

Bruree password signalled Rising

LAST TUESDAY WEEK, the huge collection of De Valera private papers covering the period 1916-21 was formally opened to the public at Brock House, Dublin, by An tAthair Fiachra O Ceallaigh, OFM, Provincial of the Franciscan Order. Historian Mainchin Seoighe on the role of Limerick in the papers.

When I was greeted and welcomed by An tAthair Fiachra O Ceallaigh, I remembered the first time I saw him, a little red-haired lad about two years my age. That was many years ago, when I spent a wonderful month of July in Carrigrohilly College, in West Clare, where his father, Seán O Ceallaigh (now 96, bail ó Dhia), one of the most remarkable and scholarly men I have ever met, was headmaster.

In his opening address An tAthair Fiachra described the papers as being "rich in new historical facts and insights into the character of Eamon de Valera himself and of his private and eminent complexes," and said that "confronting the trauma, the dangers, and the exceedingly difficult times throughout, historians must marvel at how many of these papers survived."

The Franciscans' consultant archivist, Breandán Mac Giolla-Chuille (former Keeper of the State Papers), then dealt with the scope and contents of the papers, which, he said, provided "a panorama of Irish history from the Rebellion of 1916 to the ratification of the Agreement between Ireland and Britain in January 1922."

The papers consisted of over 3,000 documents extending to more than 10,000 pages. This documentation, said An tUasal Mac Giolla-Chuille, shows, in particular, the ability of de Valera as a political strategist in his handling of the many curious and unofficial peace feelers in 1920-21.

"This newly available documentation," he continued, included all his papers dealing with the Peace Conference which led to the signing of the Treaty and all his papers dealing with his rejection of that Document No. 1 and with his attempt to promote Document No. 2 as a compromise acceptable to all parties." He confessed surprise how a letter from General Sir John Maxwell could be found among the papers.

De Valera had instructed that his vast collection of papers be put in the care of the Franciscans, and now that collection is housed in the Franciscan Institute of Celtic Studies and Historical Research, Dún Mhuire, Killiney, Co. Dublin, where they have been available for public viewing since 25 November.

When I sat at the table allocated to me in Dún Mhuire I found 13 separately bound volumes comprising the catalogue of all the 3,000 papers in the collection, each of which is carefully listed and described in the composite catalogue, which itself runs to over 500 pages. Even to flick fairly quickly through the thirteen volumes of the catalogue, noting documents, the originals of which I intended to consult later, took a couple of hours.

There is a letter from Irish Volunteer Headquarters, dated 11 March, 1915, from P. H. Pearse to de Valera informing him that he had formally been appointed Commandant of the 3rd Battalion of the Volunteers. The letter concluded by saying: "Can you attend a meeting of the four Battalion Commandants on Saturday evening next after the officer's lecture? There are several important matters that the Headquarters Staff wants to discuss with the Commandants."

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He was given her two sons' bodies for interment in ground that has been consecrated. The message further stated that "Prime Minister is of opinion request should be granted."

But military dictator Maxwell, was of a different opinion. A message dispatched by him at 7.10 p.m. on the day he received the War Office message said: "Most undesirable; Mrs. Pearse has already been refused by me. These graves will be turned by Irish sentimentality into the shrines of martyrs, and there will be a constant irritant in the country caused by annual processions, etc., to them."

