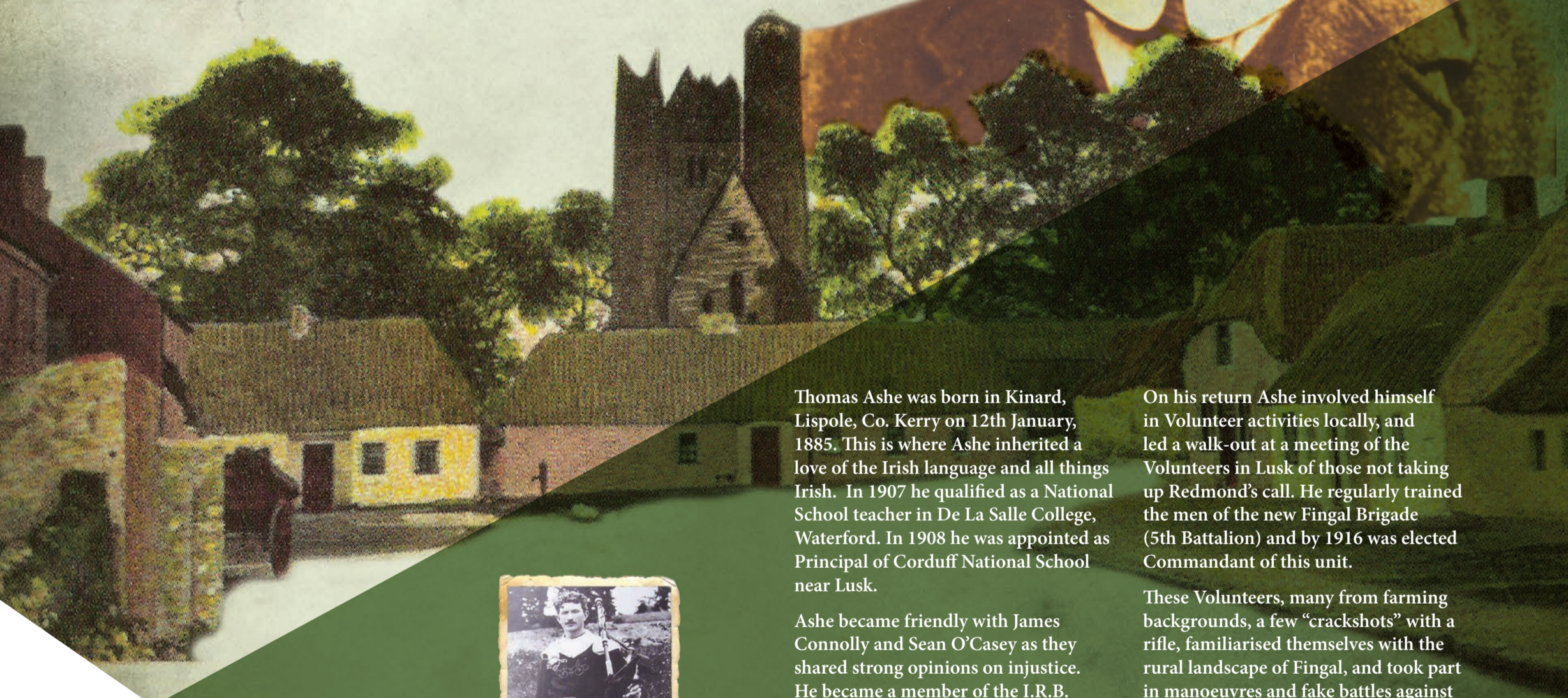


Fingal and the Fight for Irish Freedom

"They are not showy or demonstrative people in Fingal, but they are responsive to a leader they can take to. They took to Tom Ashe."

William O'Brien, Donabate



Thomas Ashe was born in Kinard, Lispole, Co. Kerry on 12th January, 1885. This is where Ashe inherited a love of the Irish language and all things Irish. In 1907 he qualified as a National School teacher in De La Salle College, Waterford. In 1908 he was appointed as Principal of Corduff National School near Lusk.

