



Limerick man's family link to 'forgotten' hero of 1916 Devoy

■ Photographer David Hayes one of 5,000 invited guests at commemoration

NICK RABBITS AT THE GPO

A LIMERICK man who is descended from a man many describe as a significant figure in the 1916 Easter Rising was an invited guest at the Dublin commemoration.

Kileely man David Hayes is related to Clan Na Gael leader John Devoy through his great grandmother, Catherine Devoy.

A major fundraiser for the Easter Rising, John Devoy raised money for the rising from his base in the USA, while living in exile there. A 'Defence of Ireland' bond raised \$600,000, money which was used to buy German rifles and a shipment of arms on the captured Aud arms ship, said Bartle D'Arcy, who is curating the Revolution 1916 exhibition at the Ambassador Theatre in Dublin.

David Hayes, a photographer by trade, was one of 5,000 guests invited to Sunday's commemoration. He sat in a grandstand erected for descendants opposite the General Post Office, the heart of the 1916 Rising.

He said: "I was really proud to go there and represent John and be a witness to it all. I felt a great overwhelming sense of pride in my country, watching he military carry out its manouvres and seeing the president representing the Irish people. I really felt the emotion."

David described John Devoy as a "forgotten hero" of the seminal events of a century ago, pointing out that commander in chief Padraig Pearse said he was perhaps the greatest of all Fenians, something written on his headstone in the Republican plot at Glasnevin.

David wants to see perhaps a greater tribute paid, saying: "I don't see any streets called 'Devoy Street'."

"I am not looking for O'Connell Street to be renamed, but I'd like



David Hayes from Kileely, pictured outside the General Post Office in O'Connell Street. Inset, a picture of his ancestor, John Devoy

to see some recognition for him. He gave up on love, he gave up on his fiancée. He never married - if anything, he was married to the Irish cause."

Devoy is given a mention in the film which greets visitors to the Revolution 1916 exhibition, running at Dublin's Ambassador Theatre until October, alongside the Limerick-based figures in the rising, Con Colbert, Edward Daly and Sean Heuston.

Mr D'Arcy says John Devoy was

a "remarkable character", adding: "So important was his role is he is mentioned in the Proclamation".

He added that another less well-known anniversary taking place this year is that of the sailing of the ship Catalpha.

When John Devoy was in exile in America - where he founded Clan na Gael - as part of the 'Cuban Five' he organised a rescue of other exiled Fenians from Australia.

Taking up the story, Bartle

D'Arcy said: "A lot of the Fenians were sent to Australia and they were kept in bad conditions. John Devoy organised a rescue from America."

"He travelled on the whaling ship, the Catalpha. It landed at Freemantle [in Western Australia] on Easter Monday 1876. They managed to take the Fenians out of the camp, bring them on the ship, outrun the British naval gun boat, and they hoisted the American flag and dared them

not to shoot as it was going into international waters. It was a heroic and legendary Fenian activity."

David has long been proud of his connection to the Rising, and is delighted that his ancestor's role has been recognised in some quarters.

He said: "Within Ireland, if you were not involved in the political side of it, it would not be a name which clicks off the top of your head. Outside of Ireland, he was the most recognised leader."

'Proud' Eileen recalls father's Rising duties

FINTAN WALSH

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A KENNEDY Park woman has preserved awards that were given to her father for his efforts as a runner in the Easter 1916 Rising and the War of Independence.

Before Michael O'Flaherty, of Parnell Street, died in April 1982, he wanted his prized certificate and medals to be given to his "proud" daughter, Eileen Murphy.

The war runner received these awards by the Fianna Éireann chief of staff, Éamon Martin and the then President of the Irish Republic, Éamon de Valera, in 1921.

Eileen, 79, said that this was long before Michael was to become a star rugby player in Limerick. In 1928, Mr O'Flaherty was a member of the winning Young Munster team that famously took home the Bateman Cup.

Because Michael, born in 1904, was too young to bear arms in both the insurrection and the War of Independence, he was used to pass messages to and from different bases in Limerick, Ms Murphy said.

"He didn't think that, 100 years on, that he would be looking at it. But I got it

photocopied for my daughters and my sisters," she told the Leader, adding that her father had "never boasted" about participating in what he saw as Ireland's fight for freedom.

"The certificate was hung up when he got it. He hung it up next to his Young Munster photograph. I was most interested in the history, and before he died, he told my mother that I was to get his awards."

"I was delighted to hang it up on my wall for years. And I am so proud of him. I didn't realise, until I got married, how proud we were going to be of this in later years," she said.

Ms Murphy, who is a member of the Our Lady Queen of Peace choir in Janesboro, added that Michael was "a quiet, private man" and "a great father".

Though she said that she "never takes the certificate out of the house", she made an exception when she watched her grandchildren take part in St Munchin's College's reenactment of the 1916 Rising, on March 15.

Ms Murphy said that her five brothers and four sisters were "all very proud our father" when growing up.



Eileen Murphy shows off her father's cert given to him for his efforts, as a runner, in 1916 and War of Independence