



## **OVERVIEW – THE GINCHY CROSS<sup>1</sup>**

### **PROTECT AND PRESERVE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS**



## **INTRODUCTION**

**Background.** The Ginchy Cross is an artifact of historical military and all-island heritage importance. For many residing on the island of Ireland and elsewhere, it is a precious and unique relic from the First World War. Erected in February 1917, in a field between Ginchy and Guillemont in France, the Ginchy Cross was dedicated to personnel of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division: "*To those who fell at the capture of Guillemont and Ginchy, September 1916, RIP*".

**Symbol of Remembrance.** Following its repatriation to Ireland, the Ginchy Cross became the most significant symbol of Irish remembrance of the First World War. From 1924 to 1939, the Ginchy Cross was the cenotaph and focal point for the annual November Remembrance (Armistice) Ceremony, initially with a replica Ginchy Cross, constructed in granite, in both College Green (1924) and St Stephens Green (1925), and thereafter with the original Ginchy Cross in the Phoenix Park. During this period, and in subsequent years, the Royal British Legion had, and continues to have, an understandable vested interest in the display of the Ginchy Cross, and its availability for ceremonies of a remembrance nature. According to a plaque on display in the Irish National War Memorial<sup>2</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> The original version of this evolving Overview was dated 20 Mar 23. A version dated 20 Oct 23 was formally adopted by the Trustees at the AGM on 20 Nov 23. Revised versions dated 25 Mar 24, 01 Jul 24 and 01 Sep 24 reflect additional information on the Ginchy Cross.

<sup>2</sup> Generally known as the Irish National War Memorial Gardens.



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which briefly describes the history of the Ginchy Cross, “it was brought here with due reverence in 1937 [sic].”

During the State Visit by Queen Elizabeth II in 2011, the State’s 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme in 2016, and the Annual Somme Ceremony of Commemoration and Wreath Laying, hosted by the Royal British Legion (Republic of Ireland), the Ginchy Cross was erected on temporary display on the Central Lawn, west of the War Stone (also known as the Stone of Sacrifice), symbolizing an altar, at the Irish National War Memorial.

Up to 2022, the Ginchy Cross was the focal point for congregations from Ireland and Northern Ireland participating and attending shared ceremonies conducted in the Irish National War Memorial Gardens, and in particular, the Annual Commemoration and Wreath Laying Ceremony hosted by the Royal British Legion (Republic of Ireland).

Since 2022, based on its condition and professional technical advice, the Irish National War Memorial Trust (INWMT) has been unable to secure the longevity of the Ginchy Cross. As a result, the Trust cannot loan the Cross to external bodies, as the movement poses a risk to the structural integrity of the Cross. Regretfully, this means that the Ginchy Cross can no longer be moved for temporary display in the Irish National War Memorial Gardens either for State, or for Commemoration Ceremonies.

**Description.** The Ginchy Cross is a large oak commemorative cross in the Celtic style, carved, in December 1916, with ‘16<sup>th</sup> IRISH DIVISION’ across the horizontal beam, and with an incised shamrock insignia at the apex of the vertical beam. The dimensions of the Ginchy Cross, currently on display in the North East Bookroom in the Irish National War Memorial, are Height: 344.5 cm, Width: 122 cm, and Depth: 24 cm, (an average measurement across uneven surfaces).

**Location and Ownership.** The Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform holds the legal title to the Irish National War Memorial, located at Saint John’s Road, in the Longmeadows Field, Islandbridge, Dublin 8. Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869 – 1944), the Irish National War Memorial is the responsibility of the Office of Public Works (OPW), National Historic Properties Section, and is managed by the Chief Park Superintendent, in conjunction with the INWMT. Items on display in the Bookrooms are either owned by the INWMT, (e.g., the Books of Remembrance), or on loan to the INWMT, (e.g., the Marino Collection). The ownership of the Ginchy Cross, which is on permanent display in the North-East Bookroom of the Irish National War Memorial since 1956, is vested with the INWMT.

## **TOPICS**

This overview on the Ginchy Cross, which is iterative in nature and subject to corrections, covers the following topics:

- Introduction;
- Topics;
- Context;
- Historical Background;



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- Forms of the Ginchy Cross;
- Lieutenant Emmet Dalton MC, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, Killed in Action, during the Battle of Ginchy, 09 September 1916;
- Temporary Displays of the Ginchy Cross; and
- Sources.

A range of material, including information, data and photographs, drawn from the publications, documents and articles listed under the topic titled ‘Sources’, located at the end of the Overview, was used during the elaboration of this document. Lt Col Colin Bulleid, Secretary to the Trustees of The Royal Hampshire Regiment Trust, and Historian Marc Thompson, Royal Hampshire Museum, provided valuable information on the 11th Battalion, Hampshire Regiment’s service in Ireland, and in the Battle of Ginchy. In addition, the INWMT’s Minutes of Meetings, Correspondence, Papers, and Financial Records and Media Sources, including the Trust’s documents archived in the Digital Repository of Dublin City Library and Archives, were also used.