On his return Ashe involved himself in Volunteer activities locally, and led a walk-out at a meeting of the Volunteers in Lusk of those not taking up Redmond's call. He regularly trained the men of the new Fingal Brigade (5th Battalion) and by 1916 was elected Commandant of this unit.

These Volunteers, many from farming backgrounds, a few "crackshots" with a rifle, familiarised themselves with the rural landscape of Fingal, and took part in manoeuvres and fake battles against other Dublin battalions, such as the 'Battle of Broadmeadows'. Ashe had mapped the whole area and had plans and routes ready.

Ashe became friendly with James Connolly and Sean O'Casey as they shared strong opinions on injustice. He became a member of the I.R.B. He joined the Gaelic League and was appointed to their governing body, the Coiste Gnotha. Some of his colleagues there were Seán T. O'Ceallaigh, Sean MacDiarmada, Eamonn Ceannt, The O'Rahilly, and Eoin MacNeill.

In January 1914 Ashe took a break from teaching and travelled to the United States on a fund-raising trip for the Gaelic League. He had to return in October 1914 after seven months because of the outbreak of World War One. Redmond had made his famous Woodenbridge speech, and the Volunteers had split.



Thomas Ashe in full piper's uniform

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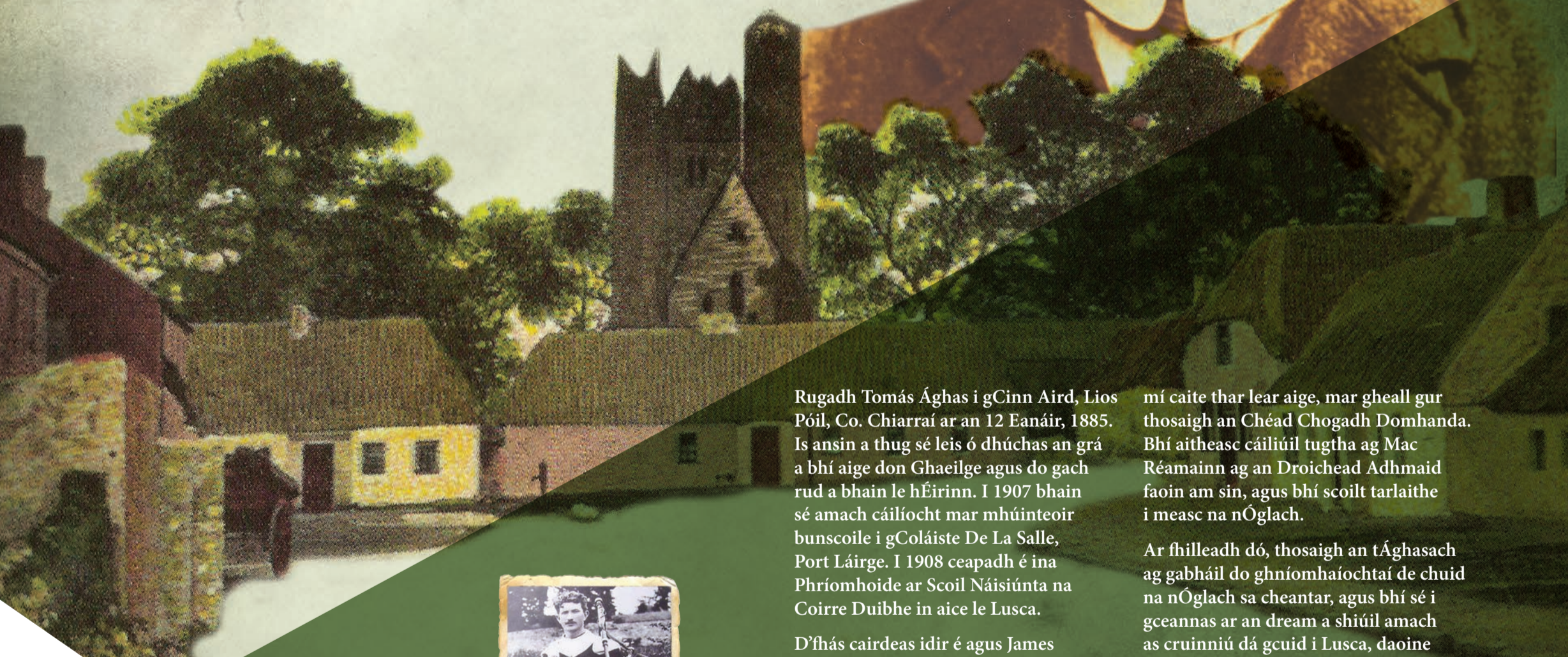
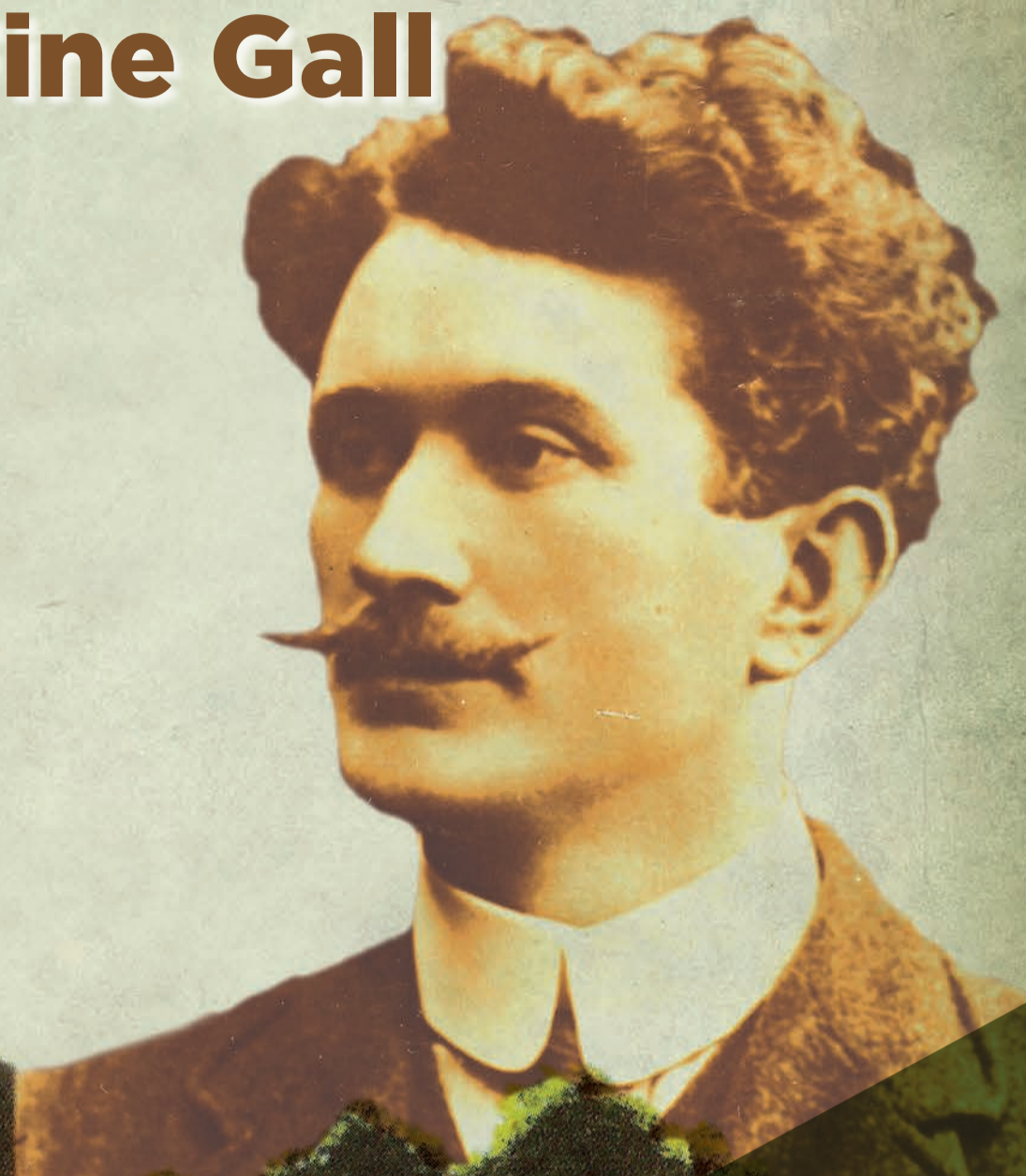
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An Troid ar son Saoirse na hÉireann I bhFine Gall

“Ní daoine iad muintir Fhine Gall a chuireann a gcuid mothúchán in iúl, ach tugann siad éisteacht do cheannaire ar féidir leo bá a bheith acu leis. Agus bhí bá acu le Tomás Ághas.”

