



**Interview of Paddy Ruane
of Carnmore**

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Interviewers: Brona Gallagher & Sharon Kearney

Age: --

Paddy	I go to Bettystown every third Sunday in June for the Republican Commemoration.
Brona	<i>Could you tell us about Tom Ruane and the involvement of Claregalway in the Rising and how come it was mainly that Dublin was involved and someone cancelled the message?</i>
Paddy	The message came to Liam Mellows. He was executed in 1922. Tom broke down with bad health, Pleurisy in England in Scrubs prison at that time. He was in prison twice and he was there again in 1918. It was known as the so-called German plot. He happened to be one that was arrested and that's where he spent a long time. He was in the internment camp then. Tom heard talk of the IRB. My father was one of the organisers of that and he used to go out getting people sworn into it. It was a very good organisation. IRB stood for the Irish Republican Brotherhood it was supposed to be the best organisation. It meant that if anyone was in trouble the others wouldn't let him down. Tom Ruane was a native of Carnmore, Oranmore. The IRB was formed in 1908. Tom was Captain of Claregalway Senior Team from 1908 to 1914, exchanged from hurley to the gun. 1916, he was in Moyode with the Galway Brigade under the command of Liam Mellows, and when disbanded he went on the run. He was captured in Barra, Moycullen, he was hiding in an island on Lough Corrib. His wife Annie wrote him a letter on Friday night and had it in her handbag. Two RIC policemen took the handbag from her in Galway and the letter which stated where he was hiding. He was just in for his breakfast when a lorry load of British soldiers and two Crossley tenders captured him in Bohan's house Barra, Moycullen and took him to the police station in Galway and later he was deported to the internment camp in Frangoch, Wales, where he spent ten months. Arrested again in 1918. Gaoled in Wormwood Scrubs and later in Winson Green Prison, Birmingham, for the so-called German plot. He was again on the run from the Black and Tans and had many narrow escapes, and was in many a hide out. There was a reward of £1,000 for his capture. The door of the house was broken down on a few occasions. He took the Republican side in 1920 and remained faithful to his death on 31st August 1937, aged 53 years. His health was never the same after the hardships of the Black and Tan war. His rank was Vice Brigadier, 2 nd Western Division of the IRA. He was elected as a Sinn Féin member of Galway County Council and was chairman of the Finance Committee.
Brona	<i>How did he get involved so deeply in the IRB?</i>
Paddy	He was one of the organisers, he was with Stephen Jordan of Athenry, Mattie Niland of Kilcolgan, living that time.
Brona	<i>How was this area so involved as opposed to other areas, was it because of Liam Mellows in Athenry?</i>
Paddy	Yes, Liam Mellows was sent to look after the Galway Brigade. He was chairman of the Claregalway Hurling Club from 1908-1914. When he retired and that's when they formed the IRA and it was an exchange from the hurley to the gun. Most of the people who were attached to the Claregalway Hurling Club, all joined up in the movement up to about 40-50 from this parish at that time.

Brona	<i>Where did they have meetings?</i>
Paddy	In Claregalway, in the old school.
Brona	<i>Would they have been in secret?</i>
Paddy	Yes.
Brona	<i>How would they cover up? Would the RIC not know?</i>
Paddy	Oh yes, of course, they used to be after them.
Brona	<i>They didn't have meetings in the Turlough in Kiltulla. I heard that.</i>
Paddy	No, where they used to be is in Kileen Castle, Kiltulla, Claregalway
Brona	<i>Where's that?</i>
Paddy	You know McHugh's pub on the Galway-Tuam road, an old pub in Castlegar. They used to do their training there in Kileen.
Brona	<i>Would they have used hurley sticks?</i>
Paddy	No, rifles.
Brona	<i>Is it true that they used to make plans while on the hurling pitch?</i>
Paddy	Yes, that's where they used to meet. There used to be one at Castlegar and another in the next parish? Turloughmore, Oranmore. They were very closely meshed together.
Brona	<i>What looked like an innocent game of hurling was really their plans for the 1916 rising?</i>
Paddy	They did, as you said, use hurley sticks at the start.
Brona	<i>Where did they get the rifles?</i>
Paddy	I couldn't tell you that. There's the lads that were executed in Tuam. At the time the Bishop of Galway died, while they were in Galway jail and he had said that he wouldn't allow anyone to be executed in the diocese so they were executed in the Tuam diocese.
Brona	<i>They would have been involved in the Civil War or the War of Independence?</i>
Paddy	That's where they were captured now in the Civil War. We had an unveiling ceremony in 1975
Brona	<i>Was Liam Mellows shot by the Free Staters?</i>
Paddy	Yes he was.
Brona	<i>Claregalway didn't really play a part in the Civil War, did they? There wasn't as much bitterness as in other parts of the country.</i>
Paddy	No Corrandulla. They had a big group there. They took part in the ambush of Headford Barracks and that's why they were captured and executed, shot in Tuam in the old Workhouse. There was a fella there, Mc Cormack. He was shot in the Headford Ambush, he lost his hand and died a few years later. (Book) – There's the Loughnane brothers from "Seanaghuigh"

