

WICKLOW'S HISTORIC GAOL WHERE MANY OF THE '98 REBELS WERE HELD

The 1798 Rebellion - why?

The late eighteenth century saw the culmination of a number of factors erupting into what has become one of the most turbulent and momentous events in Irish history. Although the Penal Laws were relaxed in the 1770s they still prevented Catholics from having equal rights with their fellow Protestants. The population doubled to five million in the last quarter of the century and this increased tension and competition for land, leading to agrarian unrest, the spread of secret societies and the establishment of the Orange Order. This period also saw the emergence of the societies and the establishment of the Orange Order. This period also saw the emergence of the Age of Enlightenment and the demand for independence - liberty, equality and fraternity - in America and France. This international influence spurred on the liberal element in the Irish parliament to press for legislative independence from the British parliament, thus halting the trade restrictions placed on Irish goods. The threat of a belligerent Volunteer force, founded to protect Ireland from Britain's enemy, France had the effect of gaining only apparent independence, with real control still remaining in London.

The founding of the Society of United Irishmen, in 1791 in Belfast, by young radicals, such as Wolfe Tone and Samuel Nielson, was an attempt to bring about "an equal representation of all the people in parliament", Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter (Presbyterian). Some concessions were made by parliament in an attempt to secure the loyalty of Catholics. However, due to increasing disquiet over the liberal and radical attitude of the Volunteers, the government suppressed this organisation in 1793, as so too the United Irishmen in 1794. This movement became a secret society in 1795 and Tone sought French aid, which arrived into Bantry Bay in December 1796, though was unable to land due to fierce storms. The government responded to this French threat with a "scorched earth" policy and established a network of spies. A reign of terror followed which only served to bring an already turbulent situation to boiling point. Despite the arrest of many of the Society's leaders, the Rebellion broke out on the night of the 23rd of May in Kildare and on the 24th of May in Wicklow.



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Calendar of Events

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Foreword

It is my pleasure to introduce the Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98 Calendar of Events of the 1798 Rebellion Bi-Centenary Commemorations.

The 1798 Rebellion had a major impact on Irish history and touched on almost every household in County Wicklow. There was an enormous loss of life, destruction of property and business, and large scale transportation. According to one observer, "there wasn't a good house left standing in the county after 1798..."

Thanks to the courage and ingenuity of one man Michael Dwyer, the Rebellion continued for five years in County Wicklow. The most visible and concrete symbol of the Rebellion is the Military Road, stretching from Glenree to the Glen of Imaal, the first purpose built road in Ireland, built by the authorities in an attempt to capture Dwyer and his men.

Over thirty thousand people died during the Rebellion and it led indirectly to the Act of Union in 1801. It also meant that many Wicklow men were transplanted from their own county to the penal colony of New South Wales. Once there these people brought their culture, beliefs and values which still dominate Australia today. They contributed in no small way to the development and prosperity of their adopted country. We are justifiably proud of them.

I would like to thank the many historical societies and community groups throughout the county, who have worked extremely hard to bring awareness of 1798 to their communities through organising events for this commemorative year. I wish them every success in their endeavours. I would also like to thank the many people who have given their time and expertise to the 1798 committee.

Wicklow County Council has established Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Wicklow '98 Committee, to oversee the 1798 commemorations throughout the county. The Council has made provision in the Estimates of the last number of years to ensure that funding is available to commemorate this milestone year in an appropriate manner. Through the Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98 the Council will contribute financial and technical assistance towards the many commemorative projects throughout the county. We are very appreciative of the Wicklow Leader II Programme's significant contribution to the Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98 funds.

1998 is going to be a very special year for Wicklow people and visitors to our county, many of whom will be descendants of convicts transported after the Rebellion to Australia.

Blaise Treacy
Wicklow County Manager

A Chronology of the Important Events during the 1798 Rebellion in County Wicklow

- 23rd May** Rathdown and Talbotstown Wicklow rebels participate in surprise night attack on Ballymore-Eustace. Others probe outskirts of Dublin City from Rathfarnham and retreat when challenged.
- 24th May** Talbotstown rebels clash with garrisons of Stratford-On-Slaney and Baltinglass. At least forty-three prisoners shot dead or hanged in Dunlavin. Local leader Thomas Kavanagh betrayed and executed in Baltinglass.
- 30th May** Newtownmountkennedy partially destroyed in major attack by Newcastle and Ballinacor North rebels. Devil's Glen burned by the army in brutal mopping up operation. Inmates of Newtown's guardhouse executed.
- 31st May** Over twenty persons massacred around Newtownmountkennedy by the Ancient Britons and local yeomen. Rebel camp at Blackmore Hill near Blessington abandoned after attack by Sir James Duff's forces. New camp formed at Clohogue.
- 1st June** Over forty United Irish prisoners shot dead in Carnew ball alley.
- 9th June** Battle of Arklow. Ballymanus Division suffer heavy losses in day long battle of considerable strategic importance.
- 17th June** Army reconnaissance of Mount Pleasant challenged after which the village of Tinahely was burned.
- 21st June** Ballymanus Division engaged at Enniscorthy during the battle of Vinegar Hill. William Byrne succeeded by his brother Garret. Rathdrum yeomen massacre civilians at Auhgrim.
- 25th June** Combined Wicklow forces destroy Hacketstown.
- 30th June** Ambush of 200 Ancient Britons and Fifth Dragoons at Ballyellis near Carnew. Failed attack on Carnew garrison.
- 2nd July** Nineteen yeomen killed in clash with rebels on Ballyrahan Hill near Tinahely.
- 19th Sept** Rebels capture and partially burn Auhgrim.



SWORDS OF 1798 PERIOD

Why was the 1798 Rebellion so ferocious in Wicklow?

There is no one answer to this question. County Wicklow experienced some of the most ferocious fighting during 1798 and was to remain disturbed long after the Rebellion had ended in the rest of the country. There was an enormous loss of life, destruction of property and business, and large scale transportation. Indeed, the counties of Wicklow and Wexford stood apart from the rest of the country in terms of systematic house-burning. According to one observer, "there wasn't a good house left standing in the county after 1798....".

The form and character of the Rebellion as it manifested itself in Wicklow has long puzzled historians. Wicklow's anomaly lies in the fact that previous to the Rebellion, the county was considered to be one of the most prosperous, stable and relatively quiet regions in the country. It had the most successful Protestant settlement outside Ulster and a landed establishment of marked liberalism.

County Wicklow - A Successful Protestant Settlement

The fact that Wicklow had the largest Protestant settlement outside Ulster is an important factor in how the Rebellion manifested itself in the county. Indeed, it is probably the main reason why the Rebellion in Wicklow and Wexford contrasted so strikingly with the rest of the country in terms of its bitterness and ferocity.

The Politics of Wicklow in the 1790's - Wicklow's Liberal Establishment

County Wicklow had the distinction of possessing a powerful Liberal establishment both before and after the Rebellion. The county's landed families have been described as tolerant and enlightened and there seems to have been a higher degree of affinity between landlord and tenant as landlords were mainly resident in the county.

Many of Wicklow's landed families were opposed to the traditional establishment in Irish politics and were supporters of parliamentary reform. No doubt many were influenced by the flow of ideas from Europe in terms of the Enlightenment and later the French Revolution. The liberal politics of the county were all too evident in the general elections of both 1770 and 1797. Wicklow returned two liberal or Whig candidates to parliament, William Hume and Nicholas Westby, both of West Wicklow. The authorities at Dublin

TYPICAL 1798 WICKLOW PIKE

Castle mistrusted the Wicklow magistrates who they felt were not fully committed to dealing with disaffection in the county.

