

Royal Irish Constabulary Barracks in the Parish of Lorrha & Dorrha at the end the 19th Century

by Seamus J. King

There's a fascinating book called *Devia Hibernia: The Road and Route Guide for Ireland of the Royal Irish Constabulary*. Written by George Dagg, who was a member of the RIC, it was published in 1893 and when I went looking for it in the Tipperary County Library, they didn't have a copy and I discovered there were copies in only four libraries in the country. One of these was the Dublin City Library, Pearse Street Branch. I consulted it there.

So, why my interest in this rare tome? I have been trying to establish the number of RIC barracks there were in the parish before we got our independence. I thought there was a study in existence of RIC barracks, giving the date of the foundation of each one, how long it was in use and how many RIC personnel were in occupation.

No such study existed but I was directed to *Devia Hibernia* as a source of the information I was looking for. It was partly satisfactory and included information on the other facilities that existed in the place at the time..

The *Guide* included all the RIC barracks in Ireland at the time, including those in the Parish of Lorrha and Dorrha in 1893, but it doesn't include information on barracks that may have existed in the parish before that date.

The RIC Barracks

The *Guide* tells us that the population of Lorrha was 122, which must be just the immediate village. There was a telegraph office which functioned from 8 am to 8 pm. The Post arrived at 9 am and was despatched at 3.30. There was a Post Office in the village and one post car available. The sergeant's name was Thomas O'Rorke but there's no information on the number of constables he had under him. The Petty Sessions were held there every four weeks.

There was another RIC barracks at the Pike. The Sergeant's name was James Murphy. The nearest Post Office was in Rathcabbin. No other information is given.

I include Riverstown, even though it was outside the parish. It also had an RIC barracks and the sergeant's name was John Watson. The population of the village was 102 and it included a Post Office.

There was no RIC barracks in Rathcabbin but there was one in Annagh, close to the R438. The sergeant's name was T. Malynn. The nearest Post Office was in Derrinsallow, which appears to have been a place of importance at the time. There was a mill there beside the River Brosna.

Another RIC Barracks existed in Portland. I'm not quite sure where the location was. The sergeant's name was David Lavelle. There was also a Post Office in the place.

Not Included

I was interested in three other places where there's supposed to have been RIC barracks in the parish. One of these was in Joe Corcoran's in Grange. When the land was divided in the area the Corcoran family was given as residence a building which had once been a barracks.

Another place is McCormack's pub in Abbeyville. There is a strong belief that the building was once a barracks and it includes features that seem to confirm that, including a central room that looks like a cell. Close by near Ashpark House is where a barracks existed at the time the Ordnance Survey Map was made. Opinion has it is that when it closed down a new barracks was built where McCormack's pub now stands.

There is also a strong belief that a barracks existed on the hill behind Carrigahorig village. Rumour has it there was a barracks there as late as the 1920s, when Sean Treacy and Dan Breen were hiding out in the area.

Strength of RIC in County

However, none of these latter places are mentioned by George Dagg in his *Guide*. The book also gives information on the strength of the Royal Irish Constabulary in County Tipperary in September 1891. In the North Riding there were 1 County Inspector, 6 District Inspectors, 6 Head Constables and 257 Sergeants and Constables. In the South Riding there were 1 County Inspector, 7 District Inspectors, 10 Head Constables and 454 Sergeants and Constables.

The total cost of running the force in the country that year was £1,425,530 of which Horses and Forage cost £19,056.