Brona	<i>That's right, they were near Kilcolgan or somewhere wasn't it?</i>
Paddy	Yea, farther on now.
Brona	<i>They were thrown into a well, is it?</i>
Paddy	They were thrown into a lake first and they were burned and they were captured. There was an old thrashing machine and one of them was outside driving the horses around and he was captured and the other brother, the two of them were taken, he had a sister, a nun and she walked all the police barracks around kicking the doors asking where they were. They were three weeks before they were found. They have a nice memorial on the way near Ardahan.
Brona	<i>What about the fella, I forgot his name? He was shot and taken to the infirmary in Prospect Hill and some nurse squealed where he was. She was going out with an RIC man and they just got him out in time, who was he?</i>
Paddy	He was Charles Quinn from Claregalway. He was in the Kilroe Ambush. The Kilroe Ambush was held within two miles of Headford and in that ambush – the meeting they had beforehand said it would be all single men that would take part. I think it's 24, that was it – the Tans in the lorries they ambushed and all that was in it was two men with rifles and this man called Charles Quinn had a revolver. So when they held up the lorry, the road was blocked, the Tans motto was to jump out straight away and go under the lorry with their machine guns. But Mike Newell from Castlegar, he was there and he had a hand grenade and he fired it in the hope that he'd put it into the centre of the lorry and what happened it fell over the other side of the wall and knocked the wall in on top of the other men and they were exposed to the Tans. They had to retreat and take more cover. He was wounded, Charles Quinn. He was a captain in the army. My father was Vice Brigadier of the 2 nd Western Division. They got a message that the Tans were away in the south – Tipperary, Cork and Galway West. They were ambushed in Cork in Kilmichael and they killed all the Tans that time. There's a song about that.
Brona	<i>And who else was involved in that ambush?</i>
Paddy	James Duggan from Montiagh. He worked for years in the boiler house. My father was on the Sinn Fein Council and he got a lot of them working in there.
Brona	<i>Where was this boiler house?</i>
Paddy	In the hospital in Galway, not the Regional.
Brona	<i>Merlin Park?</i>
Paddy	Ah no, the infirmary, I suppose. And there was another fella and he was driving an ambulance – Tom Duggan, a brother of his. He died recently. He was caretaker in the county buildings. He was from Claregalway. Pat O'Brien, Claregalway, and the Lallys, Peter Lally was an agent? He took the shop of Kileen castle.
Brona	<i>What part of Claregalway were the Lally's from?</i>
Paddy	Carnmore, just beside the airport. Four brothers that was in it.
Brona	<i>Are they all dead now?</i>
Paddy	Yes, two of them died in New Zealand. There was a Fox in Carnmore too, he died in New Zealand and Martin Grealish, "Rock" Grealish, he's at Carnmore, at the cross. The first RIC man to die in Ireland that was shot, was shot at Carnmore Cross.