Economic and Social Rivalry

Wicklow's economy was growing steadily in the 1790s. Industries contributing to this growth were mining, textiles, wool and forestry. Apart from possessing one of the strongest Anglican rural communities, a large proportion of Protestant labour was imported to work the mines and manufacture flax and linen. It follows that there was a relatively high degree of contact between Protestant and Catholic on a day to day basis, unlike other counties where Protestant settlements tended to be in more isolated pockets.

The growing economy and population meant that there was more room for social mobility within the county. Lesser gentry and rising middle-class families competed ferociously for financial resources and social position. Aggravating existing tensions still further were the Catholic families within this group who were themselves struggling both socially and economically. As Louis Cullen put it, "social rivalry was thus further bedevilled by religious distinction".

It was a great deal more difficult for two groups living in such close contact to resist sectarian tension and fears as they reverberated from other parts of the country. Membership of the United Irishmen and the Orange Order were high. Provocative behaviour prior to the Rebellion and social rivalry in general, added to the sharp divide which existed in the landed establishment of the county and contributed to the tensions which erupted so ferociously in the summer of 1798.



Powerful Catholic Families - The Byrnes of Ballymanus

The Byrnes of Ballymanus, from whom the rebel leader Billy Byrne emerged, were the only Catholic family to maintain a social position in Wicklow. Their influence within the county was formidable and they also possessed strong bonds of kinship and marriage with neighbouring counties.

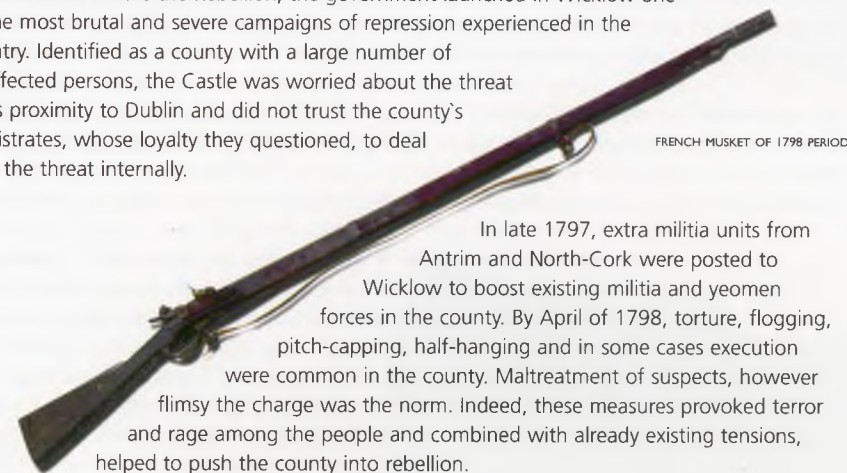
Family pride and ambition was strong, and further strengthened by the successes of their kin, both in Dublin, and on the Continent.

Along with many rising middle-class and lesser gentry families of Wicklow, Catholic and Protestant, the Byrnes of Ballymanus were long identified as opposing the county's pro-government faction.

The strong ties which existed between middle class Catholic families in Wicklow and Wexford coupled with their United Irish involvement meant that they were destined to play a significant part in the impending rebellion.

Pacifying Wicklow - The Government's Law and Order Policy for Wicklow

In the months before the Rebellion, the government launched in Wicklow one of the most brutal and severe campaigns of repression experienced in the country. Identified as a county with a large number of disaffected persons, the Castle was worried about the threat of its proximity to Dublin and did not trust the county's magistrates, whose loyalty they questioned, to deal with the threat internally.



In late 1797, extra militia units from Antrim and North-Cork were posted to Wicklow to boost existing militia and yeoman forces in the county. By April of 1798, torture, flogging, pitch-capping, half-hanging and in some cases execution were common in the county. Maltreatment of suspects, however flimsy the charge was the norm. Indeed, these measures provoked terror and rage among the people and combined with already existing tensions, helped to push the county into rebellion.

Government Forces in 1798 - The Military in Wicklow

The Standing Army

These were regular, professional soldiers, brought mainly from England. There were few regular troops fighting in Wicklow during the rebellion, many of whom were occupied in Europe.

The Militia

This was a defence force conscripted from ordinary Irish men. The bulk of the militia troops were Catholic with Protestant officers. They were rarely used within their home-county. Militia units from North-Cork, Antrim, Tyrone, Cavan, Fermanagh, Leitrim, Sligo and Dublin City were used in Wicklow in 1798. The notorious North-Cork Militia were famous for their harsh methods in repressing the rebels and are credited with the invention of the pitch-cap.

The Yeomanry

The yeomanry system was created in October 1796. Landlords, in their capacity as magistrates were called upon to raise infantry and cavalry from tenants whom they believed to be loyal. Growing Protestant fears about the loyalty of Catholic yeomanry resulted in many Catholic expulsions prior to the Rebellion. The yeomanry, cited as being responsible for many misdeeds, were known for their lack of training and discipline. Contemporary reports described their behaviour as being out of control on occasion, and many were said to have used the Rebellion to settle old scores with their neighbours.

Fencible Regiments

Fencible Regiments present in Wicklow during the Rebellion were usually from Britain. They were militia permitted to serve outside their native country. Regiments such as the Ancient Britons, the Durham Fencibles and Suffolk Fencibles were raised for specific campaigns and often lacked the discipline of regular soldiers.

The United Irishmen in Wicklow

From 1796 onwards, membership of the United Irishmen increased rapidly among the people of Wicklow and Wexford. This expansion was mainly due to emissaries sent out from the organisation's radical wing in Dublin.

The constraints of geography meant that the county was split into several distinct groups or divisions of United Irishmen. The strength of this kind of regional organisation lay in that effective use could be made of cross-border alliances such as that of south-Wicklow and north-Wexford. Also, each division could act independently of the other if necessary.

A significant number of Wicklow's Protestant gentry families were deeply involved in the United Irishmen from the beginnings of the organisation in the county. Apart from their opposition to the traditional Protestant landed establishment of the county, these families often had close personal links within the locality, and with Catholic families elsewhere. Indeed, Wicklow Catholics were relatively late in joining the organisation in large numbers, unlike Ulster where Catholics were active from the outset. This had a lot to do with the lack of a significant Catholic middle-class in the county and also the liberal character of the gentry themselves.



UNITED IRISHMEN FLAG

The government's harsh law and order drive carried out by a brutal military force in the months before Rebellion, did much to weaken the rebel organisation in Wicklow. With many of their leaders arrested, exiled or executed and the bulk of their arms confiscated, the Wicklow United Irishmen were short on morale and even shorter on effective direction. Indeed, a peasant, farmer or fisherman stood little chance against a trained, experienced, well armed soldier. It is no wonder that rebel casualties in 1798 utterly outweighed losses on the government side.

It must be said however that what rebels lacked in training, many made up for in determination, courage and endurance. There are many accounts of the tenacity of the Wicklow rebels whose extreme militancy endured long after the Rebellion had ended in the rest of the country.

On paper, Wicklow United Irishmen numbered 14,000 in 1798.

