



## **IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD - CHRISTCHURCH, MAGOURNEY.**

Near the village of Coachford is the Church of Ireland graveyard of Christchurch. It is a smallish, rectangular area behind the now deconsecrated church, and on first glance is of no more, or less interest than the vast majority of such resting places to be found throughout the country. But a closer inspection reveals a different picture, for among the 37 memorial stones dating from 1904 to 1995 can be found an extraordinary collection of memorials to officers of the British forces of World War One, together with some very interesting reminders of the old Protestant people of the parish, now gone to their rest.

So, let's take a peek, in no particular order.

The HAYES cross and grave. Rev Richard Thomas Hayes, M.A., was Rector of the parish for 31 years, and it was he who oversaw the laying out of the new graveyard. His own son Henry, a lieutenant in the Navy, who had joined the Navy as a midshipman in 1895 was fated to become the first to be buried in the new cemetery. Also in the grave is another son, Rev. Richard Babington Hayes, who was curate in Myross, and like his brother died at an early age. Their father, Rev. Richard Thomas is also here buried, and the Cork Examiner carries an interesting account of his funeral, attended by all classes and creeds in the parish, in 1911.

The LEADER/JELLETT monument commemorates Frank Leader (F H M Leader) of Classas and his family. Among them are his son William (F W M) Leader, lately of the Connaught Rangers (The Devil's Own), who was killed in action 26<sup>th</sup> August 1914. Captain Leader was one of those, in the British Expeditionary Force, who tried in vain to halt the German advance during the early days of WW1. As part of the Retreat from Mons, a stand was made at Le Grand Fayt, and he and his group were overwhelmed. The Regimental Diary describes the engagement, as does a mention in "The History of the Second Division" by Everard Wyrall. William Leader's grave is actually in Le Grand Fayt, not in Coachford.

Also remembered, and buried in the plot, is William's brother Tom (Thomas Henry Mowbray). Not a professional soldier, he was a game warden in Canada when the war broke out. Returning, he joined the North Irish Horse. As even French and Haig eventually saw that cavalry charges had no place in modern warfare, he transferred to the infantry, but not before escorting the regiment's horses from Marseilles to Alexandria, for use by the Australian troops in the Egyptian desert. He then joined the newly formed Tank Corps, and was in training with the 23<sup>rd</sup> Tank Regiment when the war ended.

Mary Jellett (nee Leader) is also buried in the plot. She was the widow of Dr Henry Jellett, son of Rev Henry Jellett, Rector of Aghinagh and subsequently Dean of St Patrick's, Dublin. Dr Jellett became Master of the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin. When the war broke out, he volunteered as a civilian ambulance driver in the Munro Ambulance Corps, serving in France and Belgium, and was

decorated by the French and Belgian governments.

GENERAL G. M. FITZGERALD (Gerald Michael), a Corkman, served in the Indian Army, in the famous Bengal Lancers, also known as the 7<sup>th</sup> Haryana Lancers. His regiment became part of Force D (Indian Expeditionary Force) sent to France, where he served. Rising through the ranks, he became a full General, and served in the Army Council during WW2. He retired to Coachford in his final days.

BRIGADIER MICHAEL JOHN CAHILL, O.B.E. and his wife Joan Cahill, who was from Golden, Co. Tipperary, joined the army as a member of the Southern Irish Horse, and was in the coronation procession of King George V. Cahill served in both wars in the Service Corps, an unglamorous but vital component of any army. During WW1 he served at Gallipoli and in Egypt and Palestine. He held, and was extremely proud of, the title Knight Commander of the Holy Sepulchre, a Papal distinction bestowed on him by Pope Pius XI for service in Palestine after WW1. In WW2 he was involved in the Dunkirk rescue, and served with the 8<sup>th</sup> Army in the Desert against Rommel and subsequently in the Italian campaign against the stubborn resistance of the Germans. After the war he served in occupied Germany (as part of the Allied Control Commission) and in India. There is an extensive file in the National Archives in Kew about his service in Italy and North Africa during WW2. His wife was Joan Melland, daughter of a Lancashire merchant, and her aunt, Helen Melland, was the first wife (died of cancer) of the U.K. Prime Minister Herbert Asquith. The Cahills retired to Coachford, living in Aghavrin House and subsequently at Oakgrove, Killinardrish. A well known cattle breeder, he served on the Munster Agricultural Show Committee,