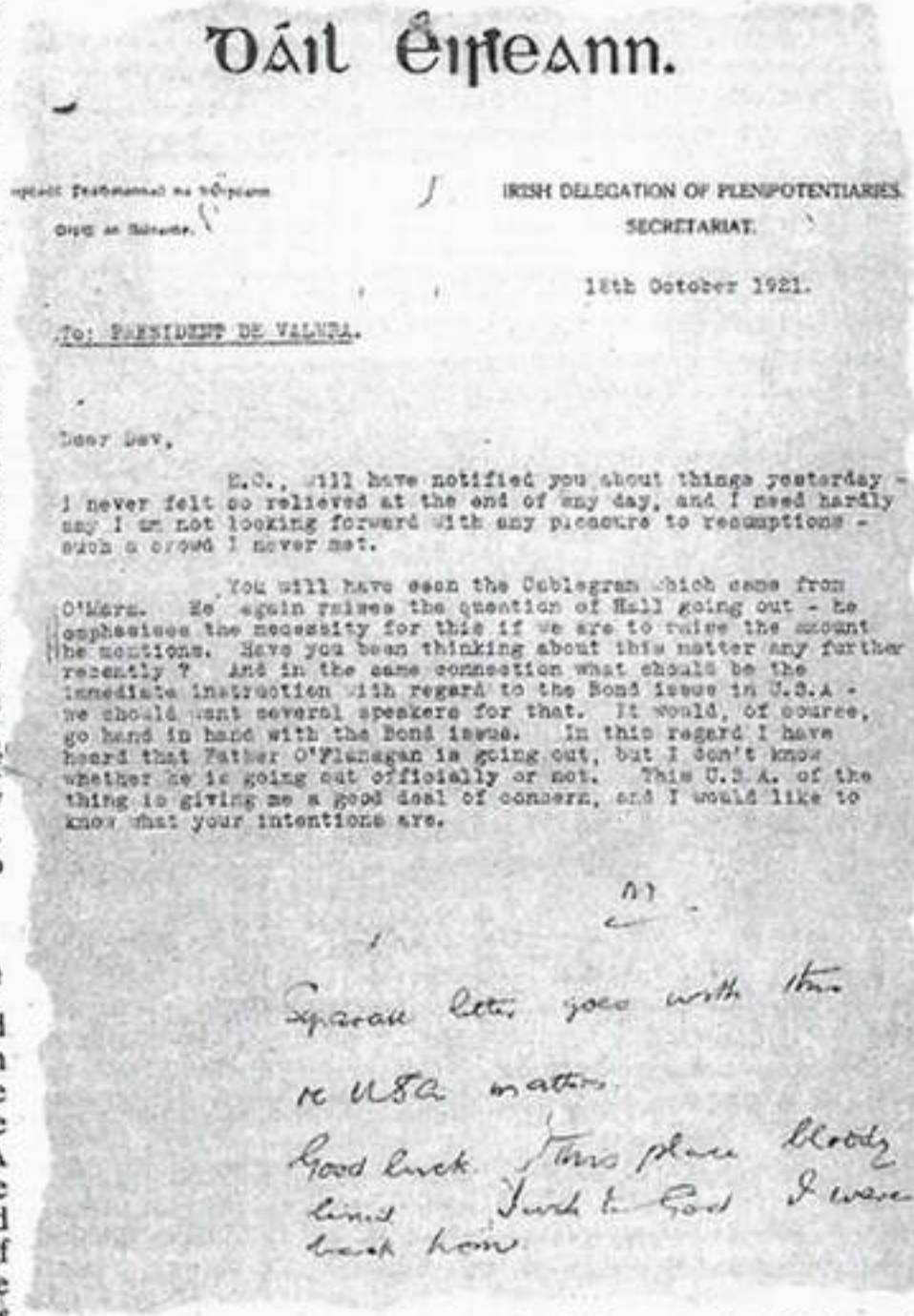
Incidentally, it was Prime Minister Asquith, who finally ordered Maxwell to cease from further executions, thereby saving the life of Eamon de Valera, who lay under sentence of death. Instead, he was sentenced to penal servitude for life.

Hearty welcome

Release for de Valera and his comrades, who had been lodged in English jails, came at the general amnesty in June 1917. A report headed "A Hearty Welcome — Mr. de Valera at Bruree," appeared in the *Limerick Leader* of Wednesday evening, June 27th, 1917, and a copy of this report is preserved in the de Valera papers. It reads:

"On Friday evening (writes our Kilmallock correspondent) Mr. Eamon de Valera visited Bruree, where he spent his boyhood, and was given a most enthusiastic reception. Contingents were present from Charleville, Kilfinane, Ballylanders, Galbally, Hospital, Bruff, Kilmallock and districts surrounding Bruree, while bands attended from Charleville and Kilfinane, and played a selection of airs. A procession was formed in which a number of young ladies took part, and there was a plentiful display of Republican flags. Outside the village Mr. de Valera was met by a large concourse of people, who greeted him in the most enthusiastic manner, while the renewal of old friendships was of the heartiest description.