Newtownmountkennedy 8th April 1798

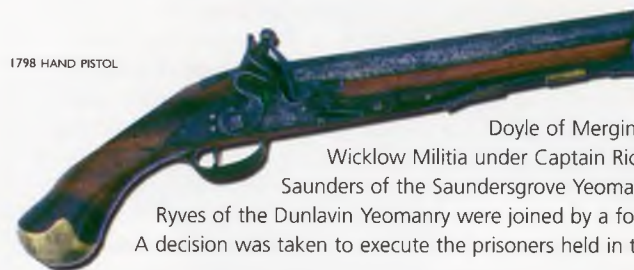
On the day of the annual fair, 8th April, the Ancient Britons led by Captain Burganey were ordered to Newtownmountkennedy. The loyalists in the town regarded them as "angels of deliverance", and plied them with drink. They then pointed out suspected rebels in the town. Six men were chosen at random and they were hanged without trial.

John Edwards, captain of the Oldcourt Yeomanry and a magistrate in Bray, complained about the events that had occurred:

"We never have had here the smallest appearance of disturbance, nor are we likely to have the least. I deprecate dragooning such people. It is a bad system except in open rebellion. Those already enemies to government it exasperates. Of those who are wavering and timid it makes decided enemies and it tends to disaffect the loyal. Where is the man whose blood will not boil with revenge who sees the petticoat of his wife or sister cut off her back by the sabre of the dragoon, merely for the crime of being green, a colour certainly with them innocent of disaffection".

The Massacre of Dunlavin Green 24th May 1798

Fear of a possible rebel attack on the garrison at Dunlavin by rebel forces already engaged in an attack on Ballymore Eustace would appear to have prompted the mass executions of prisoners on 24th May.



1798 HAND PISTOL

News of the attack on Ballymore Eustace by rebel forces was carried by a young man, Charles Doyle of Merginstown. A company of the Wicklow Militia under Captain Richardson, Captain Morely Saunders of the Saundersgrove Yeomanry and Captain William Ryves of the Dunlavin Yeomanry were joined by a force of the Ancient Britons. A decision was taken to execute the prisoners held in the guardhouse.

Among the thirty-six or so prisoners taken out and bound together in rows were 14 members of the Narraghmore and 18 members of the Saundersgrove Yeomanry. These men were suspected of being rebels and of infiltrating the military forces. The remaining four including John Dwyer of Seskin, an uncle of Michael Dwyer, were senior Talbotstown United Irishmen. Only one man, David Prendergast survived the massacre. He was severely shot in the abdomen, and managed to feign death among the dead bodies. Once the military had left, he crept into a ditch and was rescued and given shelter by a man named Lee of Griffinstown. For harbouring Prendergast, Lee was arrested and held in gaol and later on board the tender, Peggy at the Pigeon House, Dublin Bay until 1803. Prendergast survived his ordeal and died in 1842.

The Battle of Stratford on Slaney 24th May 1798

Led by Thomas Kavanagh of Talbotstown and Martin Burke of Imaal, a rebel force of four to five hundred approached the west Wicklow town of Stratford-on-Slaney. They were met by Lieutenant Macauley's Antrim Militia, who positioned themselves on high ground and successfully drove the insurgents back towards Baltinglass Town. The rebels became surrounded as Captain O'Neal Stratford attacked the rear of the rebel force with his Baltinglass Cavalry. High rebel losses ensued, with reports of the slaying of both men and women, including the execution of the rebel leader Thomas Kavanagh. The rebels stood little chance against the cavalry, demonstrated by the fact that there were no fatalities on the government side.

The First Battle of Hacketstown 25th May 1798

Very little is known about this engagement. It is said that up to 300 rebels died with negligible government losses. A combined rebel force from counties Wicklow and Carlow failed to take the barracks at Hacketstown. The building was successfully defended by the gunpower and cannon of the militia and yeomen. Lack of arms, particularly a cannon, was a major stumbling block for the rebels. Following an effective cavalry charge by the Humewood Corps, the rebels withdrew with heavy losses.

The Battle of Newtownmountkennedy 30th May 1798

Learning from the disaster at Stratford, Newtownmountkennedy was approached by two rebel columns; in the east from Kilcoole and in the west from North Ballinacor. This rebel force, reportedly one thousand strong, was led by Thomas Maguire of Ballydonareagh. Newtown itself was defended by Captain Burganey's infamous Ancient Britons, along with members of the Antrim Militia and the Newtownmountkennedy Yeomen Infantry and Cavalry.

Rebels broke through Burganey's defences, into the centre of the town, where fierce fighting ensued. The Ancient Britons, supported by the local yeomen cavalry, counter-attacked creating a smoke screen which caused the rebels to retreat in confusion. At least thirty rebels were killed, along with the Ancient Britons' leader, Captain Burganey. After Burganey's funeral, the Ancient Britons ran amok killing at least twenty rebel suspects.

Rebel losses rose sharply due to Major Joseph Hardy's subsequent "clean up operation" in Dunran Woods and Devil's Glen, where many rebels were massacred. Defeat at Newtownmountkennedy greatly disabled rebel forces in North Wicklow.

The Massacre at Carnew 1st June 1798

June 1st saw another episode of mass execution at Carnew. The somewhat ungrounded fear of rebel success at Newtownbarry, leading to the strengthening of rebel forces in Wicklow and Wexford, spurred Lieutenant Patten of the Antrim Militia to carry out executions in Carnew.

Sixty-one Rebels were confined in the guard-house of Carnew Castle. They had already been acquitted at the March assizes of rebel involvement. They had, however, been re-arrested on the eve of the Rebellion and sentenced to transportation by Henry and Francis Moreton and Rev.

Charles Cope, magistrates. Tragically forty-one of the sixty-one prisoners were marched from the guard-house to the ball alley, where they were shot.



On 7th June rebel forces exacted their revenge when they attacked the town and burned it.

MUSKET BALLS

Calendar of Events 1998

Date	Event	Location	Contact
Jan 1	Flag Raising Ceremony, Unveiling of plaque to Brother Luke Cullen ('98 Historian), Planting of 'Tree of Freedom'	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
Jan 1	Flag Raising Ceremony	Arklow	Tom Clandillon 0402 32955
Jan 2	Launch of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Programme	Powerscourt	Joan Kavanagh 0404 20126
Jan 3	Planting of "Tree of Freedom" by Joe Jacob, Minister of State	Glendalough	Raymond Stevens 0404 45338
Jan 22	"'98 in Wicklow" - a lecture by Dr. R.O'Donnell	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
Jan 26	Australia Day	Wicklow	Joan Kavanagh 0404 20126
Feb 15	Glen of Imaal Dwyer Bicentenary Walk 1, "Dwyer/McAllister Commemorative Walk"	Glen of Imaal	Anne Carpenter 045 404816
Feb 19	"Republicanism, its relevance in today's politics" a lecture by Dr. John Mc Manus	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
Feb 26-27	International Womens' Day Conference: "From Rebellion to Reconciliation". Opened by President Mary McAleese Addresses by British and US Ambassadors	Glencree	Fran Banks 01 6620355
Mar 1-8	29th Arklow Music Festival - Original '98 Poem	Arklow	E. Clandillon 0402 32955
Mar 1-25	"Secrets" - A multimedia art installation by Douglas Ross, Caroline Hill, and Mary MacNeill	Arklow	Joe Tully 0402 33575
Mar 2	"The Byrnes of Ballymanus" Rathdrum Historical Society Lecture by Dr Conor O'Brien	Rathdrum	Sean Walsh 0404 46445
Mar 14-22	Wicklow Heritage Centre 1798 Exhibition	Glen of Imaal	Joan Kavanagh 0404 20126
Mar 17	Glen of Imaal Dwyer Bicentenary Walk 2 "Dwyer / McAllister Commemorative Walk"	Glen of Imaal	Anne Carpenter 045 404816
Mar 17	St. Patrick's Day Parade	Arklow	Denis Naughter 0402 32299
Mar 17	St. Patrick's Day Parade	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
Mar 17	St. Patrick's Day Parade	Wicklow	Jim Giff 0404 69370 Tony O'Brien 0404 68615
Mar 17	St. Patrick's Day Parade	Rathdrum	May Byrne 0404 46262
Mar 17	St. Patrick's Day Parade	Greystones	Kay Coughlan 01 2877122
Mar 28	Wicklow Historical Society "1798 Forum"	Wicklow Town	John Finlay 0404 67887
April	Opening of Wicklow's Historic Gaol	Wicklow Town	Suzanne Costello 0404 20100
April	Launch of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Wicklow 1798 Educational Pack	Wicklow Town	Joan Kavanagh 0404 20126