### **CONTEXT**

**2017 Condition Report.** In 2017, the INWMT commissioned a report on the Ginchy Cross. Because of the concerns of both the INWMT and the OPW regarding the condition of the Ginchy Cross, and the need to protect and preserve it for future generations, the Cross was not on placed on temporary display on the Central Lawn for the Annual Somme Ceremony of Commemoration and Wreath Laying on 09 July 2022, hosted by the Royal British Legion (Republic of Ireland).

**2022 Condition Report.** In consultation with the INWMT and at OPW’s request, Sven Habermann, a timber conservation specialist, examined the Ginchy Cross, and submitted his report, dated 09 August 2022. On 13 October 2022, when providing the Royal British Legion (Republic of Ireland) a copy of the condition report for information purposes, the OPW advised that the condition of the Ginchy Cross is good, and appears structurally sound. However, due to movement in the cross members, Sven Habermann advised the OPW not to move or lift the cross in order to avoid further loosening of the joints. The OPW further advised that this will mean no future loans of the Ginchy Cross or displays on the lawns of the Irish National War Memorial Gardens for Commemorative events.

**Decision by Trustees - 2022.** On 21 November 2022, during INWMT’s Annual General Meeting, as the INWMT is unable to protect the longevity of the Ginchy Cross, the Trustees agreed that the Ginchy Cross, which is in the Trust’s ownership, will remain on permanent display in the North East Bookroom, will not be provided on loan to external bodies, and will no longer be moved for temporary display on the Central Lawn of the Irish National War Memorial Gardens, either for State or for Commemoration Ceremonies.

**Production of a Replica of the Ginchy Cross.** Implementing one of the many INWMT's objectives, on 21 November 2022, the Trustees agreed that the Trust would take the lead and ownership of a project reflecting an all-island dimension, resulting in the professional production of an exact replica Ginchy Cross, which would have the endorsement of the Irish Government, the approval of the OPW, the support of the National Museum of Ireland, the knowledge of the Belgium,



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British, French, and German Embassies, and be fully supported (directly and indirectly) by like-minded organisations such as the Somme Association, the Royal British Legion, the Combined Irish Regiments Association, and the Military Heritage of Ireland Trust.

**Benefits.** In partnership with key stakeholders within the island of Ireland, numerous benefits accrue from the INWMT's Replica Ginchy Cross Project including:

- Inspiring a greater understanding of Ireland's unique and shared military history and heritage, including the Ireland – France dimension;
- Adding substantial impetus to the prevailing rich all-island North / South military heritage environment;
- Encouraging further research and understanding of the 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division, 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division, the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division, and the Battle of the Somme;
- Honouring those Irish soldiers from across the island of Ireland who fell during the Battle of Ginchy on 06 September 1916;
- Fostering sustained North – South links, engagement, partnerships, and mutual cooperation between Museums, Regimental and Veterans' Associations, within the regional, national and sectoral domain;
- Enhancing the remembrance and reflective nature of the Irish National War Memorial especially in the context of meaningful cross-border and cross community engagement;
- Promoting national, North-South, regional and international awareness of the Irish National War Memorial, a designated Irish Heritage site;
- Promoting the Soldiers' and Chief's Exhibition, in the National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Dublin; and
- Enhancing an understanding of the objectives and outputs of the Irish National War Memorial Trust.

**Working Group.** On 21 November 2022, the INWMT Trustees established a Working Group to oversee the Replica Ginchy Cross Project. The members of the Working Group are: INWMT Chairperson Brigadier-General Paul Pakenham (Retd), and the following Trustees: Mr Brian Crawford, Mr John Kennedy, Colonel (Retd) Hubert McAllister, and Brigadier (Retd) Adrian Naughten. The Working Group's Concept of Operations (22 Sep 23), and its Report for the 2023 Annual General Meeting (24 Oct 23), were endorsed by the Trustees on 20 November 2023.

As part of its Concept of Operations, in March 2024, the Trustees tasked the Working Group to proceed with the 3D scanning of the original Ginchy Cross, and in August 2024 with the production of a timber version of the Ginchy Cross.

The Somme Association has kindly offered to provide timber from the grounds of the Ulster Tower Memorial in France.

In the context of this Project, the INWMT remains actively engaged in an all-island Outreach, Consultation, Information and Educational Programme, focussing on Government Departments, Government Agencies, Embassies, Veterans' Associations, Regimental Associations, Trusts, and Museums.



**Permanent Displays – Replica Ginchy Cross and Original Ginchy Cross.** On completion of the Project, the Replica Ginchy Cross will be placed on display in the North-East Bookroom of the Irish National War Memorial Gardens. This will allow the INWMT to transfer the Original Ginchy Cross for permanent display in a safer and more suitable environmentally controlled location within the National Museum of Ireland’s Soldiers’ and Chiefs’ Exhibition, in Collins Barracks, Dublin. In this way, the Original Ginchy Cross will be protected and preserved for future generations.