William O'Brien, Domhnach Bat



Tomás Ághas faoi lánéide píobaire

Rugadh Tomás Ághas i gCinn Aird, Lios Póil, Co. Chiarraí ar an 12 Eanáir, 1885. Is ansin a thug sé leis ó dhúchas an grá a bhí aige don Ghaeilge agus do gach rud a bhain le hÉirinn. I 1907 bhain sé amach cáilíocht mar mhúinteoir bunscoile i gColáiste De La Salle, Port Láirge. I 1908 ceapadh é ina Phríomhoide ar Scoil Náisiúnta na Coirre Duibhe in aice le Lusca.

D'fhás cairdeas idir é agus James Connolly agus Seán O'Casey toisc gurbh iad na tuairimí díongbháilte céanna a bhí acu faoin éagóir. Chuaigh sé isteach i mBráithreachas Phoblacht na hÉireann agus i gConradh na Gaeilge agus ceapadh é ina chomhalta de chomhlacht rialaithe an Chonartha, an Coiste Gnó. I measc comhghleacaithe leis ansin bhí Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh, Seán Mac Diarmada, Éamonn Ceannt, Micheál Ó Rathaille agus Eoin Mac Néill.

In Eanáir na bliana 1914 ghlac an tÁghasach sos ón teagasc agus chuaigh sé ar thuras go dtí na Stáit Aontaithe chun airgead a bhailiú do Chonradh na Gaeilge. B'éigean dó filleadh abhaile i mí Dheireadh Fómhair 1914 agus seacht

mí caite thar lear aige, mar gheall gur thosaigh an Chéad Chogadh Domhanda. Bhí aitheasc cáiliúil tugtha ag Mac Réamainn ag an Droichead Adhmaid faoin am sin, agus bhí scoilt tarlaithe i measc na nÓglach.

Ar fhilleadh dó, thosaigh an tÁghasach ag gabháil do ghníomhaíochtaí de chuid na nÓglach sa cheantar, agus bhí sé i gceannas ar an dream a shíúil amach as cruinniú dá gcuid i Lusca, daoine nár thug aird ar an éileamh ó Mhac Réamainn.

Chuir sé oiliúint ar fhir Bhriogáid nua Fhine Gall (an 5ú Cathlán) ar bhonn rialta agus faoi 1916 bhí sé tofa ina Cheannfort ar an aonad sin.

Ba ó theaghlaigh feirmeoireachta iad a lán de na hÓglaigh agus bhí an-urchar raidhfil ag cuid bheag díobh. Chuir siad aithne mhaith ar thírdhreach tuaithe Fhine Gall, agus ghlac siad páirt in inlíochtaí agus cathanna bréige i gcoinne cathláin eile ó Bhaile Átha Cliath, amhail 'Cath na gCluainte Leathana'. Bhí léarscáil déanta ag an Ághasach den limistéar go léir agus bhí pleananna agus bealaí réidh aige.

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Fingal and the Fight for Irish Freedom



Released Prisoners, June 1917

“I am more interested in Fingal than in any other part of Ireland.”

Thomas Ashe in a letter to his sister Nora, 12th February 1917

Nearly 150 men and women from Fingal, both East and West, were arrested in the months following the rising, some who had been heavily involved both inside and outside the city, and many who had not been involved at all, and the majority were interred in prison camps in England and Wales. Along with members of the Fingal Brigade were volunteers such as Thomas Carty, Clonsilla, the McNultys of Blanchardstown, the Dowlings, Duffys and Mooneys, Castleknock, Reddins of Howth, as well as Joseph Beggs and Joe Derham, who fought in the city.