"The horse was taken from under the car on which Mr. de Valera was seated, and it was drawn by a number of men. The procession then proceeded to the village where he thanked the people for the warmth of the reception, and recalled his early associations



A letter from Michael Collins to de Valera.

visit to Hospital aeraíocht on Sunday, 26th August, 1917. One of the addresses was from the Hospital (Sarsfield) Branch of the Gaelic League, the other from the Hospital Sinn Féin Club. The Gaelic League address began by saying:

"We, the undersigned members of the committee of the Hospital (Sarsfield) Connradh na Gaedhilge extend to you a hearty Céad Míle Fáilte on this the occasion of your visit to our Aeridheacht in the true cause of the Irish Language and Irish National Spirit

The address concluded as follows:

"You, Commandant de Valera, the people of Ireland will forever cherish in their memories your brave and spirited stand at the now famous Boland's Mills, and will cherish with joy and pride the 'Heroine of Stephen's Green', and you, also, the undaunted Sean Mac Garry, together with your other numerous brothers of the Irish

stake neither life nor liberty was taken into account."

Opposition

At first de Valera was opposed to the idea of the Volunteers contesting by-elections. While he was in Lewes Jail, following his deportation after the 1916 Rising, a by-election occurred in South Longford; and on hearing that Sinn Féin — as the Republican movement was by now generally known — was proposing to field a candidate, he made known his opposition in a letter sent secretly from the jail.

"Defeat," he said, "may well mean ruin, and to us defeat does not appear at all impossible... we are not willing to risk that which has been purchased by our comrades' blood should be lost on a throw with the dice loaded against us."

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opened not only the inner prison door of the prison but also the great back door of the prison. On his instructions Sean Milroy began to draw an innocent looking Christmas card to be sent out at Christmas 1918. This card showed what was obviously an inebriated man holding a large key (drawn to the exact measurements of the jail key) in his hand and vainly endeavouring to insert it in a much too small key hole. Under the drawing were the words: "Xmas 1917 — Can't get in."

Below the top picture was a drawing of the same character, this time shown in a prison cell, and under this drawing were the words: "Xmas 1918 — Can't get out." A holly spray and the words "Happy Xmas" completed the front design of the Christmas card.

Inside, however, written in Irish, in de Valera's neat handwriting, was a detailed description outlining the plans for escape! It began by saying that only this key in the picture stood between Dev and freedom — "Idir Debh agus saoirse níl ach an eochair seo" — and asked that a copy of the key be made and sent into the prison baked in a cake, with some files. Instructions were given as to where a car should be waiting, etc. After an initial failure, everything worked according to plan, and de Valera, Sean Milroy and Sean Mac Garry (to whose wife the card was sent) made their daring escape.

US visit

After his escape from jail de Valera went on a mission to America, where he remained from February 1919 to December 1920, in a ceaseless