Brona	<i>Can you tell me what happened there?</i>
Paddy	Well Castlegar and Claregalway, the two battalions were to meet.
Brona	<i>This is going back to 1916 now?</i>
Paddy	Yes, 1916. They were to meet at Carnmore cross. In the meantime as the Claregalway men were just arriving an RIC man was coming investigating on a bicycle and he was shot at the cross.
Brona	<i>So it would have been Liam Mellows that would have given the orders for them to meet?</i>
Paddy	Yes, they were under Liam Mellows orders. They were in Moyode then, a place near Craughwell. Did you hear about that?
Brona	<i>We did yeah.</i>
Paddy	And there was a fella there, he was a butcher and he used to kill cattle and they'd eat them.
Brona	<i>That's how they lived? Were they travelling to Moyode when they met at Carnmore cross?</i>
Paddy	No, they travelled afterwards. You may be right in saying that because they would have to fairly ship it because the RIC and the British army would be after them straight away. They could be on their way there and to Moyode. They spent a term in Moyode and they were waiting there for orders to come from Dublin and they were told the morning of the Rising in Dublin (1916). Liam Mellows was a Wexford man but he was sent to Galway to take charge of the Galway brigade.
Brona	<i>So Moyode was going to be the pulse point of the Rising in Galway, was it?</i>
Paddy	It was.
Brona	<i>And Carnmore cross was more or less an accident?</i>
Paddy	Well he just came the way (RIC). They knew he used to come that way. I don't know the barracks he was from, would it be the city or Loughgeorge barracks.
Brona	<i>Whelan was his name, wasn't it?</i>
Paddy	Yes, Whelan. There was an old lady at the cross and she had very bad English and the RIC man asked her who killed old Whelan. I don't know if it was Whelan or McGoldrick. There was McGoldrick shot there too. And what she said was who killed yourself, she wasn't able to talk much. They used to terrorise people. They used to raid our home, they wasn't born the same time 1920, I was born. But I used to hear my grandmother saying that she used to argue with them. And what they told her, he said don't worry what we'll do to your son is what we did to Lou Darcy. We'll tie and pull him after the lorry. That's what they did to Lou Darcy when he was captured at Oranmore station. He was taken to Oranmore barracks and he gave a false name when he was captured and when he came in the sergeant of the barracks said, "No, that's Darcy". So they beat him black and blue and the following morning they tied him with ropes to the lorry and they dragged him all the way to Merlin Park wood. They cut the ropes then and left him there.
Brona	<i>And what rank was Darcy?</i>
Paddy	I don't know what rank he held, but on his way to Dublin he was captured.

Brona	<i>And when was your father captured then, in 1918 again?</i>
Paddy	He was captured here in the house. Yes, there weren't many arrests at that time, a lot of them had gone. Ten months he was in Scrubs and in Frankock internment camp. They had an internment camp in 1923 in the area and friends of mine were in the area Paddy Fox from Carnmore, he was there in 1940.
Brona	<i>He'd have been a Republican then?</i>
Paddy	Yes, he was with the Republican side always. And Mike Hughes of Kilbannon, outside Tuam. All the Walshes of the Old Malte house, Galway. There was Mick and Paddy and Bill, they were interred.
Brona	<i>Were they from Claregalway?</i>
Paddy	No, they were all from Galway City. The Walshes, the old Malte house, they used to call it in High Street.
Brona	<i>What about Martin Cadhain, did you know him?</i>
Paddy	He taught me for about one year at school.
Brona	<i>And was your father dead before he was in the area?</i>
Paddy	My father died in 1937 and he was there that time.
Brona	<i>Did he associate with your father a lot?</i>
Paddy	He did of course, they were great friends. He was a Republican you know.
Brona	<i>Yeah, that's why he was thrown out.</i>
Paddy	Yeah, it was the parish priest Canon Moran and the bishop of Galway that fired him.
Brona	<i>Canon Moran was involved in all these movements but did he die down like De Valera in the '40's and '30s?</i>
Paddy	He died in 1946.
Brona	<i>Yes, but did he renounce the IRA in the '30s and '40s the way De Valera did?</i>
Paddy	He did, he was a great friend of De Valera and he used to come to Claregalway, making a speech and he was a mostly Irish speaker but at the time he was a friend of the Tans and he used to stay nights in Lydican with Greated.
Brona	<i>With Greated?</i>
Paddy	Yes, with Greated. Lydican then was a big big farm. In later years I suppose in 1924 the local people got small holdings. They burned down the castle and the big house.
Brona	<i>Those local people would they have done it for political reasons or for land?</i>
Paddy	They did it to get the land. The land was divided, it was nothing to do with Greated, there was nothing wrong with him. They're still alive, the younger part of the family in Co. Wexford, my nephew Michael Leonard was travelling around – he's a teacher in Galway and he went when he saw that name on a telephone directory. He was passing there, he used to write a lot of books and things himself.
Brona	<i>So they're enjoying life down in Wexford, are they?</i>
Paddy	They are.