Date	Event	Location	Contact
April 3-5	Junior Chamber Ireland's Spring Conference Commemorating Wicklow's 1798 Heritage	Wicklow Town	Frances Kiely 0404 66490
April 6	"Wicklow Gaol and '98" Rathdrum Historical Society Lecture by Joan Kavanagh	Rathdrum	Sean Walsh 0404 46445
April 10 to May 17	Arklow Retail & Business Association '98 Treasure Trail	Arklow	Sandra Duffy 0402 32457
April 11	A.A. Circuit of Ireland Rally (Co. Wicklow Stages)		Conor Faughnan 01 6779670
April 11-12	Rathdrum Easter Walking Festival	Rathdrum	May Byrne 0404 46262
April 12	Dwyer / McAllister Commemorative Road Race	Glen of Imaal	Bill Walshe 045 404731
April 12	Launch of the Liam Mellows Traditional Group's "Musical Tribute to '98". Tape and Booklet	Royal Hotel Arklow	Katherine Brennan Kinsella 0402 39691
April 16	Baltinglass Commemorative Walk 1	Baltinglass	Tourist Office 0508 81615
April 18	Unveiling of Plaque to Peter Burke and Thomas White	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
April 18	Parnell Springday	Rathdrum	Marie Tobin 01 2874124
April 19	Glen of Imaal Bicentenary Walk 3, "Dwyer Surrender Walk"	Glen of Imaal	Anne Carpenter 045 404816
April 24-25	William Dargen - annual weekend conference "Building Bridges"	Bray	Dermot De Barra 01 2866796
April 25-26	Orchestral Concert	Arklow	Tom Clandillon 0402 32955
May	Official opening of Heritage & Tourism Centre	Arklow	Sandra Duffy 0402 32457
May	The Bray Choral Society and the Garda Band in Concert	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
May	Wicklow Junior Football League Bi-Centenary Competition	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
May	One Wall Open Air Hand Ball Championships	Wicklow	Pat Doyle 0402 34763
May	1798 International Open Handball Tournament Singles and Doubles	Donard	Paddy Toomey 045 404681
May 1-4	1798 Schools' History Competition	Bray Heritage Centre	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
May 2-3	Wicklow Mountains May Walking Festival		Maura Byrne 045 867157
May 2-4	Tinahely '98 Weekend: Ceremony to Unveil Plaque (May 2) Fireworks and Street Music (May 3) March to Ballyrahan and Service (May 4)	Tinahely	Joe Dolan 0404 68968
May 2-4	Wicklow Heritage Centre 1798 Exhibition	Tinahely	Joan Kavanagh 0404 20126
May 3	A Heritage Walk around Arklow - starting at the entrance of the Methodist Church	Arklow	Aideen Marshall 0402 39348
May 8	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Commemorative Plaque	Ballymanus	Dominic Martella 0404 20126
May 8-10	Roundwood & District Historical & Folklore Society Seminar	Roundwood	Joe Timmons 01 2818389

Date	Event	Location	Contact
May 10	Unveiling of The Joseph Holt Memorial	Roundwood	Joe Timmons 01 2818389
May 10-16	Wicklow Words and Music Commemorate 1798	Bridge Tavern Wicklow	Charlie McGettigan 0404 67718
May 11	"The Role of Women in the 1798 Rebellion" Rathdrum Historical Society Lecture by Anna Kinsella	Rathdrum	Sean Walsh 0404 46445
May 15-17	Humewood Castle '98 commemorative weekend	Humewood Castle	Chris Vos 0508 73215
May 15 to July 12	9th County Wicklow Gardens Festival		Wicklow County Tourism 0404 66058
May 16	The Story of Michael Dwyer through Drama, Song and Dance. "Master of the Mountains; the story of the roots, the campaign, and the aftermath of the 1798 rebellion"	Humewood Castle	Chris Vos 0508 73215
May 17	Glen of Imaal Bicentenary Walk 4, "Dwyer / McAllister Commemorative Walk"	Glen of Imaal	Anne Carpenter 045 404816
May 18-21	Garden and Floral Art Exhibition	Woodenbridge	Wicklow County Tourism 0404 66058
May 20	Shibboleth Theatre Company Belfast presents: "The Turnout", 'a fresh look at the 1798 Rebellion, focusing on three women whose lives and deaths illuminate the nature of this peculiar time.	Wicklow Town	Arts Office 0404 20155
May 21	Baltinglass Commemorative Walk 2	Baltinglass	Tourist Office 0508 81615
May 21	Shibboleth Theatre Company Drama Workshops "A catalyst for reflection on the 1798 Rebellion"	Wicklow	Arts Office 0404 20155
May 22-29	Avoca's Melody Fair	Avoca	Peter Moore 0402 35557
May 23	Parade/Pageant Commemoration	Roundwood	Peter Farrell 01 2818194
May 23 to June 1	Newcastle & District '98 Feile Parade and Unveiling of 1798 Commemorative Stone (May 23). Guided Historical Walk (May 24). Exhibitions and Lectures (May 23-31). Various Gatherings with Irish Traditional and Breton Music and Crossroads Dance. (May 30 - June 1)	Newcastle	Pam Minnock 01 2819446
May 23 to August 31	Bray Heritage Centre '1798 Exhibition' - Ongoing	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
May 24	Unveiling of Carnew Shillelagh & Coolboy Districts Comoradh '98 Memorial	Carnew	James Doran 055 26338
May 24	Carnew Commemorative Festival	Carnew	James Doran 055 26338
May 24	Re-dedication of Dunlavin memorial and religious service at Tournant graveyard	Dunlavin/Tournant	Maura Greene 045 401521 Margaret Lynott 045 401459
May 24	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Commemorative Plaque	Dunlavin	Dominic Martella 0404 20126