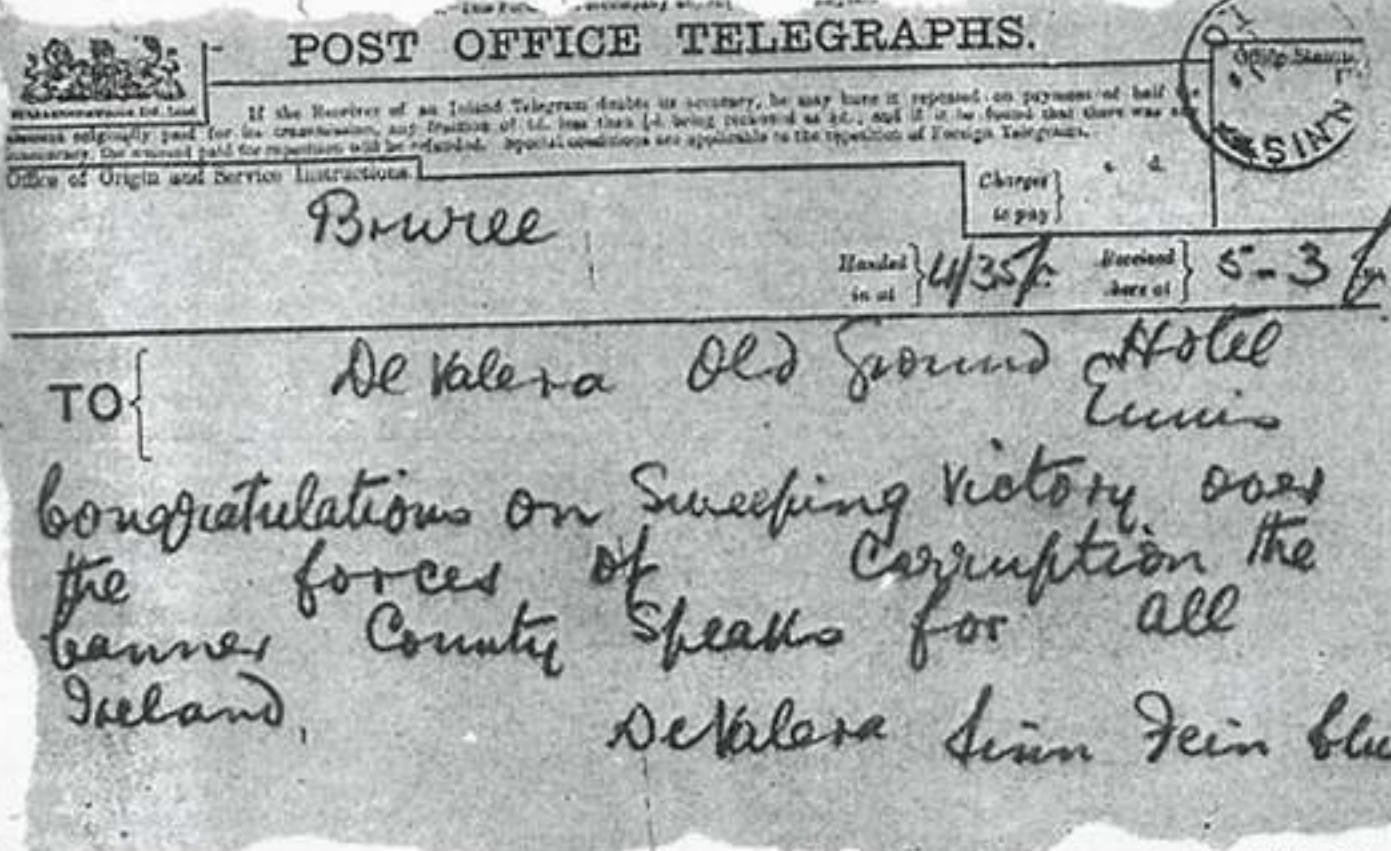
attempt to bring the strength of Irish American opinion to bear on President Wilson for the recognition of the Irish Republic. He also floated an external Dáil loan. A voluminous correspondence covers his time in the States.

Returning in December 1920 he returned to an Ireland in which the War of Independence had reached a white-hot intensity. By far the greater part of his papers cover the time from when the first indirect peace feelers began to come until the signing of the Treaty and its ratification by the Dáil on January 7th, 1922. The amount of material covering this fateful period is so huge that it would be utterly impossible to read through it all, analyse and draw conclusions from it in a mere day or two.

Even a cursory glance at some of the correspondence shows that it was an agonising time, especially for the two chief figures of the period, de Valera and Collins. Almost up to the last they seem to have been very close to, and understanding of, each other. Frequently Collins addresses de Valera in the letters as "Dear Dev". In one such letter from London, headed Irish Delegation of Plenipotentiaries, Secretariat, and dated 12th October, 1921, Collins began by saying: "E.C. (Erskine Childers) will have notified you about things yesterday — I never felt so relieved at the end of any day, and I need hardly say I am not looking forward with any pleasure to resumptions — such a crowd I never met." At the foot of the letter, penned in Collins's own handwriting, is the following: "Good luck. This place bloody limit. I wish to God I were home."