Brona	<i>Would they be wealthy now?</i>
Paddy	I don't know that, but they're happy enough. There was one of them there that time, a young lad of about 5 years, and he was taken out to safety first and the rest all left, they were told to go.
Brona	<i>So there was no-one injured?</i>
Paddy	No-one injured.
Brona	<i>So even though it happened in troubled times, it was political but would it have been tied in with the Land Commission?</i>
Paddy	It would, they divided the land in later years. You're talking about Montaigh. There was four to five from Montaigh in the movement that time. There was a fella there named Concannon, he was a great Irish speaker. Lallys have it on tape at Carnmore cross. There was four of them. Rita Lally was married to Feeney from two mile ditch and Feeneys uncle, Father Feeney from Castlegar, he was leading there, he was like a chaplain, he was with them in Moyode, there's a song about Father Feeney in their midst with green and gold on high, they struck the road from Moyode the old IRA. That was a song that was made up afterwards.
Brona	<i>How was your father captured in 1916?</i>
Paddy	He was staying on an island and he was on the run. He was sowing the corn and his workmen happened to look up and two fields away he could see four to five Tans and showed 20 to my father. They used to come down, they used to sneak in across from the road, across fields and they came down and asked him where did the man go who was in the field. He said he didn't see any man in the field and at the time, lucky enough, my mother came with the tea and he said it might be the woman herself bringing me the tea. So they beat him up anyway and they fired shots and the two horses ran away with the harrow, but he escaped on that occasion.
Brona	<i>So who was the man that got beaten up?</i>
Paddy	Pat Henilly, he died, he was from Annaghdown.
Brona	<i>So did he escape to Moycullen after that?</i>
Paddy	Yes, that was 1920. He was in Moycullen. You see they took the letter from my mother's handbag and it was addressed to Bohans house, in a place called Curna.
Brona	<i>So in 1916 he was found in Lough Corrib, in 1918 they came to the Lough and in 1920 they came to the field but he got away that time.</i>
Paddy	They came to the house several times, he got a message one night that they were coming, however, he got it they had their own secret service, and lucky enough, he wasn't there. Two lorries came, they surrounded the house and broke down the door. They gave them no time at all to open the door. They used to have sledges and pikes in the lorries for breaking down doors.
Brona	<i>So they (Black and Tans) came in 1919, was it?</i>
Paddy	I'd say early 1920
Brona	<i>But the troubles started up in 1919 and they decided to send reinforcements around that time?</i>
Paddy	Yes.

Brona	<i>So in the Republican movement, 1922 the civil war afterwards was he involved in that?</i>
Paddy	No, there wasn't anyone from around here. There was no Free Stater in the parish of Claregalway and there was no Free State soldiers. No-one joined because they'd be outnumbered 40/1. But the other end of the parish did they were got into the North Galway Brigade. They'd be from Headford, Martin Moylan from Tuam, an Annaghdown, there was a song about him, he was executed in Tuam. There was four of them executed in Athlone. They were all buried in the Republican plot.
Brona	<i>They were executed by the Free Staters?</i>
Paddy	Yes, they were. There was some of them supposed to be local too. There's a monument in the centre of Oranmore and Loughnanes were from "Seanaghlish" in Gort. There was a man also, Martin Kildee from Woodlawn, he was executed. Michael Nolan from Tuam, he was shot by the police in Tuam. There was a Patrick Cloonan, he was from Oranmore and Louie Darcy was shot in Oranmore and had taken after a lorry. Thoman Quilan Galway, was executed in Mountjoy prison.? There was a Whelan, I remember, he was executed along that road, it might be him at Carnmore cross, I thought it was McGoldrick. He was shot down there too.
Brona	<i>Do you know the Phoenix Park murderers in 1882 Well a fella by the name of Burke, he was secretary general of Ireland and I heard that he might be one of the Burke crowd in Claregalway.</i>
Paddy	I never heard it. I followed up as much as I could. I used to meet up with some of the men in later years. There used to be firing parties at their friends. They used to do it locally for a while. They'd have it a few nights after the funeral.
Brona	<i>Did you ever hear of Michael Davitt visiting Claregalway at the meetings?</i>
Paddy	Yeah, I heard about that but, I wouldn't be able to make any comment about it. That's a long time ago.
Brona	<i>Yeah, 19th century, a 100 years ago or more. Just going away from politics for a minute, could you tell me something about the races at Loughgeorge and did ye have horses? It wasn't a very formal race meeting was it?</i>
Paddy	No, it was mostly work horses, farmer's horses. All I know about it was my father used to have strapper races in Swinford, Oughterard and Scariff in Clare. They'd be half trained, half fed horses and my father had two of them and he called them the Rebel and Cowboy. Cowboy was a great horse – he won the Swinford plate. He used to take them to Mayo, sometimes walking. They used to walk to Oughterard for that race meeting. He used to have greyhounds afterwards. He called one of them Winson Green because he was in Winson Green prison. He had them for coursing. I don't think that there was much track at that time. He had another one called Scrubs, called after Wormwood Scrubs. He had three brood mares as well. He had one, 'The March Away', and I can't remember the names of the other one.
Brona	<i>And he won a few things?</i>
Paddy	Oh, a good few, yes.
Brona	<i>Was there any big trophies?</i>
Paddy	I'm not sure of that, I didn't see any of them in the house anyway.