**Availability of Replica Ginchy Cross.** The INWMT will make the Replica Ginchy Cross available for display on the Central Lawn for all State Ceremonies – especially for State Visits to Ireland, and for the Annual Remembrance and Wreath Laying Ceremonies hosted by the Royal British Legion (Republic of Ireland). The Replica Ginchy Cross will also be made available, as appropriate, following a request to the INWMT, for its temporary display in Ireland, Northern Ireland and France, in respect of ceremonies or exhibitions, reflecting the all-island’s unique shared military heritage, and the story of the Irish Soldier.

**3D Scan – Original Ginchy Cross.** In August 2024, the INWMT undertook a 3D Scan of the Original Ginchy Cross, with the ownership and copyright of the resulting data vested with the Trust. This essential curatorial and archival initiative, provides a complete and enduring digital record for posterity of this significant all-island heritage artifact. The 3D scan of the Original Ginchy Cross, provides the INWMT with additional outputs from the Replica Ginchy Cross Project, including the capability of obtaining 3D Printed versions of the Cross in three sizes (Full, Two Thirds or One Half), which could be made available, on license, to appropriate External Actors across the island of Ireland and throughout Europe, including Museums, Veterans’ Associations and Regimental Associations.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

**Battle of Ginchy.** Following the conclusion of the Battle of Guillemont on 06 September 1916, the Battle of Ginchy took place on 09 September 1916, with H-hour at 1645hrs. The Battle of the Somme continued for two months after the Battle of Ginchy. The final casualty figures from the Battle of the Somme came to 420,000 British deaths, 200,000 French deaths and 660,000 German deaths.

### **Message from Divisional Commander – 08 September 1916**



16th (Irish) Division



*The Attack on Ginchy 09 Sep 16*







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“The 16th Division has been allotted the task of capturing GINCHY tomorrow. The Divisional Commander wishes all ranks to be informed of the supreme importance of the capture of this village and of holding the line beyond it. He wishes Commanding Officers to impress on all men that they must make this final effort for the honour of their Regiment and of the Country to which they belong. Support is at hand and all troops East of GINCHY will be relieved tomorrow night. WB HICKIE Major General September 8th 1916, Commanding 16th (Irish) Division.”

**Organic Units – 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division.** In addition to its Headquarters, the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division had three Brigades (47, 48 and 49 Brigade Groups) and Divisional Units (including Guards Divisional Artillery, 16 Divisional Signals, 16 Divisional Engineers, and the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Pioneers), Hampshire Regiment. The Division had seven manoeuvre battalions from Leinster, Munster and Connaught, and five battalions from Ulster. These Irish battalions were drawn from the Royal Irish Rifles, Connaught Rangers, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, Royal Munster Fusiliers, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, Leinster Regiment, Royal Irish Regiment and Royal Irish Fusiliers.

Among the manoeuvre units that fought in the Battle of Ginchy were: 6 & 7 Battalion Royal Irish Rifles; 7 & 8 Battalions Royal Irish Fusiliers; 8 & 9 Battalions Royal Dublin Fusiliers; 7 & 8 Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers; 7 Battalion Leinster Regiment; 1, 5 & 8 Battalions Royal Munster Fusiliers; 7 Battalion Royal Irish Regiment; and 6 Battalion Connaught Rangers.

The Division spent almost three years in France, from the Autumn of 1915 to the Autumn of 1918, only being out of the line for three weeks. During this period 28,398 personnel of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division were either killed, wounded, or missing in action.

**Construction of Ginchy Cross by 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division.** The Ginchy Cross, fashioned on the style of a Celtic cross, was designed by Major-General William Bernard Hickie KCB,<sup>3</sup> commander of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division. In December 1916, it was carved from the wooden oak beam of a bomb-damaged building by personnel of 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Hampshire Regiment, the Pioneer Battalion of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division.

It is likely that Major-General Hickie requested the Battalion to undertake this work during his visit to the unit located in De ZON camp, Kemmel. As will be noted below, the casualties incurred by 11th Battalion, Hampshire Regiment at Ginchy were significant, and the construction of a memorial cross commemorating those of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Battalion who died at Ginchy, especially those without a known place of burial, was a noble cause for Pioneers.

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<sup>3</sup> Sir General W.M. Hickie KCB, (1865 – 1950) from Terryglass, County Tipperary, was one of the founding members of the INWMT. According to the minutes of the inaugural meeting on 17 July 1919, he was appointed Hon Treasurer, and served on the Trust’s Executive and Standing Committees. Major-General Hickie was an active member of the ‘Irish National War Memorial Committee, frequently attended its meetings, the last of which was 02 August 1950. Major-General Hickey was also one of the founding members of the RBL (RoI) when it was instituted on 01 January 1925, and subsequently served as its President. Major-General Hickie died on 03 November 1950.