A poignant wish! I will conclude by mentioning another item of Limerick interest in the de Valera papers. It is a photograph taken at Strand House, Limerick, 6th December 1921, the day the Treaty was signed — de Valera had just heard by telephone of the signing. In the group, apart from de Valera, are Mrs. Rynne, Michael Rynne, Stephen O Mara, Richard Mulcahy and Cathal Brugha.

I would like to express my mhíle buíochas to Breandán Mac Giolla-Chuille and Liam Ó Lonnargáin for their unflinching helpfulness, kindness and courtesy while I was researching the papers in Dun Mhuire, and to Una who made the photocopies I required.



A telegram from Bruree Sinn Féin to de Valera after he won the Clare by-election.

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Republican Army. "Thank God the cause of Ireland is looking bright when the people of the Gael shall once again converse in their

since Easter Week, especially since the executions. So he was being cautious. As it was, the South Longford by-election was won by the Sinn

Reducing the angst in career choice!

By A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Third level course selection has been described as an additional "hidden" subject by leading career guidance counsellor, Raymond Dunne.

Commenting at the launch of his Third Level Guide for School Leavers, *Applying to College In 1992* which took place in Cavan last week, Mr. Dunne said that finding time to research and indeed to locate information on these courses is probably the biggest pressure Leaving Certificate students will face this term. Such a career decision, he continued should not be rushed, based on incomplete information or left to the last minute.

Son of Limerickman honoured

Thomas Madigan, Jr., student at Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island, has earned a place on the Dean's List for outstanding achievement during the semester ending December, 1990.

Providence College, founded in 1917, has an enrolment of over 6,000 students. The entire student body competes for the Dean's List, something well worth aspiring to, but it eludes all but a select few.

Mr. Madigan's father, Thomas, a native of Castlemaheon, Co. Limerick, is a member of the Limerickman's Benevolent and Social Association, N.Y., served as president for two years, and is active in the GAA, River Edge, N.J., where he lives.

Fined £20 for bald tyres

A LIMERICK garage owner charged with having two bald tyres told Judge Michael Reilly at Cappamore Court that she was just bringing the car back to the garage when the offence was detected. Monica Holmes, of APT-KI, Dublin Road, was fined £20.

Garda J. Somers said that last March 28 he went to a traffic accident at Castlerkin, Pallasgreen, and found a vehicle there with two excessively worn tyres, one at the front and the other at the rear. He said he couldn't recall if there was a thread on the tyres, but added: "To me they were very badly worn."

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CLASSIFIES COURSES

Applying To College In 1992 classifies all the courses in the new CAO/CAS application system under the following study categories: Art and Design, Building Business/Commerce, Computer, Engineering, General, Hotel, Catering and Tourism Management, Medical and Para Medical, Science and Technology. For the first time this highly popular Guide includes information on UCCA and PCAS, Nursing, PLC's, CERT, Apprenticeships, Agricultural and Horticultural

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A later note by de Valera, attached to the letter, says: "I think that was the meeting at which I was told what would happen. At that, too, I got the password 'Bruree'."

In another note he tells how on the Wednesday of Holy Week, 1916, he was cycling from Dawson Street to Donnybrook, when:

"About opposite to 29 Lower Baggot Street, youngweeney—a boy at St. Enda's—who was riding a bicycle in opposite direction, jumped off and ran across the road to me. He gave me a note and said 'Howth'. I answered 'Bruree' and took it. It was the instruction agreed upon. Easter Sunday was to be the day. From that moment I began to get ready."

Eoin Mac Neill's countermanding of the orders issued for Easter Sunday 1916 meant that there was no action that day. But Pearse and his comrades, unknown to Mac Neill, decided that the Rising would go ahead the following day. De Valera tells in one of his papers that at 5 p.m. on Easter Sunday the decision to rise the following day was conveyed to him. He marched to the fight next day, and in doing so marched into Irish history.