Brona	<i>And, what about Tim Feeney, he had horses as well in it, had he?</i>
Paddy	Yes, Time Feeney now, is down in Mullaghcuttra. He had a brother, he died in New Zealand. Pat Feeney was his name.
Brona	<i>He was involved in the troubles?</i>
Paddy	Oh, he was, he was very active.
Brona	<i>Is that the fella that they beat him up and threw him in the nettles?</i>
Paddy	Yes, that would be the man of the house, that would be Tim.
Brona	<i>And Pat then was another fella that was involved as well?</i>
Paddy	Yes, Paddy Feeney, he died out in New Zealand, a lot of them died out in New Zealand. There was another man that was implicated – General Liam Lynch, he was executed. He was riddled in the Four Courts.
Brona	<i>Again, by the Free Staters?</i>
Paddy	Yes, that fella was wounded in the attack on Headford Barracks. Tom McGuire, he was Commander General, he was the only surviving member of the first Dail, 1918. He's gone 99. He wasn't well for a while, he was at his wife's funeral in Mayo. I was at the funeral of Bobby Sands.
Brona	<i>Were you? I remember that well.</i>
Paddy	I did, a lot from Galway went on the train and do you know what happened when we got off the train? There the police showed us the way.
Brona	<i>Really, the RUC?</i>
Paddy	Yes, the RUC. Yes, there was a great respect for Bobby Sands. I was very surprised at the time. I thought that DeValera wouldn't be on his side anyway. I kept Republican myself. I'm in the Sinn Fein for 30 years. My father was in it for 12 years in Sinn Fein, I stood also, I was elected six times in 30 years, so I retired then.
Brona	<i>Do you think that Sinn Fein is a dying breed at this stage? It's losing a lot of favouritism.</i>
Paddy	Yes, but I don't think too much of Adam's attitude.
Brona	<i>No, do you think he's too militant?</i>
Paddy	Yes, that's it, he's not popular with the people. He got elected in West Belfast. Whether he'll be there next year or in 6 months' time, it's hard to know. I notice he goes to a lot of funerals and is fairly popular with some people, but that remains to be told.
Brona	<i>Have you any stories about how any of them lads were caught, no more than your own father being on the island?</i>
Paddy	No, there wasn't many of them captured, any of them that were captured were sentenced to death. There would be a few alright from Craughwell, but they weren't in English jails. Mick Newell was there alright. They were in Agricultural College for a while and they had to leave and go to Moyode. My father went on the run but some of them weren't as popular and they weren't known to the police.

Brona	<i>Would your father have been in contact with Liam Mellowes all the time?</i>
Paddy	Oh, he was, yes.
Brona	<i>And Liam Mellowes was in charge of Galway, was he?</i>
Paddy	Oh, the whole country.
Brona	<i>And was your father involved in his part?</i>
Paddy	He was, yeah. He was Vice Brigadier of the 2 nd Western Division.
Brona	<i>So, would the 2nd Western Division incorporate part of Mayo? And Castlegar, Claregalway and Headford?</i>
Paddy	Yes, then there was a North Galway Brigade after that. They were the lads that were shot in later years in the Civil War. You see, there was no Free Staters in Oranmore and there was no one to fight but, you had places like Annaghdown, where they took the Free State side. A lot of them joined the Free State Army. There was supposed to be some fellas there, carried out the shooting in Tuam. They were under orders, you know.
Brona	<i>You know, he looks a lot like W.B Yeats so, he was meant to be a good teacher, was he?</i>
Paddy	Ah, yeah, a 1 st class teacher and very good at Irish. There was a teacher there in Claregalway, Tom O'Connor.
Brona	<i>That's right, yea, he was another Republican?</i>
Paddy	He was, but, he didn't come to Claregalway until 1921, he was a great G.A.A. man too. He was registrar away back. I was Treasurer for 18 years in my younger days. I started off at that, I was secretary of the West Board in 1941, so I had 50 years. That tree was planted in memory of my 50 th . The family was home and they planted it.