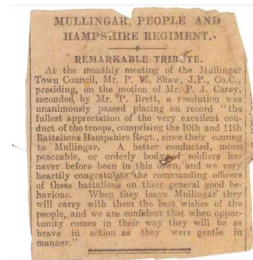
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### 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Hampshire Regiment



*Collar Badge*



*Irish Times Tribute*



*Digging Trenches Kilworth*

The 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion Hampshire Regiment (11<sup>th</sup> Hants Pioneers), under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel William Kemmis, was established in Winchester in September 1914. On the 15 September, the Battalion deployed to the Royal Barracks (now Collins Barracks), Dublin. From 21 September, it was garrisoned in the Infantry Barracks, (now Columb Barracks) Mullingar, alongside the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Hampshire Regiment.

Thereafter, the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion was assigned to the 16th (Irish) Division. Whilst retaining a conventional infantry capability, its designated role was converted to the Division's organic Pioneer Battalion. These newly configured units, although equipped and trained as infantry, were affiliated to Divisional Engineers rather than Infantry Brigades. On the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion's departure from Mullingar, the Irish Times Reported: *"When they leave Mullingar they will carry with them the best wishes of the people, and we are confident that when opportunity comes in their way they will be as brave in action as they were gentle in manner."*



In March 1915, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel B.E. Crockett, the Battalion deployed to Moore House, Kilworth, County Cork. On 05 September, the Battalion departed Cork for Aldershot, before deploying to France on 18 December 1915, with the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division.

Whereas the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Hampshire Regiment was stationed in Ireland in 1914 – 1915, there is little or no evidence of a significant number Irishmen enlisting in the unit, or indeed transferring to







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Decorations received by the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion arising from operations during the month of September 1916, for gallantry and devotion to duty in the field included: Lieutenant Henry Durant, Military Cross; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Reginald Dupre Shaw, Military Cross; Sergeant G. Shepherd; and Corporal R. Snelling both of A Company Distinguished Conduct Medals. Lieutenant Reginald Shaw, who was serving in the Battalion when the Ginchy Cross was made, was later awarded the Military Cross for actions in 1917.

**Original Location of Ginchy Cross.** In February 1917, the Ginchy Cross was erected in a field between Ginchy and Guillemont, commemorating the 224 commissioned officers and 4,090 enlisted personnel of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division who lost their lives at these locations in September 1916. Amongst those killed was the Irish Nationalist MP and poet Lieutenant Thomas Kettle, of the 9<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who is one of the best-known Irish victims of the Battle of the Somme.

**Inscription.** The Ginchy Cross was approximately four meters high and was anchored to a base of stones and concrete, with the inscription "*To those who fell at the capture of Guillemont and Ginchy, September 1916, RIP.*"



## **Belfast Weekly Telegraph – 23 December 1922**



**16TH (IRISH) DIVISION WAR MEMORIAL.**  
The above photograph is of a war memorial (left) which was erected in 1917 to commemorate the 16th (Irish) Division who fought at the capture of Guillemont and Ginchy on September 3 and 9, 1916. The memorial was erected by the 16th (Irish) Division and is now in the possession of the Irish War Memorial Committee. The photograph was taken by the Irish War Memorial Committee and is now in the possession of the Irish War Memorial Committee.

On 23 December 1922, the Belfast Weekly Telegraph published an article on the Ginchy Cross, which included an excellent photograph of the Cross on the Battlefield. The article was posted on the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Facebook Platform on 23 December 2023. The article reads:

### **“16 IRISH DIVISION WAR MEMORIAL”**



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“The above photograph is of a war memorial erected immediately after the capture of Guillemont and Ginchy on September 3 and 9, 1917 [sic]. This temporary wooden cross was designed by Major-General Sir W.B. Hickey, K.C.G., G.O.C. 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division and erected by the Divisional Pioneers between the two battlefields and bears the simple inscription *To those who fell in the capture of Guillemont and Ginchy September 1917 [sic]*. The casualties of the Irish Division in these two engagements amounted to 263 [sic] officers and 4,091 [sic] other ranks, which included a very large proportion of Ulstermen. It is intended to replace the temporary memorial by a replica in Irish Limestone, and also to erect a similar memorial at Wytschaete [sic] and Messines, and also at the graveyard in Gallipoli as a memorial to the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division. These are part of the Irish war memorial scheme. The photograph was forwarded to Alderman Harkin to Major-General Hickie, who has taken a very active and prominent part in the organisation of the Irish War Memorial committee.”

**Replica Granite Ginchy Crosses – 1926.** In 1926, the INWMT allocated a sum of £1,500 for the construction, transportation, erection of three Replica Granite Crosses, and the associated dedication ceremonies, the attendance of which included the INWMT’s Chairman. The three replicas were unveiled by

- General Borremans, Commander-in-Chief of the Belgium Army at Wytschaete (Belgium) on 21 August;
- The Commander-in-Chief of the French Forces on the Western Front, Marshal Joseph Jacques Césaire Joffre at Guillemont on 23 August; and
- The third cross was unveiled near the village of Robrovo in the Republic of Macedonia.