The Rising took the British by surprise in more ways than one, for in a letter in the de Valera papers we find General Sir John Maxwell telling Lord French that "the fighting qualities so far displayed by the rebels gives evidence of better training and discipline than they have been credited with..."

In another document we find Countess Markievicz saying at her trial by court-martial: "We dreamed of an Irish Republic and thought we had a fighting chance."

Limerick arrests

The papers also contain the text of a telegram sent by the Mayor of Limerick, Stephen Quinn, to the Lord-Lieutenant, on the 7 May, 1916, suggesting that any arrests of volunteers in Limerick might disturb the peaceful state of the city. The telegram had no effect, and the arrests of volunteers followed.

There is a poignant cipher message from the War Office to General Maxwell (who authorised the executions of the 1916 leaders). It is dated 1 May, 1916, and states that Mr. Dillon, MP, had asked on behalf of Mrs. Pearse that she

visited Bruce, where he spent his boyhood, and was given a most enthusiastic reception. Contingents were present from Charleville, Kilfinane, Ballylanders, Galbally, Hospital, Bruff, Kilmallock and districts surrounding Bruree, while bands attended from Charleville and Kilfinane, and played a selection of airs. A procession was formed in which a number of young ladies took part, and there was a plentiful display of Republican flags. Outside the village Mr. de Valera was met by a large concourse of people, who greeted him in the most enthusiastic manner, while the renewal of old friendships was of the heartiest description.

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Details are given on the 1992 entry requirements, application and acceptance procedures, Matriculation examinations, points systems, course content and options for all the courses on offer in the Institutes—Universities, DIT, RTC's CoACT, etc.

Information on grants and other sources of financial help is also outlined.

They book, which should ease the pressure and anxiety on parents and students alike, is available from bookshops or directly from Undergraduate Publications Ltd., Rock Cross, Cavan. Price £6 + £1.20 p.p.

Arts and Crafts fair at City Hall

THERE WILL be an arts and crafts fair in the city hall on December 8. Organised by the Community Arts Project, it will run from 2 to 6pm.

"There is a wealth of artistic talent in Limerick," said organiser Joan MacKernan, project co-ordinator, "and this fair will not only be a good opportunity for crafts people to display their wares, but it will also heighten the awareness of the general public to the excellent art and craft industry that there is in Limerick."

Joan pointed out that it was not too late for artists or crafts people to have a stand in the fair. Anyone interested should contact Joan at 415799.

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Monica Holmes said that she had only got the car that evening and was bringing it to the garage. "I checked the tyres. They were worn, but I didn't think they were that bad," she said.

Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage to Knock on Sunday, December 8. Buses leave Knock Shrine Bureau, Bedford Row, at 9.15 am. Pilgrimage will be led by Rev. Fr. Peter Doyle, O.F.M. Tickets on sale at Bureau now. Tel. 419458.