C.F.T. This enigmatic inscription refers to Charles Frederick Trench, D.S.O., son of Charles O'Hara Trench of Galway. Like many others, he joined the Indian Army, serving in Fane's Horse or the 9<sup>th</sup> Kings Own Lancers. Like General Fitzgerald, he was sent to Europe, in his case to Mesopotamia (modern Iraq, then part of the Ottoman or Turkish Empire). His unit landed at Basra, and was ordered by General Nixon, following consultation with Kitchener, to advance northwards to Kut el Amara and, if successful, to proceed to take Baghdad, as a propaganda coup. General Townshend, who led the expedition, soon captured the poorly fortified Kut, and then trekked north through inhospitable desert towards Baghdad. Waiting for them at Ctesiphon was a Turkish army under a German officer von der Goltz and the Turkish general Nureddin Bey, and after a fierce encounter the British forces had to retreat to Kut, where they were surrounded. Trench was sent on horseback through the Turkish lines to advise headquarters of their plight, and for this hazardous journey he was awarded the D.S.O. (Distinguished Service Order). Townsend eventually surrendered his army to the Turks, the greatest British surrender between the disasters of Yorktown and Singapore. Trench, having by his exploits avoided the surrender, subsequently served in France. After the war he married a solicitor's daughter, Faye Renouf, from a very distinguished Channel Islands family. After her death from cancer, he retired to live in Oakgrove, where he died.

HORACE LIONEL MATTHEWS, M.C. and Amy Marguerite Clarke. Matthews, who was the son of the Rector of Moviddy (Crookstown), was a Captain in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers when the war broke out. After service in France, his regiment was sent to Gallipoli in an ill fated attempt to force the Dardanelles. He served at Sedd el Bahr, gaining a Military Cross for bravery. He subsequently served in Salonika and Gaza, and took part in the relief of Jerusalem. After the war he served in Malaya (modern Malaysia), eventually retiring to Nadrid House, which he bought with his wife Amy Marguerite, a member of the Clarke tobacco family. Much of his lands were acquired during the flooding of the Lee Valley (see the informative ACR Heritage Booklet or, better still, Seamus O'Donoghue's magisterial volume "Flooding of the Lee Valley"). Mrs. Clarke, mother of Mrs. Matthews, who lies in the adjoining grave, reached the fine age of 100.

E.J.L. BAYLAY, D.S.O. This was Edward John Baylay, son of a general in the Indian army. Born in

India, he joined the Royal Horse Artillery, and was unfortunate enough to be involved in the disastrous Mesopotamia campaign (See Trench above). On the retreat to Kut, following defeat at Ctesiphon, he was appointed Observation Officer, and was one of those nominated by General Nixon for a D.S.O. for outstanding service. At the surrender he, together with some 13,000 soldiers became prisoners of war (having lost approximately 30,000 dead and wounded). Following a long march in terrible conditions, he and fellow officers and men spent the remainder of the war in a Turkish POW camp. After the war he left the army and emigrated to South Africa, where he became a citrus farmer, but that failing, he came to Ireland, firstly to Innislinga Abbey and then to Derreen, where he died. He married twice, first to Violet Bingham, who was a first cousin to the infamous Lord Lucan and granddaughter to the earlier Lord Lucan who ordered the disastrous Charge of the Light Brigade. (Harry Andrews played this military genius in the 1968 film "Charge of the Light Brigade") On Violet's death he married Catherine Freston ("Beloved of Kitty" on his headstone).

ROBERT CHRISTOPHER ALEXANDER. A member of a distinguished Northern Irish family, his grandfather being Bishop of Meath and two of whose distant cousins were Archbishop of Armagh and Earl Alexander of Tunis, R.C. Alexander was too young to take part in WW1. In WW2 he served in France as an officer in the Irish Guards and took part in the final invasion of Germany. After the war he retired to Coolalta, where he died. His wife, Laura Ina Madeleine Lenox-Coyningham is buried beside him, but separately, in an unmarked grave (Her request). From a prominent Unionist aristocratic family, her father recruited and, at his own expense, outfitted two regiments of the Ulster Volunteers – who were to die in great numbers at The Somme.

HUBERT BERNARD TONSON RYE, D.S.O. and Bar. Of ancient French nobility stock, the Ryes have been in Ireland for centuries. Hubert studied at Radley College, where he became a distinguished cricketer. He joined the Royal Munster Fusiliers, served in India, where he married Harriet Moore, daughter of a Cork clergyman, becoming Colonel of the Second Battalion, and serving at Mons, Loos, Aubers, The Somme, Passchendaele and the Hundred Days, and was twice awarded the D.S.O., as well as numerous Mentions in Despatches. One of the most distinguished officers in that regiment, he represented the regiment when the Celtic Memorial Cross was unveiled at Ypres. He returned to Ryecourt, and is buried in Christchurch Cemetery, Coachford.