According to the Order of Service at Wytschaete, on the arrival of General Borremans, “*the Signal for the Silence will be given by the Chairman of the Memorial Committee*”. The Order of Service also refers to the INWMT’s Books of Remembrance: “*At the conclusion of the Ceremony, General Borremans will be asked to present to the Reverend Mother at the Hospice at Locre, the Records of the Irish Dead for custody in the Chapel of the Hospice.*”

### **College Green – 1924**



*Armistice Day 11 November 1924, College Green Dublin (Left Irish Times)*

The symbol of Irish remembrance became the Ginchy Cross. In November 1924, a granite replica of the Ginchy Cross was temporarily erected as an Irish Cenotaph outside the College Green entrance to Trinity College for a Remembrance (Armistice) Ceremony on 11 November. This granite Celtic



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Cross was 13ft 6in high, weighing three tons. The following was inscribed at the base of the memorial: *'Do chum Gloire Dé agus Ónóra na hÉireann (To the Glory of God and Honour of Ireland). In commemoration of the victories of Guillemont and Ginchy Sept 3<sup>rd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> 1916, in memory of those who fell therein and all those Irishmen who gave their lives in the Great War RIP'*.

An estimated 50,000 persons attended the ceremony in College Green. Senator Colonel Maurice Moore, formally of the Connaught Rangers, laid a wreath with the following citation: *'Ó Rialtas Saorstát Éireann i gcuimhne na nÉireannacht uile a fuair bás son choga mór. (From the Government of Saorstat Éireann in memory of all the Irishmen who died in the Great War)'*. Mrs Mary Kettle, wife of Lieutenant Thomas Kettle, 9<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers, who was killed at the Battle of Ginchy on 09 September 1916, also laid a wreath.

Next morning, the *Irish Times* reported that 'hundreds of ex-service men, wearing their ribbons and medals [gathered] round the Celtic Cross in addition to those who took part in the official parades'.

**St Stephen's Green – 1925.** The 1925 Remembrance (Armistice) Ceremony was moved to St Stephen's Green. The *Irish Times* reported an attendance of 120,000 on 11 November 1925. Shortly before 1100hrs, 'the sounding of the buzzer at Jacob's factory' signalled the start of the Ceremony. Two smoke bombs disrupted the proceedings for the two minutes silence. Wreaths were laid by Major-General Hickie for 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division, Major-General Sir Bryan Nugent for 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division and Major-General Nugent for 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division, at the base of a replica of the Ginchy Cross of granite stone, which according to the *Irish Times* 'is to be erected at Wytschaete to the memory of the soldiers of the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division who fell in that area'.

According to the *Irish Times*, several minor incidents occurred in Dublin on 11 November 1925, including one at 1600hrs in College Green. During 'a fracas' in College Green, ex-Corporal C.E. Oates, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, aged 40, of 3 Church Terrace, Clondalkin, 'collapsed from excitement or shock, caused by one of the smoke bombs' and was declared dead on arrival at Mercer's Hospital.

**Repatriation.** When the Ginchy Cross was replaced by a replica granite cross in 1926, the original memorial was subsequently repatriated to Ireland, and thereafter became the centerpiece of the annual Remembrance (Armistice) Day Ceremonies in Dublin.

### **Phoenix Park 1926**



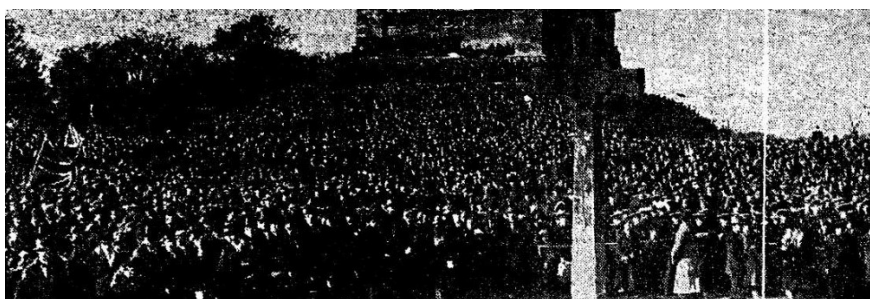
*Armistice Day 11 November 1926, Phoenix Park Dublin*



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Catering for potentially a greater attendance, marking the eighth anniversary of the Armistice, the 1926 Remembrance (Armistice) Ceremony moved to the Phoenix Park, where the original Ginchy Cross was erected as the Cenotaph, near the Duke of Wellington Memorial.

Over 40,000 attended the 1926 Remembrance (Armistice) Day celebration in the Phoenix Park. The *Irish Times* covered the commemoration in detail, and also covered events across Ireland, in particular Belfast and Cork, and in London where Minister for Home Affairs Kevin O'Higgins, accompanied by Ireland's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom James McNeill, laid a wreath at the cenotaph in Whitehall and upon the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Westminster Abbey.