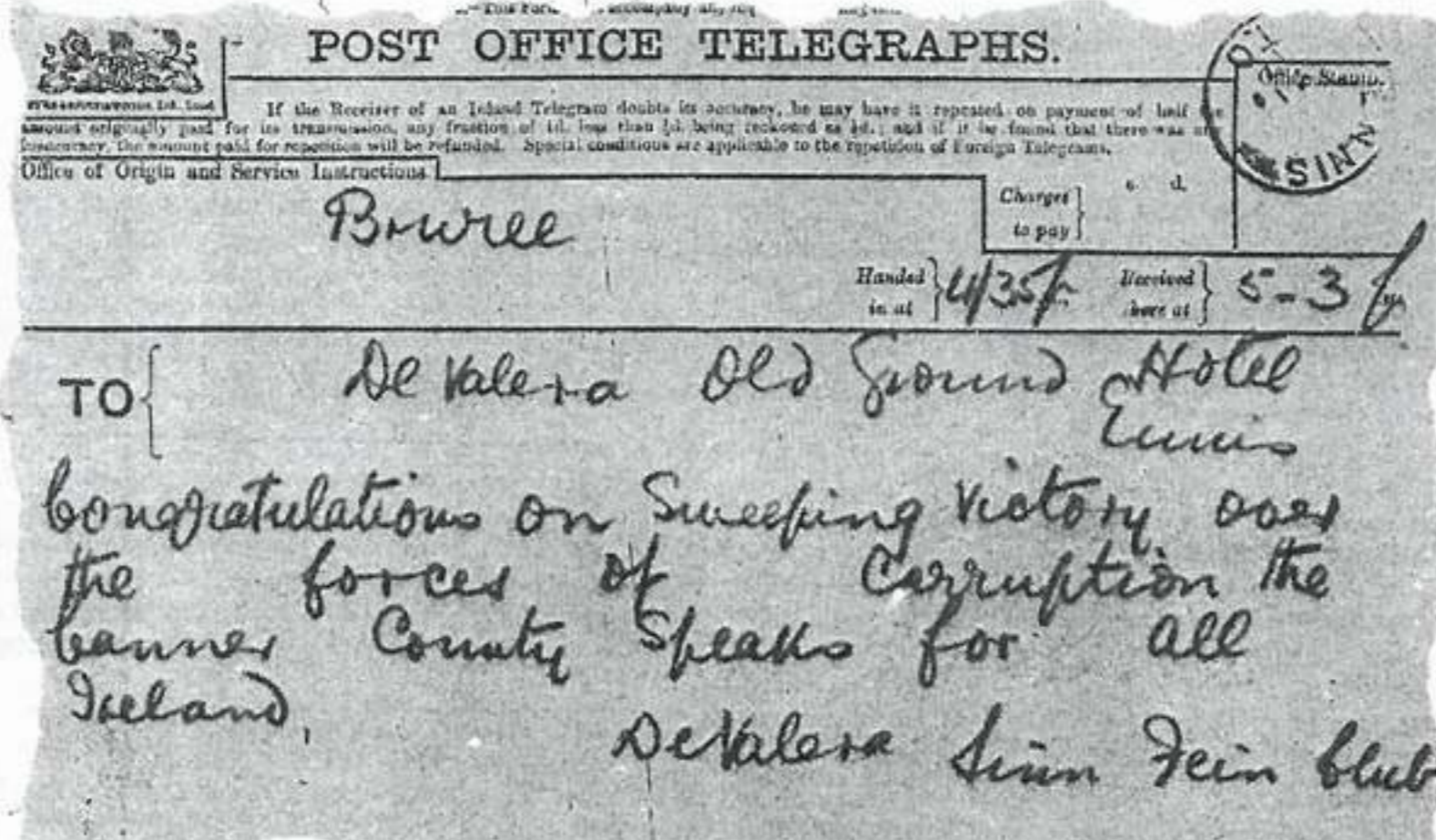
Advertisement of Cancellation

Name of Society:
LIMERICK COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS SOCIETY LIMITED

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Registrar of Friendly Societies has, pursuant to the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts, 1893 to 1978, this day CANCELLED the REGISTRY of the Limerick Community Communications Society Limited (reg. No. 4504 R), held at Social Service Centre, Henry Street, in the County of Limerick, at its request.

The Society (subject to the right of appeal given by the said Acts) ceases to enjoy the privileges of a registered Society, but without prejudice to any liability incurred by the Society, which may be enforced against it as if such cancelling had not taken place.

Dated the 19th day of November.
Paul Harrington for Registrar of Friendly Societies. (f30c)



A telegram from Bruree Sinn Féin to de Valera after he won the Clare by-election.

with the place. He then delivered a lengthy and stirring address, which was punctuated with applause at frequent intervals. Mr. Joseph Gaffney, Kilmallock, also spoke. Mr. Smyth presided. The houses in the village were illuminated."

I was a little amused to find appended to the *Limerick Leader* report on the Bruree visit, two short notes in Irish, which I had sent to President de Valera several years ago when he asked me for any information I had on the Joseph Gaffney and the Mr. Smyth mentioned in the reports.

