there. He had become a dipsomaniac."

"Oh, a lot of them became that, whether through disappointment or disillusionment, I don't know."

"There was a Catholic Repository in Derry City which I understand was used as a clearing house for I.R.A. information. Did you know, Liam, anyone concerned in that?"

"No Father, but we were well supplied with books and other things by the Cumann na MBhann in Derry, though I don't remember any of their names."

"Well, in Belfast prison, Liam, can you remember the names of any of the prisoners who were there with you?"

"Strange to relate Father, most of the prisoners in Belfast prison, when I was there, were policemen, that is to say, Specials, who had been imprisoned following their convictions for various offences."

"Yes, Liam, I remember myself a D.I. from Magherafelt receiving a sentence for peculation of events."

"However, there were along with me in Belfast a couple of prisoners from County Antrim - both from Ballycastle area - one of them was called McNeill. He was from Ballyvoy - a small farmer there, and Paddy, he was a neighbour of mine in Ballycastle. They were both doing three years."

"What were you sentenced for?"

"For possession of the explosive substances and leoying war against the King for which I was given a sentence of three years - a sentence which I did."

"Well, Liam, at the expiry of your sentence were you given an extradition order to get out of the Six Counties?"

"No, I wasn't, but I think McWhinney was served with one of these and its terms were that he could live anywhere except County Antrim."

"Where was he a native of, Liam?"

"Like John Mitchell of old, he was a Presbyterian and a native of Dungiven, Co. Derry, where his father had been a Presbyterian Clergyman."

"Were there any prisoners from Draperstown imprisoned with you?"

"No, there wasn't Father, because as far as I know about Presbyterian there was nothing there but the ancient order of Hibernians, who were no friends of the I.R.A."

"But to resume - about Belfast Liam, can you remember any more names of prisoners or of staff in the prison? Can you remember the name of the head warden whom I heard was very cruel and had a bad name for his treatment of the prisoners?"

"As far as I was concerned Father, they all had a bad name! I was in there in 1922 or 1923. I remember a prisoner there from Co. Antrim called Seamus Hurley. I think he was a teacher."

"Did you know a man called Liam Gaynor?"

"Oh, I did, but not in prison."

"He is a fine big man."

"Ay, and a great singer too, Father."

"Well, I could believe that Liam because he has a fine speaking voice. You knew Cathal O'Shannon?"

"Aw, I did Father and I would like to meet him again, though probably he wouldn't remember me."

"Well, I met him recently. I met him and many others of the Third Northern Division at a lecture given by Dennis McCullough in Dublin here. It was concerning the unpreparadness of Ulster for the 1916 Insurrection. Aren't you a member of the Third Northern Division?"

"Oh, I am,"

"And did you not get any invitation to any of these meetings concerning the Pre-Truce men?"

"No, I had no communication with them from the old days."

"Well, that is strange Liam. As far as I know the secretary is a man called Seamus Kelly who lives in Griffith Avenue and his chairman is a Seamus Dobbyn, who lives in Rathlin Road, and I must see that you get an invitation for future meetings of the Third Northern Pre-Truce Association."

"The last contact I had Father, with members of the Third Northern was with a man called Crawford who has since died here in Dublin, and I was at his funeral where I met some of the boys, amongst them a Denny McDevitt and Arthur Robinson and some others who had been members of No.2 Brigade."

"Well, Liam, as I said, the McCullough lecture was on the unpreparadness of the North - pre 1916 in the compilation of a lecture on this subject?"

"Oh, indeed I could. Dennis gave the impression that he had received orders from Pearse and Connolly that there was to be no violence in 1916 in Ulster."

"And you told him earlier in this talk that that was the attitude adopted by McLogan."

"Oh, yes, yes, I did, and that principle whenever

operated in Ulster, even before 1916."

"Regarding the A.O.H. I am sure you had many's a brush with them."

"Oh, indeed we had."

In the parish of Culfeightrin there was a hall in which they used to run dances, and we Sinn Feiners made it a point that at a certain time during the course of the dance we would take over the running of the dances and I was appointed M.C. when I would announce all the dances in Gaelic, and if I came to a foreign dance I would announce it as a foreign dance.

Attending the dances along with us and the A.O.H. people there were a lot of what we call, "Fly boys" who had come over from England and Scotland to avoid conscription. They were great entertainers and though they were from across the border, they packed me up in this attitude" (?).

"Who was the Parish Priest of Culfeightrin at that time?"