Place names such as Frongoch and Knutsford, Wakefield and Wandsworth, Lewes and Stafford became very familiar to the families of the Volunteers in Fingal. Some were released in time for Christmas 1916, others had to wait until the following year. It was a difficult time for many families, surviving without father, or husband, brothers and sons, in an era before social welfare. Treated like criminals as they were deported, they were welcomed home as heroes.

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An Troid ar son Saoirse na hÉireann I bhFine Gall



Príosúnaigh a scaoileadh saor, Meitheamh 1917

*“Is mó suim atá agam i bhFine
Gall ná in aon chuid eile d’Éirinn.”*

Tomás Ághas i litir chuig Nóra,
deirfúr leis, ar an 12 Feabhra, 1917

Gabhadh beagnach 150 fear agus bean ó Oirthear agus Iarthar Fhine Gall sna míonna tar éis an Éirí Amach. Bhí baint mhór ag cuid acu leis na heachtraí laistigh den chathair agus lasmuigh di, agus bhí a lán eile ann nach raibh aon bhaint acu leo ar chor ar bith. Cuireadh a bhformhór chuig campaí príosúin i Sasana agus sa Bhreatain Bheag.

I gcuideachta ball de Bhriogáid Fhine Gall bhí Óglaigh ar nós Thomas Carty ó Chluain Saileach, na deartháireacha McNulty ón Muileann, Baile Bhlainséir, na deartháireacha Dowling, Duffy agus Mooney ó Chaisleán Cnucha, agus muintir Reddin ó Bhinn Éadair.

Ba ghearr go raibh logainmneacha ar nós Frongoch agus Knutsford, Wakefield agus Wandsworth, Lewes agus Stafford i mbéal theaghlaigh na nÓglach i bhFine Gall. Scaoileadh saor roinnt de na príosúnaigh in am do Nollaig na bliana 1916, agus b'éigean do chuid eile acu fanacht go dtí an bhliain dár gcionn. Bhí cruatan le fulaingt an tráth sin ag cuid mhór teaghlach, agus iad ag maireachtáil gan athair, ná fear céile, deartháireacha ná clann mhac, sa ré sin roimh íocaíochtaí leasa shóisialaigh.

Caitheadh leo amhail is gur choirpigh iad agus iad á ndíbirt, ach is i gcáil laochra a cuireadh fáilte rompu abhaile.

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Fingal and the Fight for Irish Freedom

“Nothing additional remains to be said. That volley which we just heard is the only speech which is proper to make above the grave of a dead Fenian.”

Micheal Collins



The Firing Party At The Grave Of Thomas Ashe. September, 30, 1917.



Thomas Ashe in Kilmainham

Returning to active service immediately on release, both Ashe and Coleman were arrested again in August 1917 on the election campaign trail for De Valera. They went on hunger strike in Mountjoy and Ashe died from force-feeding.

An estimated 30,000 people attended his funeral in Glasnevin, organised by Richard Mulcahy, at which Michael Collins read the brief but now famous oration above.



An Troid ar son Saoirse na hÉireann I bhFine Gall

“Níl rud ar bith eile le rá. Is é an rois piléar sin atá díreach cloiste againn an t-aon aitheasc amháin is cuí a thabhairt agus Fínín á chur faoin bhfód.”

Micheál Ó Coileáin



The Firing Party At The Grave Of Thomas Ashe. September, 30, 1917.



Thomás Aghas i gKilmainham

Chuaigh an tÁghasach ar fiannas arís láithreach ar scaoileadh saor dó, agus gabhadh arís é i mí Lúnasa 1917 agus é i mbun feachtas toghcháin ar mhaithe le De Valera. Chuaigh sé féin agus príosúnaigh eile, Richard Coleman ina measc, ar stailc ocrais i Muinseo agus fuair an tÁghasach bás de bharr bia a bheith á chur siar air le fórsa ar an 25 Meán Fómhair, 1917.

Meastar gur fhreastail 30,000 duine ar a shochraid i nGlas Naíon, ócáid a d’eagraigh Risteard Ó Maolchatha agus ag ar léigh Micheál Ó Coileáin an t-aitheasc gairid a bhfuil cáil air anois:

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