Date	Event	Location	Contact
May 24	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Commemorative Plaque	Baltinglass	Dominic Martella 0404 20126
May 24	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Commemorative Plaque	Stratford	Dominic Martella 0404 20126
May 24	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Commemorative Plaque	Carnew	Dominic Martella 0404 20126
May 29-31	Byrne Clan Rally The Gathering of the Byrnes, Registration, Reception Welcome by Chieftains, Ceol agus Craic (May 29) Seminar, Guided Tour of Wicklow Gaol, Celebration Banquet followed by Music / Dancing (May 30) Ecumenical Service, Guided Bus Tours of O'Byrne Country and Other '98 Locations (May 31)	Woodenbridge	Val Byrne 01 2866208
May 30	Official Opening of Wicklow's Historic Gaol by President Mary McAleese	Wicklow Town	Suzanne Costello 0404 20100
May 30	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Commemorative Plaque	Newtown-mountkenedy	Dominic Martella 0404 20126
May 31	Ballinglen Commemorative Sunday Baltinglass	Ballinglen	Paul Byrne 0402 38322
June	Glencree Reconciliation Centre Exhibition (Ongoing)	Glencree	Rick Quinn 01 2829711
June	'Fairhills of Ireland' - Australian Tour by '98 descendants		Joan Kavanagh 0404 20126
June	Bray Emmetts V Carnew Emmetts, Bi-Centenary GAA match - Emmet Park	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
June 1	Traditional Music at Bray Heritage Centre	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
June 1-14	Battle of Arklow Commemorations	Arklow	Anthony Byrne 0402 31636
June 2-16	Arklow Visual Arts Presents a Festival of Activities in The Community Arts Centre	Arklow	Joe Tully 0402 33575
June 4	Dedication of William Putnam Mc Cabe Room at Quinn's Hotel (Royal)	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
June 6	Senior Football '98 Challenge Pearse Park WICKLOW v WEXFORD	Arklow	Jimmy Dunne 0402 32386
June 6	Bi-Centenary Hurling Match u12	Roundwood	Peter Farrell 01 2818194
June 6	'98 60x30 Handball Team Event: WICKLOW V WEXFORD	Arklow	Eamon Rice 0404 69705
June 9	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Commemorative Plaque	Arklow	Dominic Martella 0404 20126
June 12	1798 Period Costume Outdoor Feast	Glen of Imaal	John Fenton 045 404657
June 14	Parade Pageant	Arklow	Anthony Byrne 0402 31636
June 14	1798 Bus Tour of Wicklow		Henry Cairns 088 2765120
June 14	The Glen of Imaal '98 Festival	Glen of Imaal	Bill Walshe 045 404731
June 17	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Commemorative Plaque	Tinahely	Dominic Martella 0404 20126

Date	Event	Location	Contact
June 17	Tinahely Commemorative Handball Match	Tinahely	Mick Darcy 0402 38264
June 18	Baltinglass Commemorative Walk 3	Baltinglass	Tourist Office 0508 81615
June 18	Unveiling of Plaque to Captain Edwards, followed by "Captain Edwards of Oldcourt" - a lecture by Eva OCathaoir	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
June 18 and 20	Wicklow Drama Group-Street Pageant of Billy Byrne	Wicklow	Suzanne Tallon 0404 69117
June 18-21	The Wicklow Midsummer '98 Pageant	Wicklow	Suzanne Tallon 0404 69117
June 19 to 21 July	16th Dunlavin Festival of Arts	Dunlavin	Matt Owens 045 401368
June 20	Round Ireland Yacht Race	Wicklow	Fergus O'Conchabhaoir 0404 67014
June 21	Songs of Praise	Methodist Church, Arklow	Gordon Black 0402 31898 / 33221
July	An Evening of Entertainment with Bray Musical Society, Dry Rain, Square One, Musicians, Dancers, Poetry etc.	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
July 2	Coolboy Commemorative Handball Match	Coolboy	Richard Willaghey 0402 34763
July 4	Independence Day	Wicklow	Joan Kavanagh 0404 20126
July 2-5	Murphy's Irish Open Golf	Druid's Glen	Paddy Rossi 01 6614666
July 5-11.	Synge Summer School - "History and Theatre"	Rathdrum	Irene Parsons 0404 46131
July 5-12	Bray Seaside Festival - In association with Bray Family Seaside Festival Shay Elliot Exhibition - Ongoing	Bray Bray Townhall	Henry Cairns 088 2765120 Joe Loughman 01 2866796
July 10-12	A Flower Festival - "Seeds of Methodism"	Methodist Church, Arklow	Aideen Marshall 0402 39348
July 12	Wicklow Pike Men / Women Salute "Tour de France"		Peter Farrell 01 2818194
July 12-13	Tour de France (Co. Wicklow Stages)		Pat Mc Quaid 01 2864451
July 14	Bastille Day	Wicklow	Joan Kavanagh 0404 20126
July 16	Baltinglass Commemorative Walk 4	Baltinglass	Tourist Office 0508 81615
July 19	Unveiling of Ballymanus GFC Plaque to Billy Byrne	Ballymanus	Michael Stapleton 0402 36369
July 19	Glen of Imaal Bicentenary Walk 5, "Dwyer / Mc Allister Commemorative Walk"	Glen of Imaal	Anne Carpenter 045 404816
July 20	Billy Byrne Anniversary Memorial Service	Ballymanus House	Priest's House 0402 36119
July 26 to August 9	120th Guinness Wicklow Regatta Festival	Wicklow	Tom Byrne 0404 68391
July 27	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Commemorative Plaque	Powerscourt	Dominic Martella 0404 20126

Date	Event	Location	Contact
July 31 to August 3	Greystones Summer Festival	Greystones	Grainne McLoughlin 01 2877308
July 31 to August 3	Arklow Maritime Weekend	Arklow	Thomas Hickson 0402 39949
August	A Childrens / Adults Mission and African Childrens Choir	Arklow	Rev. Sahr Yambasu 0404 69682
August	Arklow Celtic Week	Arklow	Joe Tully 0402 33575
August 1	Unveiling of Plaque to United Irishmen Kennedy, Ledwidge, Nugent etc.	Bray Courthouse	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
August 2	Guided '98 Walk with Dr. Ruan O'Donnell	Glendalough-Seven Churches	Raymond Stevens 0404 45338
August 2	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee Coiste Chill Mhantain '98, Commemorative Plaque	Glendalough	Dominic Martella 0404 20126
August 3	County Agricultural Show	Tinahely	Larry O'Loughlin 0402 38171
August 6-9	Bray International Festival of Dance and Music	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
August 8	West Wicklow Historical Society Seminar	Baltinglass	Paul Gorry 01 8393942
August 9-16	Parnell Summer School - "The Republic"	Rathdrum	Maire Tobin 01 2874124
August 9	Ceili and Party	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
August 9	Unveiling of 1798 Commemorative stone	Glenmalure	Dermott O' Dowd 0404 46469
August 10-16	Glenmalure 1798-1998 Bicentenary Festival Week: Parade, Historical Walks, Music, Dance, Lectures, Exhibition of Historical Data, 1798 Arts Exhibition	Glenmalure	Dermott O' Dowd 0404 46469
August 13	Rathdrum Fireworks Display	Rathdrum	May Byrne 0404 46262
August 15	1798 Historical Tour - Hosted by Greenan Farm Museums & Maze and Glenmalure Lodge		Jonathan Wheeler 0404 46000 Paddy Dowling 0404 46469
August 15	Opening of 1798 Commemorative Park	Rathdrum	May Byrne 0404 46262
August 16	Bray Concert Band at Heritage Centre	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
August 20	Baltinglass Commemorative Walk 5	Baltinglass	Tourist Office 0508 81615
August 21-23	"Reconciling Conflicting Views of History" "1798 in the context of Peace Building" Glencree Centre Summer School	Glencree	Rick Quinn 01 2829711
August 23	Traditional Musicians at Heritage Centre	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
August 24	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Commemorative Plaque	Wicklow	Dominic Martella 0404 20126
August 30	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Commemorative Plaque	Avoca	Dominic Martella 0404 20126
August 31	Closing of 1798 exhibition	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120