"He was a Fr. Small - oh a great man and a great friend of ours."

"Well, that was strange Liam because myself and the Parish Priests at that period were opposed to Sinn Fein."

"Oh, well, he wasn't because I remember a couple of days after the capture of Ballycastle Barrack, he came into the hall where I was conducting a dramatic class. He had a newspaper in his hand and he was laughing fit to split his sides. "Look at this" says he, "Ballycastle Dach!" and he proceeded to tell us all about a thing we already knew."

"Was Father Black around Ballycastle at that time?"

"Oh yes, he was a Curate there."

"He was a chaplain to the prisoners in Larne later, wasn't he?"

"Yes, he was."

(He is now Canon Black)
(He died in March, 1966)

At this point in the interview, Mrs. McMullan brought in tea.

"I remember blowing up a railway bridge near Dunloy. It was over a railway and it was a very successful operation."

"Well, tell me, in your own words Liam, how you went about this?"

"Well, first of all, we got two strong boxes made which we filled with an explosive which we called "War Flour". Assisted by members of the Loughguelle Company we pinched some planks and some of them climbed up the railway embankment and inserted the planks underneath the rail between the sleepers to which we attached the boxes.

We then detonated these boxes and drew back 220 yds. - the length of wire we were using to fire the mines. Hugh McCamphill, a brother of Brid's, and Barney Cummins, who was also married to a McCamphill, I think they now live in Florida, came with me and I touched off the mine. There was a mighty explosion and it rained masonry and sleepers for several minutes.

There had been a guard of about a dozen specials on the bridge, but they were not doing their guarding very well for they were in a hut about a 100 yards from the bridge, playing cards during our preparations following the explosion. They came out and proceeded to fire at the bridge which by this time was running itself up and down and we retired in good order leaving them to carry out their futile action.

A man met us and accompanied us as guide to a barn where we spent that night in.

I think that this particular act of destruction had been ordered in connection with an invasion that was to take place from the twenty-six county area. It was said at the time that Sean MacEoin was going to lead thirty thousand men into the six counties and we, in the Six Counties, were ordered to perform such a cause of destruction in the Six Counties that would draw off the Six County forces from the frontiers to the interior and so facilitate MacEoin's entry to the Six Counties. Whether this was true or not, no invasion took place but at least we did our little part."

"Did you ever manufacture any war flour yourself, Liam?"

" Oh, yes I did."

"What did you manufacture it from?"

"The principle ingredient was sodium chloride and rosin and sugar. We used to get a little barrell of sodium and chloride in Ballycastle, althouth it was very hard to get. I suppose it was controlled in England from where it came."

"Did you ever make mines from railway buffers?"

"No, we didn't, but we did make them from Ford Car Pistons and five gallon oil drums with great pieces of iron broken in for shrapnel and in the centre we would insert a core of empty cylindrical tins into which we would put our explosives and our detenators and our mines were ready ."

"Did you ever make grenades Liam?"

"Oh, yes, we did. We made a Mills type grenade but it was a percussion type grenade. The interior - instead of having a detachable firing pin - had its firing pin incorporated in its construction. It

was difficult to get this type of firing pin and I had to go round several places in Belfast to get them manufactured. The drawing of the firing pin had been given by Seamus McArdle, Brigade Engineer. This type of firing pin had parallel sides except where there was a notch cut into it and the principle moving part was a block - a cylindrical block with a hole that exactly fitted this slot, but it was flared on each side and the firing pin was operated by a spring and the block compressed the spring and whenever you got the spring compressed, so that the notch would engage in the block, it was ready then and the least little touch at all would explode it."

"How far would you have to be back from it having thrown it?"

"You wouldn't have much time to get away having thrown it since it is a concussion type. This type was usually thrown at moving vehicles."

"Did you ever manufacture grenades with the efficient hooks attached to them?"

"No, we didn't, although I heard of their use, especially when the Crown Authorities covered their vehicles with strong netting wire to prevent the ordinary grenade from being thrown into the lorries."

"Well, you had told me about Glenareem barrack having been attacked, but you said you were not at that attack. I presume Liam that your activity was largely against the Specials since you were imprisoned during the Tan War."

"My activities were against R.I.C. whether they were Specials or not."

(Mrs. McMullan interjects)

"What sort of men were those that were stationed near Cushendall - at Park More?"

"They were a mixture of Specials; English men and Belfast men and even some Black and Tans."

"Well, did you know anything at all, Liam, about the shooting of Swansea at Lisburn?"