VIVIAN WILLIAM DARLING. HONOR FRANCES GARDE. Archdeacon Darling was one of the last resident Rectors of Magourney Union, but less well known is that during WW1 he was Chaplain to the Forces with the nominal rank of Captain. From 1914 to 1919 he served in France and Belgium, and we can hardly imagine the horrors he must have seen. After the war he became curate at St. Lukes in Cork, where the Rector was Rev. Flewett (later Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross). Darling married Flewett's daughter, and among their children was Right Rev. Richard Darling, Bishop of Limerick, Ardferd and Aghadoe. Unlike most officers, he does not seem to have accepted his WW1 Campaign Medals.

RICHARD NASON WOODLEY, D.S.O. and his wife Ailsa Margaret. Richard Woodley, from Leades, Aghinagh, qualified as a doctor in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Joining the army (Royal Army Medical Corps), he served in South Africa, twice receiving the Queen's Medal during the Boer War. He subsequently undertook further training in Malta, and eventually became Commandant of a military hospital on that island. During WW1 he served in France and Flanders, gaining his D.S.O. as a result of his service during the Ypres and Hundred Days Campaigns. He retired to Leades after the war, and subsequently moved to Leemount, Coachford, where he died. He had been an important defence witness at the time of the Dripsey Ambush trials.

GEORGE WHITE HAWKES, D.S.O., M.C. and his wife Emily Victoria. George Hawkes came from a well known family who had land in Carhue (Coachford) and Carrigaline. He served in the 5<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment in Gallipoli (Suvla Bay), Salonika, The Somme and

Ypres. After the war he went to Canada, finally returning to live in Carrigaline. His wife, Emily Victoria Smith, was the daughter of the Dean of St. Finbarr's, Cork.

Some of the non military occupants of the cemetery are also of interest.

LAWLESS PYNE. Caroline and Rebekah Lawless Pyne were the daughters of Rev. John Lawless Pyne of Cottage, Aghabullogue and subsequently Rector of Inch. On his recommendation, the majority of his family emigrated to Queensland, where there are several descendants living.

CAREY. Edward (Ned) Carey was, like his father, Clerk of the Petty Sessions and Parish (C of I) Sexton for many years.

CROSTHWAIT. Thomas Philip Crosthwait was an engineer on the Cork and Muskerry Light Railway. His son William who had qualified as an architect, emigrated to Canada but joined the Canadian forces at the beginning of WW1 and died at Passchendaele,

LINDSAY. John Lindsay was the husband of the unfortunate Mrs. Lindsay of Dripsey Ambush fame. Originally buried at Leemount, his remains were transferred when the house was sold. Mrs. Lindsay's grave has never been found.

GILLMAN. Annie Gillman (Mackwood) came from a family of tea planters in Ceylon (modern Sri Lanka). She was the wife of Herbert Webb Gillman, a judge in Ceylon and later Vice Chairman of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society and mother of the famous WW1 general Sir Webb Gillman.

RUSSELL. Daphne Mabel Russell of Classas, Coachford and previously Longueville, Mallow and Castle Cottage, Killinardish, was a well known photographer, many of her beautiful nature and rural life photographs appearing in the Irish and Sunday Independent in the 1930s. She was a member of the Cork Camera Club, with whom she exhibited. She was a granddaughter of Sir William Howard Russell, the famous "Russell of the TIMES", the war correspondent who exposed the conditions faced by the soldiers in the Crimea and whose work led to the arrival there of Florence Nightingale. She had a small annuity (£20) from her relatives the Longfield family of Mallow, with whom she lived for some years. She was the literary agent of author Helen Mather (her aunt), a prolific author in the 1920s and 30s, better known then than now. In her will she left £50 to The Times, £500 to her friend Ms Aileen Leader, and £10 to Mrs Buckley, Church Lodge, Coachford as well as several other small amounts. She also left £1 annually to keep her grave in good condition! Her grave carries the lovely inscription "That God have mercy on my soul, and Man protect my dust, so long as doth a robin sing, this is my trust". There is a beautiful carving of a robin on her memorial cross.

THE OTHERS. There are many others, of interest and remembrance to their families, but perhaps those listed above would be those of most general interest.

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SOURCES. As this is not an academic text, I list the various sources without giving the source of any individual entry.

Newspapers consulted were The Cork Examiner, The Southern Star, The Irish Independent. The Irish Times, The Irish Press and The Sunday Independent. Web sites consulted were Ancestry.co.uk, The National Library of Ireland, The National Archives, U.K. National Archives, Kew. For WW1 I read A.J.P. Taylor and Basil Liddell Hart.

Errors, Typos and Omissions: Alas, they are my own.