Date	Event	Location	Contact
September	Eirecell Press Photographers Association of Ireland Exhibition	Arklow	Joe Tully 0402 33575
September	Ballyknockan Granite Festival	Ballyknockan	Seamas O' Maitiu 045 867332
September	School Writers Competition	Arklow	Tom Clandillon 0402 32955
Sept 4	Period Costume Garden Party	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
Sept 5	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Commemorative Plaque	Blessington	Dominic Martella 0404 20126
Sept 6	Heritage Day		Helen Holden, Dúcas, 056 21668 / 21813
Sept 6	Excursion to Michael Dwyer Cottage with talk by Dr. Ruan O'Donnell	Derrynamuck	Con Costello 045 897724
Sept 13	A Thanksgiving Service	Methodist Church, Arklow	Rev. Sahr Yambasu 0404 69682
Sept 18	'98 Commemorative Ball	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
Sept 19	Unveiling of Aughrim District Comoradh '98 Memorial	Aughrim	Annie Holt 0402 36270
Sept 19	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Commemorative Plaque	Aughrim	Dominic Martella 0404 20126
Sept 20	Glen of Imaal Dwyer Bicentenary walk 6 "Dwyer / McAllister Commemorative Walk"	Glen of Imaal	Anne Carpenter 045 404816
October 1	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Commemorative Plaque	Delgany	Dominic Martella 0404 20126
Oct 6-8	La Touche Legacy Seminar "Local Authorities -Reassessment"	Greystones	Tom Murphy 01 2868278
Oct 16	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Commemorative Plaque	Rathdrum	Dominic Martella 0404 20126
Oct 22-29	The Oscar Wilde Autumn School	Bray	D.C. Rose 01 2865245
Oct 24-25	Wicklow Mountains Autumn Walking Festival		Wicklow County Tourism 0404 66058
Oct 30	Wicklow Junior Chamber '98 Commemorative Period Masquerade Ball	Wicklow	Sinead Curley 0404 69796
November	'98 Film Festival	Wicklow	Joan Kavanagh 0404 20126
Nov 10	"Joseph Holt"; a lecture by Dr. Ruan O'Donnell	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
December	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Commemorative Plaque	Annacurra	Dominic Martella 0404 20126
Dec 14	Unveiling of Wicklow '98 Committee, Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, Commemorative Plaque	Humewood	Dominic Martella 0404 20126
Dec 14	"Michael Dwyer"; a lecture by Dr. Ruan O'Donnell	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
Dec 31	Lowering of the Flag, Last post etc,	Bray	Henry Cairns 088 2765120
Dec 31	Launch of Book of Memorial Photos of '98	Arklow	Eddie Fitzgerald 088 2727647

For further updates of events please consult our web page: <http://www.wicklow.ie/1798>



A map of Wicklow showing some of the towns where events occurred during the 1798 Rebellion.

Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98 County Steering Committee

Officers:

Chairman Tony O'Neill
 Secretary Joan Kavanagh
 Assistant Dominic Martella
 Treasurer John Nolan
 P.R.O. Ruan O'Donnell

Committee Members:

Val Byrne
 Tom Clandillon
 Robert Downes
 Brendan Flynn
 Gino Forte
 Gerry Maher
 Pat Power
 Jim Rees

The Battle of Arklow 9th June 1798

Rebel forces led by William Byrne of Ballymanus, Anthony Perry of Inch and Fr. Michael Murphy of Ballycanew attacked Arklow on the 9th June. They had delayed attacking the town and had thereby allowed the government forces, who had abandoned the town, to re-enter. General Francis Needham and Lieutenant General Gerard Lake led a force of about 1,400 English, Scottish and Irish soldiers.

The Durham Fencibles were attacked by a large group of rebels and suffered heavy casualties. Some government cannons, the weapons responsible for many rebel fatalities, were destroyed. The rebels used pikes, barricades and some guns against government cannons, guns and firing lanes, for which fences and obstacles were cleared in the town.

The failure of the rebels to take Arklow resulted in their containment in the south-east corner of the country. For the Rebellion to have any real effect, the rebels would have had to rush northwards to the capital.

After the death of Fr. Murphy, a severe blow to rebel morale, the rebels withdrew to Gorey Hill. Like many events in the 1798 Rebellion, stories grew up in the folk memory regarding Fr. Murphy. One of the better known describes the leader urging his rebel force onwards with the reassurance that the "heretic bullets" will do them no harm.

The Burning of Tinahely 17th June 1798

After the Battle of Arklow, many of the rebels from the north Wexford army and the Ballymanus Division rallied at the Mount Pleasant camp and then Kilcavan Hill. The rebels advanced on Tinahely having sighted a large patrol of Government forces led by Generals Loftus and Dundas.

The Government forces hastily retreated abandoning the town. This allowed the rebels to occupy Tinahely which they immediately burned. This was in retaliation for the perceived "murderous" conduct of the town's yeomen.



1798 BAYONET

The Second Battle of Hacketstown 25th June 1798

A combined force from north and south Wicklow and a Wexford force including Shelmalier Riflemen led by Garret Byrne, Michael Dwyer, Michael Reynolds and Edward Fitzgerald attacked Hacketstown for the second time on the 25th. The Hacketstown Infantry under Captain Hardy and the Humewood Yeomen, the Antrim Militia and the Shillelagh Cavalry were aided by a supplementary force led by Rev. James McGee. The rebels attacked the town aiming to procure badly needed arms. Covered by flanking parties, one of which was led by Michael Dwyer, they forced the infantry back to the barracks which they attacked. Having suffered heavy losses, the rebels burned approximately 76 houses to create a smoke screen. This proved ineffective and they had no choice but to withdraw to Whelp Rock. Eight loyalists and Captain Hardy were killed.

The Battle of Ballyellis 30th June 1798

The success of the rebels at the Battle of Ballyellis was a great boost to morale but unfortunately it was too little, too late. A large force of pikemen under General Joseph Holt and a Wexford contingent led by Edward Roche ambushed a party of 200 Ancient Britons and Fifth Dragoons led by Colonel Richard Puleston. The rebels concealed themselves in the hedge on either side of the road at Ballyellis, between Monaseed and Carnew and ambushed the cavalry patrol. The surrounding fields were unsuitable for horses and cannon. At least 49 cavalrymen and a few yeomen were killed. There were no rebel losses. Though it was a successful ambush for the rebels, they lost the opportunity of a surprise attack on the important garrison at Carnew.



Michael Dwyer

Born in 1772 in Camera in the Glen of Imaal, West Wicklow, Michael Dwyer is one of the most famous rebels of the 1798 period. It would appear that he had joined the United Irishmen as early as April 1797 when the movement spread to the west. Active in the movement he was forced to go on the run prior to the outbreak of the Rebellion. He fought at both the Battle of Arklow and Vinegar Hill and led the rebels at the Battle of Hacketstown. With the retreat of the rebels into the Wicklow mountains he was appointed "Governor of Glenmalure". He did not agree with the plan to march into Meath and elected to stay to guard the wounded. On Holt's return on the 16th July he joined the main rebel force.

By August General Moore was issuing amnesties but Dwyer was wary of accepting one as loyalists in his locality swore he would be killed if he returned home. Though the Rebellion was virtually over in a matter of some months, Dwyer along with a small band of loyal followers held out in the hills. He carried out a very successful campaign of guerrilla warfare, always managing to elude his pursuers such as the incident at Derrynamuck, where, with the help of Sam MacAillister, he made a narrow escape.

Dwyer stayed for five years on the run in the hills. The Military Road and five barracks along its route were built in an attempt to capture Dwyer. This was the first purpose built road in Ireland.

With the failure of Emmet's rising in 1803 pressure was increased to capture the elusive Dwyer. His usual haunts were guarded by the British and eventually in the winter of 1803 he surrendered to Mr. Hume, M.P. for County Wicklow. It was agreed that he and his four lieutenants would be pardoned and with their families be sent to America.