*Armistice Day, Phoenix Park Dublin – 11 November 1926*

Concerning the Ceremony in Phoenix Park, the *Irish Times* reported that 'the gathering of those who paid honour to the dead was not pent up within the limits of a city square'. Nine thousand ex-servicemen were reported to have marched through the city to Phoenix Park in a march that began at 0800hrs. The largest procession, made up of some twenty contingents, began from Beresford Place shortly after 1000hrs. These 'alert and resolute men of whom any country would be proud' who were joined by at least 40,000 persons who 'shared the sorrow and exaltation of the observance and bowed their heads in the poignant minutes of silence'.



*Major-General Sir W.M. Hickie KCB laying the first wreath at the Ginchy Cross*

The *Irish Times* editorial added that 'very fittingly was the cross from Guillemont placed within the shadow of the obelisk which records that an Irishman's genius for war saved Europe and Asia more than one hundred years ago'. It was the 'finest and most impressive celebration of Remembrance Day that Ireland has known'. The paper highlighted the 'reverent temper which never forgot the day's solemn significance.' And at the centre of all in the Phoenix Park was 'the weather-beaten oak cross which for so many years had a place at the very centre of the Ginchy-Guillemont battlefield'.



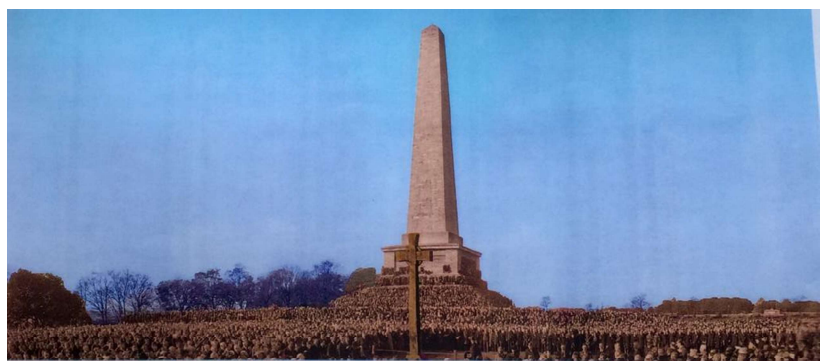
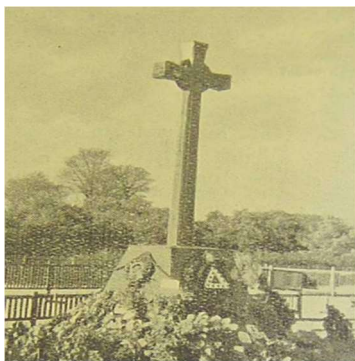


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The ceremony at the cenotaph in Phoenix Park ‘passed off without the slightest hitch, the two minutes of solemn remembrance being unbroken by any sound save the faint sighing of the wind in the trees.’ By 1130hrs the ceremony was over, the ex-servicemen having marched past the cross ‘smartly and well.’ The Ginchy Cross remained in the Phoenix Park for a week ‘watched day and night by a force of Civic Guards’.

Major-General Sir William Hickie told the *Irish Times* that: ‘personally I was very happy to see the old wooden cross, which has stood for nine years between Guillemont and Ginchy, at last on Irish soil. I hope that we may be able before very long to find a resting place for it, where we all can see it.’

### **1937 - 1939: Phoenix Park**



*Armistice Day, Phoenix Park Dublin*

In 1937, the Royal British Legion requested permission to hold the Armistice Day Ceremony in the Irish National War Memorial. During a meeting of the INWMT on 17 September 1937, it was decided that, as in previous years, the ceremony would be held in the Phoenix Park. At a subsequent meeting on 27 September 1937, it was noted that the earlier decision would minimise damage to the newly planted shrubs, trees, and plants in the Memorial Gardens. The INWMT defrayed the costs accrued by the Royal British Legion for the Armistice Day Ceremonies in the Phoenix Park. The Ginchy Cross was displayed during the Remembrance (Armistice) Ceremonies in the Phoenix Park up to 1938. The *Irish Times* reported on 12 November 1938, ‘In the morning at 9.30 bodies representing every branch in Dublin, as well as many county branches, paraded at Beresford place for the march along the quays to Phoenix Park... they moved in step with old familiar war tunes’.

The last Armistice Day Ceremony in the Phoenix Park took place on 11 November 1939, and as on previous years the focal point was the Ginchy Cross. The INWMT paid the costs accrued by the Royal British Legion for the Armistice Day Ceremonies in the Phoenix Park, including expenses related to the Ginchy Cross.

### **Ginchy Cross – Storage**

On 17 December 1937, the INWMT discussed the Ginchy Cross, referred to in the minutes as ‘the Armistice Day Cross’, and requested Colonel Steele a member of the Standing Committee to seek guidance from Major-General Hickie regarding its future.