In my notes I told him that Joseph Gaffney, of Kilmallock, came of strongly nationalist stock; that his father, Nicholas Gaffney, was an active Fenian; that his great grandfather was a United Irishman; and that his mother was a Hawthorne, member of that family in whose house in Kilmallock the famous Gaelic poet, Aindrias Mac Craith, had died in 1795, and in whose grave in the local cemetery he had been buried.

Regarding the Mr. Smyth who had presided at the meeting, I told him he was John A. Smyth, a farmer, of Rathany, Hospital, Co. Limerick, and that he had received a classical education in Bruff, and that in later life he read the Greek and Latin classics as a past time. As well, I told him that John A's son, who now lived in the old homestead, had assumed the Irish form of his name, and was known as Donncha Mac Gabhann, and was bringing up an Irish-speaking family.

A number of documents relating to Hospital are deposited in the Killiney archives. There are addresses of Welcome presented to de Valera and his colleagues, Countess Markievicz and Sean Mac Garry on the occasion of their

Republican Army. "Thank God the cause of Ireland is looking bright when the people of the Gael shall once again converse in their own native tongue in a free Ireland."

"In conclusion we sincerely hope and pray that God may spare each of you life and strength to see the flag, under which you so nobly fought, fluttering in the breeze in a free and unfettered Ireland."

The address was signed by: An Bráthair Alban, Uachtarán; Séamus Ua Dabheirn, Leas Uachtarán; Seoirse Ó Dubháin, Cisteoir; Séamus Ó Mártain, Rúnaidhe; Tomás Breathnach, An Bráthair Allilid, Seághan Ó Dubháin, Seághan Ó Cearbhaill (Lodge), Seághan Ó Mártain, Brighid Ní Riain.

It will be noticed that the form "Seághan"—which one meets occasionally in the early years of this century—was used by a number of the signatories in place of the usual "Seán". Two of the signatories were De La Salle Brothers.

The Hospital Sinn Féin Club address of welcome, which was signed by Sean O Carroll, V.P., P. Burke (a second initial illegible) and Tomás Breathnach, Rúnaidhe, in expressing its admiration for Commandant de Valera, said: "You were foremost in the battle and the last to leave the field on the never to be forgotten glorious Easter Week of 1916..."

To Countess Markievicz it said: "You, the Countess Markievicz, we hail as the 'Joan of Arc of Ireland'..." Finally, it said: "And you, Sean Mac Garry, we welcome as an undaunted unflinching fighting Lieutenant in the struggle against overwhelming odds you proved to the world that when the freedom of Ireland was at

since Easter Week, especially since the executions. So he was being cautious. As it was, the South Longford by-election was won by the Sinn Féin candidate, Joseph Mac Guinness, even if only by a handful of votes.

De Valera's decision, after some reluctance, to contest the East Clare by-election of 1917 was one of the most momentous decisions of his life. The election took place on the 11th July, 1917, and de Valera, symbol of a new, resurgent Ireland, defeated his Irish Party opponent by 5,010 votes to 2,035. It was a resounding victory, and it meant that de Valera the soldier was now on the road to becoming de Valera the politician and de Valera the Statesman. From his home town, Bruree, the local de Valera Sinn Féin Club sent a telegram of congratulations, the original of which is preserved among the Killiney papers: "De Valera Old Ground Hotel Ennis. Congratulations on sweeping victory over the forces of corruption. The Banner County speaks for all Ireland. De Valera Sinn Féin Club."

In May 1917 de Valera and scores of Republican leaders were arrested in connection with the so-called "German Plot" and deported to England where they were imprisoned without charge or trial. De Valera was lodged in Lincoln Jail from where he made a sensational escape on 3rd February, 1919. A book could be written about the escape, drawing on the material in the de Valera papers. The means by which he proposed to get out of prison were drawn up by de Valera himself.

Somehow, he managed to get his hands on one of the warder's keys, and measured it very accurately. He also discovered that this key