" Oh, indeed I do - one of the men on that job is still alive and well in Dublin. - Roddy McCurley. I used to stop in his house in Belfast when I was 'on the run.' It was on the Antrim Road direction. I forget the name of the street but one could see the Milewater Factory from the house. As far as I ~~remember~~ remember it was between York Street and the Antrim Road."

"Well, he had another brother, hadn't he?"

"Yes, - Felix. He was Adjutant in the Third Northern . He married a McCamphill, but he is now dead. While he was in the army here he lived in Arbour Hill Barracks."

"But to resume the Swansea affair Liam, what more can you tell me?"

"Aw, Leonard was the car driver on the occasion and they showed great courage in doing the job in Lisburn where they would not have any assistance in any shape or form."

"Had you any contacts ever with volunteers in the South Derry Area?"

"No, no, the nearest we had was with a company of volunteers that was formed at Cranfield, near Toomb-bridge."

"We had spoken earlier Liam about Paddy McLogan. When was he arrested?"

"He was arrested soon after his marriage and after his arrest his place was taken by Tom Glennan."

I remember receiving an urgent despatch to join the Flying Column that was being formed in Co. Antrim, and shortly afterwards I received another despatch informing me that the majority of the members of the proposed Flying Column had been arrested, including Tom Glennon."

"As far as I remember Liam, McLogan founded his brigade on the borders of Counties Antrim and Derry at a place called Portglenone."

"Yes, he did."

"What was the attitude of the R.I.C. in your area in the early days of Sinn Fein?"

"Oh, it was fairly indulgent, but after 1916 they became a lot more alert and antagonistic. I remember the first thing that put me on the run was three or four of us seized a poteen still and hung it on the railings of the castle and of course the R.I.C. come up with hacksaws and removed it to the barracks. The owner of the still, a prominent Hibernian, went in the following day to the barracks to report the affair. I happened to be the only one in the reigning authority that had not worn a mask, so soon afterwards a member of the Cumann Na mBhann came out and told me not to go home as the police had been out raiding our home looking for me and I had taken a lot of documents from our house. So I took her bicycle and cycled back to another house ~~al-~~ along the way, and Mr. Lynn drove back the car that I had been driving to Ballycastle, so that is the first time I went on the run, and that was on Holy Thursday, and from that, for about eighteen months I was "on my keeping." My first appearance following the Truce was at the funeral of Pat McCarry whose memory is commemorated on that cross on the Hill of Murlough. Himself and Fr. McGill were responsible for getting the sign-post in that area, in Gaelic."

"Since many of the Hibernians were suspected of being spies were there ever any execution of spies in the North Antrim area?"

"No, because actually there were not very many Hibernians in the area."

"Was there any voluntary activity in the Ballymena and Ballymoney areas at that time?"

"None, but there was a company of volunteers in Ballymena but in Ballymoney there was no company at all, but the meeting that decided to run Louis Walsh as candidate for the Council, was held near Ballymoney."

"Did any of the old liberal stock support Sinn Fein?"

"Oh, Lord yes. There were dozens of those around Ballycastle and there was a liberal member returned for North Antrim, in my memory. - A man called Glendinning. He ousted the Unionist sitting member but he had great men to help him - amongst them Tom Sloan of Belfast and Lindsay Crawford. These two were largely responsible for the foundation of the Independent Orange Order. They were staunch supporters of Sinn Fein in its opposition to conscription."

"In this affair also, the Hibernians coalesced with Sinn Fein against conscription but more to save their own skin than to further the aims of Sinn Fein. In the same manner as after the Treaty they were all rushing to join the ranks of Sinn Fein. I was kept informed about all this by Linda Kearns, who was in the executive of Fianna Fail.

Did you ever meet Maire Comerford?"

"Yes, she was in jail along with Linda Kearns, and with Linda and others escaped from Mount Joy prison."

The only one who refused to escape on that occasion was a woman who later married Dr. McCarvell. "

"Speaking of doctors - did you ever meet Dr. Pat McCartan?"

"Oh, yes, I stepped on his fingers when I was going up a ladder when we were both decorating the "Retunda." where some festival was being held in connection with Sinn Fein."

"Did he get soured with blocks?"

"Aw I think he did. Probably he thought there wasn't enough fuss made of him."

"You would know nothing about the mix-up that took place in Ulster regarding McNeill's countermanding order?"

"Aw no, I wasn't in the Sinn Fein movement sufficiently deep at that period to be conversant with those matters."