He remained in Kilmainham Gaol until 1805 when he was informed a week before that he was being sent as a free man to the penal colonies of Australia. He was devastated at this news and protested vociferously at this treatment, reminding the authorities of the terms of his surrender. It was in vain.

On 28th August 1805 Dwyer with his wife Mary, Hugh Vesty Byrne his first cousin, and his wife Rachael and children, Arthur Devlin, John Meenagh and Martin Burke left Cobh Harbour aboard the "Tellicherry", arriving in early 1806.

On landing the men were given 100 acres of land and they settled into their new life. However, the Governor of New South Wales, Captain Bligh, of "Mutiny on the Bounty" fame had the five men charged with seditious activities and though cleared of the charges in court, Bligh had them re-arrested and sent to various convict depots, including Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land. Bligh was eventually removed from office by the military in the Rum Rebellion. Dwyer and his men were released and pardoned. The families returned to their farms at Liverpool, near Sydney and settled down to a life in farming.

Dwyer was persuaded by Governor Lachlan MacQuarie to take a position as a constable in the district. He held this position for some time but was eventually removed from office for misconduct. He opened a tavern, but this venture brought him financial problems. On leaving Ireland it had been decided that their four children would not accompany them but that they would follow at a later date.

Michael Dwyer died on 23rd August 1825, aged fifty-three. His children arrived one week after his death. He was buried in Devonshire Street cemetery but was later moved to Waverley Cemetery and a monument erected over his grave to commemorate the "Wicklow Chieftain" in 1898.

It is reported that over 200,000 attended the unveiling of the monument. It is the largest memorial still in Sydney today.

General Joseph Holt

Joseph Holt was born in the parish of Redcross, Wicklow in 1756.

After marrying Hester Long in 1782 he settled in Mullinaveigue, outside Roundwood. He served as a volunteer in his youth and went to study agriculture in the north of Ireland. On returning to County Wicklow he took up a position as a baronial sub-constable in the 1780s, as well as being a bounty hunter. He also worked at road building and cloth assessment.

Despite Holt's claim in his Memoirs that he was not a member of the United Irishmen, it would appear that he joined the Society in 1797. He acted as a recruiter and liaised with the Dublin Committees.

Prior to the outbreak of the Rebellion Holt's farm was burned by the Fermanagh Militia on 10th May. He joined the rebels and remained at large until November. Once the Rebellion had commenced he fought within Wicklow, gaining a reputation for leadership, he moved into Wexford with the Wicklow men in early June. His greatest moment of triumph was at the Battle of Ballyellis on 30th June where he organised an ambush of the Ancient Britons. He elected to participate in the Meath expedition in July where he distinguished himself. Despite being wounded twice he returned to Wicklow where he led the remaining rebels amounting up to 1,000 men.

During the following months he carried out attacks on military convoys and loyalists. Dublin Castle viewed Wicklow as being the most disturbed county in the country at this time with over 400 houses burned by the outstanding rebels. Though a large reward was offered for Holt, efforts to capture him failed. He held out in the mountains awaiting further French intervention, but when it became apparent that no such assistance was coming Holt decided to accept terms of surrender from the Government which had been negotiated through his wife. His surrender on 10th November meant that he would be exiled to New South Wales as a free man.



Before being transported Holt was imprisoned in Dublin Castle where he was examined.

In August 1799, he sailed aboard the Minerva with his wife and children, apart from his

daughter Marianne. His position as a rebel leader in

Ireland was widely known in New South Wales where he was regarded as being a natural leader in the various Irish plots. He was very involved with the planning of the Castle Hill Revolt of 1804, but on learning that an informer had been at work he withdrew. The authorities, however, sent him to the secondary penal settlements of Norfolk Island and Van Diemen's Land. He was allowed to return to the mainland in 1806.

On his return he took up farming at which he prospered, while also carrying on illegal distilling. He was granted 110 acres at Cabramatta beside Michael Dwyer and his comrades. In 1811 he

was granted an absolute pardon and he decided to return to Ireland in December 1812. His son, Joshua remained in Sydney.

JOSEPH HOLT FLAG



Despite being shipwrecked on the Falkland Islands in February 1813 the Holts returned to Ireland in April 1814. His first venture was to open a pub in Kevin Street, but by 1819 he had retired to Dun Laoghaire. He died in 1826 and is buried in Monkstown. Holt wrote his Memoirs which were edited in 1838 by Crofton Crocker. In this he gave a very vivid account of his involvement in the Rebellion, the voyage aboard the Minerva and also his life in New South Wales. His graphic description of a flogging of two Irishmen at Tongabbie is widely quoted in Australia.

William (Billy) Byrne

Billy Byrne, born in 1775, was the youngest son of Garret Byrne of Ballymanus. This was one of the last great Catholic landed families in Wicklow. They lost their position and lands as a result of the participation of Billy and his older brother, Garret Jr., in the 1798 Rebellion. Garret Jr. was a United Irishman, as was his brother Billy, a "man about town" who was described as handsome, powerfully built and six foot six inches in height. The Byrnes of Ballymanus had made enemies of various influential people over the years and Billy was no exception. This was later to lead to his death.

In the absence of his brother, Garret, he played the part expected of a Byrne of Ballymanus and fought with the vanguard at Arklow on 9th June. He led a group of Wicklow men at the battle of Vinegar Hill on 21st June but after the defeat went into hiding. It was reported to him, however, that if he raised a regiment of men to fight for the British Government abroad, his past would be atoned. This he decided to do, but his enemies struck first and he was arrested in Dublin in March 1799. He spent the next six months in Wicklow Gaol. He was court-martialled on 24th June 1799.



Evidence was manufactured and witnesses paid to swear against Billy. The most notorious of those was the infamous Bridget Dolan or Croppy Biddy.

Billy was found guilty of being a rebel leader and was sentenced to death. It is possible that this could have been commuted, but his enemies were too influential. Billy Byrne was taken from Wicklow Gaol and brought to Gallows Hill, half a mile from Wicklow Town, on the old Glenealy Road, and executed on 21st September.

Transportation

Wicklow has a unique position in relation to the transportation of its rebels to the penal colony of New South Wales. More Wicklow men, circa 106, arrived in New South Wales between 1799 and 1806 than from any other county. There are two reasons for this.

Firstly Wicklow had the highest number of United Irishmen in Leinster, 14,000 in total, sworn into the Society, than any other county prior to the Rebellion.



THE TELLICHERRY

Secondly, the Rebellion continued for a period of five years in Wicklow after it had collapsed elsewhere, especially after the defeat of the French at Ballinamuck on 8th September 1798. The Rebellion continued in Wicklow, first under Joseph Holt, until his surrender on 10th November 1798, and then under Michael Dwyer until 1803. The authorities regarded Wicklow as the most disturbed county in the country during the period August to November 1798 with over 400 houses burned.

The Wicklow men, once in New South Wales contributed to the development, expansion and prosperity of the fledgling colony; men such as Holt, Dwyer, Dempsey, Delaney, O'Neill, Byrne - Hugh Vesty and James. Today they are highly regarded by their descendants who honour their memory with pride and distinction.

The Military Road

After the 1798 Rebellion Michael Dwyer, the Chief of the Wicklow Rebels, roamed the hills and mountains freely and was a great cause of concern to the authorities. The road system in the west of the county was more or less as it is today with the road connecting Seven Churches or Glendalough with Hollywood over the Wicklow Gap. Another road went from the Glen of Imaal through Derrynamuck into Ballynabarny Gap. The Glen of Imaal and Glenmalure were also connected with the road over the Black Banks.