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In a response dated 23 January 1938, via Major Tynan (Royal British Legion), Major-General Hickie stated, ‘I would very much like the Cross to find a resting place at least for a few years in one of the Book Houses. If it was afterwards found that it showed signs of disintegration it could be burnt or buried as you suggest. Meanwhile for our generation at least it would be an additional link between Ireland and the Battlefields and would help to fill one of the Houses. I am sure that Col Steele<sup>4</sup> could see that the cross was cut to suitable dimensions, it might be found possible to enclose what is kept of it in a glass frame after it was reinforced and chemically treated.’

From its repatriation to Ireland, the Ginchy Cross was stored somewhere in Dublin, up to its transfer to the Irish National Memorial Gardens in 1955. Possible storage facilities in Dublin include the RBL (RoI) Furniture Factory and General Woodworkers' Emporium in 41A Mespil Road, Jameson Distillery's Storeroom, and Trinity College Dublin. Nevertheless, a record exists of the actual transfer of the Ginchy Cross from Trinity College in 1955 to the Irish National War Memorial. The Provost of Trinity College, Most Reverend John Henry Bernard DD was a founding member of the INWMT, and served on its Executive Committee. Accordingly, when not in use, the likely storage location of the Ginchy Cross, providing a supportive environment, was in Trinity College Dublin.

**Irish National War Memorial – 1940 - 1969.** Plans for the formal opening of the completed Irish National War Memorial scheduled for 30 July 1939 were postponed<sup>5</sup>. Following a request from the Royal British Legion, the minutes of the INWMT meeting of 03 September 1940 record the Committee's decision to seek the permission of An Taoiseach to hold the November Remembrance (Armistice) Ceremony in the Irish National War Memorial. Subsequently, the 1940 ceremony transferred from the Phoenix Park to the Irish National War Memorial in Islandbridge.

The *Irish Times* report of the Remembrance Ceremony, which took place on 11 November 1940, records that ‘thousands of Irishmen and women observed Armistice Day with the same quiet simplicity that has characterised every eleventh day of November since the end of the last Great War. Only the surroundings were changed – the ceremonial parading was dropped this year. They stood in the beautiful Garden of Remembrance at Islandbridge... just across from the river from the first memorial enclosure in the Phoenix Park. Instead of being smaller in number, the crowd seemed to have been swelled to the many hundreds more.’ The *Irish Times* did not include any photographs of the ceremony.

It is likely that the Ginchy Cross was on display on the Central Lawn for the 1940 and the following years' Remembrance (Armistice) Ceremonies. Up to and including 1969 with the approval of the INWMT, during the month of August, the Irish National War Memorial was used by the Dublin

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<sup>4</sup> Colonel Steele was a founder member of the Irish National War Memorial Committee. According to the minutes of the inaugural meeting in July 1919, he was appointed to both the Executive Committee and Standing Committee, and later was elected as a Trustee of the INWMT.

<sup>5</sup> The Irish National War Memorial was eventually officially opened and dedicated by representatives of the four main Churches in Ireland on 10 September 1988, and opened to the public. The INMT Chairperson, Lieutenant-Colonel D.H. Boydell delivered the main address, and the second was by Admiral Sir Arthur Hazlett, from the Royal British Legion. A wreath was laid by Mr. Patrick Barry, M.B.E. RN.



## **Irish National War Memorial Trust**

Central Branch of the Old Contemptibles Association, and during the month of November by the Royal British Legion (Republic of Ireland Branch).

### **Transfer of the Ginchy Cross – Bookrooms - 1955**



During its meeting of 14 July 1955, the INWMT agreed that the ‘the 16<sup>th</sup> Irish Division Cross could possibly be put in one of the Bookrooms in the Memorial Park and .....undertook to check the measurements of the Bookrooms to see if it would fit in one of them’.



At some stage the length of the vertical beam of the Ginchy Cross was reduced, allowing it eventually to be placed on display, fixed to the wall of the north-east Bookroom. This reduction in height may have occurred in 1940, as minutes of a INWMT meeting of 03 September record that two chairs were made from the wood of the ‘original Flanders Cross with General Hickie’s permission, and that he wished to present these to the Memorial Trustees for the Book-rooms .....and it was agreed that until they were put in the Book-rooms they should be stored in the Distillery’.

Since 1956, in conjunction with the OPW, the INWMT fully discharged its ownership responsibilities of the Ginchy Cross including its security, access, maintenance, preservation, and restoration. According to the 2022 Condition Report, the cross has undergone at least one phase of restoration, whereby the lower section of the vertical beam was replaced and steel plates added.

### **Minor Damage – December 1956**





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The minutes of the INMWT meeting of 01 January 1957, refer to damage ‘caused to the Memorial Cross on Christmas Day’. It is likely that the ‘not extensive damage’ occurred while the Ginchy Cross was housed in the Bookroom.

**Preservation – 1957.** At some time before December 1957, the Ginchy Cross was removed from Trinity College Dublin to E. Gibson Ltd Decorators and Contractors, 11 Westland Row, for treating the preservative, and then transported to the Irish National War Memorial Gardens. The Irish National War Memorial ‘Committee’ reimbursed the Royal British Legion for this preservation work.