It was the lack of roads in the east of the county that hampered the free movement of troops attempting to rid the county of "banditties". It was decided that a road should be cut through "parts of the county which are infested by insurgent plunderers as the ready means of driving them from those places. A similar measure was adopted some years prior in the Highlands of Scotland when they were infested with the banditties and was the means of rooting them out and securing the peace of the country". Such was a report that appeared in "The Freeman's Journal" dated 10th June 1800. Another report in the same paper some days later carried a

proclamation made by Lieutenant Colonel George Stewart, Assistant Adjutant General "commanding his Majesty's Troops in the mountains of the County Of Wicklow":
"notice is hereby given that the mountain roads are now opened by the troops under my command. The possession of these roads, passes, and mountains will most effectually open the county, and enable me to protect the work by some of the people of the Glen".

In a written report made by Taylor, in July 1802, outlining the progression of the work to date on the Military Road, "*which is the direct communication between Dublin and Seven Churches*", he gave details of sections of the road being finished by contract. "*Four miles from where the soldiers' huts are placed towards Enniskerry are in a similar state, and five miles forward upon the road to Sally Gap and beyond it towards Seven Churches are nearly half finished. Upon the finish ten miles, there are 86 small bridges, sewers and water pavements required*".

By July of 1802 expenses of £9,000 had already been incurred and Taylor gave a rough estimate of costings of the remainder of the work which he believed would amount to approximately £24,661. The soldiers were to be paid one Shilling British per day while three supervising subaltern officers were to be paid five shillings a day. According to local folklore many of the people living in the mountain areas joined the troops in working on the roads and they were paid one penny per day. The wall at the top of the Glenmacanass Waterfall is reputed to have been originally built at this time.

Taylor also wrote:

"it will also enable the people to travel with safety to the mountains at all times, and to bring provisions to His Majesty's Troops there, who will pay the market price for it; and I will give immediate protection to any of the inhabitants who shall assist me, or any detachment of troops, in securing any of the gang of robbers headed by Michael Dwyer. Given under my hand at camp on Lugnaquilla Mountain, the 19th day of June 1800".

Once the Military Road was completed it was a natural progression to establish army barracks along its route and five such buildings were erected. "The Freeman's Journal" lists the following in a report on 3rd of March 1803: *At the Glen of Imaal there is to be a barrack for a field officer and 200 men; at Glenree a captain and 100; at Laragh (the Seven Churches) a captain and 100; at Glen Malour the same and at Aughavanna the same.*

Of the five barracks mentioned above only two are still in use today. Glenree is now the Reconciliation Centre, having acted as a reformatory school for many years earlier this century. Aughavanna is now an An Oige youth hostel and was at different times the shooting lodge of Charles Stewart Parnell and John Redmond. All that remains of Leitrim barracks in the Glen of Imaal is a chimney, while Drumgoff in Glenmalure has but four walls standing. Laragh barracks became a police barracks and was attacked and almost destroyed during the troubles earlier this century. It was rebuilt and is now a private residence.

The building of the Military Road proved to be very beneficial to the county, as it opened it up, allowing free access from Rathfarnham over to the west of the county and today it is a route that is used by many visitors to the county, both foreign and native, who marvel at the beauty that surrounds them.



WICKLOW GAOL UNIFORM BUTTONS

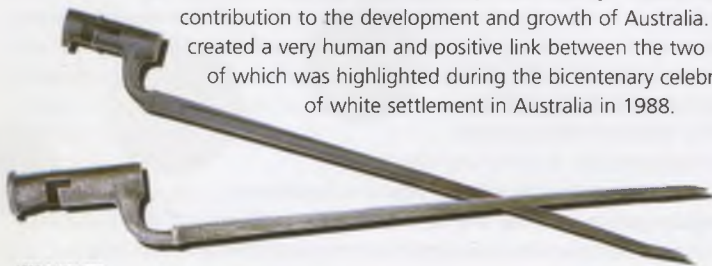
The 1798 Rebellion in County Wicklow

1798 is not just a year in the history of County Wicklow. It can be equated to a concept, for the Rebellion continued for five years after it had been suppressed elsewhere throughout Ireland.

With the defeat of the French in August 1798 it can be said that the Rebellion came to a close throughout the country. However, in Wicklow, the rebels, firstly under the command of General Joseph Holt and then Michael Dwyer from November 1798, remained in opposition to the government until 1803. Guerrilla warfare, raids, skirmishes and ambushes against government forces occurred during these five years, when Michael Dwyer was known as "The Wicklow Chieftain". The authorities in Dublin stated that Wicklow was "the most disturbed county in Ireland" at this time. Probably the most famous of Dwyer's escapades during these years was his escape from Derrynamuck in West Wicklow in February 1799.

The most permanent and concrete memorial to 1798 is the Military Road in the Wicklow mountains. This was built by the authorities in an effort to capture Michael Dwyer and his comrades-in-arms.

Through the country, approximately 30,000 people were killed in the course of the Rebellion. Many were executed for their involvement and circa 600 men were transported to the penal colony of New South Wales. Of that number at least 106 were Wicklow men; more men were transported from Wicklow than from any other county. These men made an enormous contribution to the development and growth of Australia. Their presence there created a very human and positive link between the two countries, the value of which was highlighted during the bicentenary celebrations of the origins of white settlement in Australia in 1988.



1798 BAYONETS

1998 will see the beginning of the commemorations to mark the bicentenary of this watershed in the history of our county and of our country. The Coiste Chill Mhantáin '98, the Wicklow '98 Committee, will acknowledge the fact that the Rebellion in Wicklow continued until Dwyer's surrender in 1803.

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WICKLOW'S HISTORIC GAOL WHERE MANY OF THE '98 REBELS WERE HELD

The 1798 Rebellion - why?

The late eighteenth century saw the culmination of a number of factors erupting into what has become one of the most turbulent and momentous events in Irish history. Although the Penal Laws were relaxed in the 1770s they still prevented Catholics from having equal rights with their fellow Protestants. The population doubled to five million in the last quarter of the century and this increased tension and competition for land, leading to agrarian unrest, the spread of secret societies and the establishment of the Orange Order. This period also saw the emergence of the societies and the establishment of the Orange Order. This period also saw the emergence of the Age of Enlightenment and the demand for independence - liberty, equality and fraternity - in America and France. This international influence spurred on the liberal element in the Irish parliament to press for legislative independence from the British parliament, thus halting the trade restrictions placed on Irish goods. The threat of a belligerent Volunteer force, founded to protect Ireland from Britain's enemy, France had the effect of gaining only apparent independence, with real control still remaining in London.

The founding of the Society of United Irishmen, in 1791 in Belfast, by young radicals, such as Wolfe Tone and Samuel Nielson, was an attempt to bring about "an equal representation of all the people in parliament", Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter (Presbyterian). Some concessions were made by parliament in an attempt to secure the loyalty of Catholics. However, due to increasing disquiet over the liberal and radical attitude of the Volunteers, the government suppressed this organisation in 1793, as so too the United Irishmen in 1794. This movement became a secret society in 1795 and Tone sought French aid, which arrived into Bantry Bay in December 1796, though was unable to land due to fierce storms. The government responded to this French threat with a "scorched earth" policy and established a network of spies. A reign of terror followed which only served to bring an already turbulent situation to boiling point. Despite the arrest of many of the Society's leaders, the Rebellion broke out on the night of the 23rd of May in Kildare and on the 24th of May in Wicklow.



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Calendar of Events