## **Bronze Plaques**



The INMWT meeting of 01 October 1988 was advised of ‘the erection of two bronze plaques, one in Irish and the other in English giving the story of the Ginchy Cross’. These plaques, which briefly outline the history of the Ginchy Cross, are on display in the Bookroom. The English version of the bronze plaque was recast in 1989 with correct details.

## **Annual Observance Ceremony and Remembrance Service – November**



*Left: Irish National War Memorial – Right: St Patricks Cathedral*

*13 November 2022*

In recent years, under the auspices of the Royal British Legion (Republic of Ireland) an Observance Ceremony is held at 1100hrs on the 11 November in the Irish National War Memorial. A parallel





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Annual Remembrance Service, which was initiated in 1971 takes place in Saint Patrick's Cathedral on the Sunday closest to the 11 November, during which wreaths are laid by the President of Ireland and the Royal British Legion.

### REPLICAS OF THE GINCHY CROSS



*Guillemont*



*Wytscheate*



*10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division - Robrovo, (Salonica) Republic of Macedonia*

In 1926, granite stone replicas of the original Ginchy Cross were erected at Guillemont, at Wytscheate (Belgium), and near the village of Robrovo in the Republic of Macedonia. The memorial at Robrovo honours personnel of 10<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division who lost their lives in Salonika, October 1915.

The memorial located to the left of the church in Guillemont on the Somme has the inscription '1914-1918 – *In commemoration of the victories of Guillemont and Ginchy September 3rd and 9th 1916 in memory of those who fell therein and of all Irishmen who gave their lives in the Great War. RIP.*' This memorial is essentially the same design as the Division's memorial at Wytschaete.



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The memorial to the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division) at Wytschaete is located to the left-hand side of the Military Cemetery. The inscription reads *‘In commemoration of victory at Wytschaete June 7th 1917. In memory of those who fell therein, and of all Irishmen who gave their lives in the Great War RIP’*.

### **FORMS OF THE GINCHY CROSS**

The design of the Ginchy Cross has been used in memorials honouring those who served in the First World War.

### **French – Irish Memorial Glasnevin**



*Glasnevin Cemetery 13 November 2016*

In March 2016, with the INWMT’s approval, McKeon Stone Ltd, Stradbally, surveyed the Ginchy Cross in the Irish National War Memorial, made a template of the Cross, and thereafter constructed an exact replica of the Cross for the France-Ireland Memorial. The France-Ireland Memorial, featuring the design of the Ginchy Cross, was unveiled at a ceremony at Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin on 13 November 2016. The Memorial, a monument created specially by the Beaux-Arts de Paris (Paris fine arts school) was presented to Ireland in recognition of ‘the solidarity and sacrifice’ by so many Irish in the defence and freedom of France, particularly during the First World War. The Memorial is dedicated to all Irish men and women who fought for freedom and the defence of France during the conflicts of 1870-1871, 1914-1918 AND 1939-1945.

### **Rathfarnham War Memorial Hall**



*Rathfarnham War Memorial Hall*

The design of the Ginchy Cross has been used in memorials such as an oak memorial cross in Rathfarnham War Memorial Hall in Dublin, which is similar in form to the Ginchy Cross. The inscription is: *‘Erected by Col. Sir Frederick Shaw and his Family in Memory of the Soldiers of all Ranks and Denominations from the Districts of Terenure and Rathfarnham who gave their Lives for their Country in the GREAT WAR’*.



### **Lieutenant James Emmet Dalton MC – Battle of Ginchy**

Emmet Dalton (04 March 1888 – 04 March 1978) joined the Dublin Volunteers at their inaugural meeting in 1913. In 1914, at 17 years of age, he enlisted as a temporary 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the 7<sup>th</sup> Service (Dublin Pals) Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. By 1916, he was attached to the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 48<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Group, 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division.



*Lt E Dalton*



*Cap Badge 9th Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers*



*Lt T. Kettle*

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Emmet Dalton was awarded the Military Cross at Ginchy, in September 1916: *For conspicuous gallantry in action. He led forward to their final objective companies which had lost their officers. Later, while consolidating his position, he found himself, with one serjeant, confronted by 21 of the enemy, including an officer, who surrendered when he attacked them.*<sup>6</sup>

Prior to his action, on the evening of 09 September 1916, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Emmet Dalton said the Act of Contrition to his dying comrade Lieutenant Thomas Michael Kettle MP, B Company, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Hailed as ‘one of the most brilliant minds of his generation in Ireland’, Lieutenant Kettle, was a prolific Irish poet, essayist, barrister and Irish Nationalist MP. He is one of the best-known Irish soldiers lost to the Battle of Ginchy<sup>6</sup>.

The 16th (Irish) Division, and its personnel, is warmly associated with Ginchy, especially 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Emmet Dalton MC and Lieutenant Thomas Kettle.

Later in 1916, King George V presented 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Dalton with his medal at Buckingham Palace.

Like many of the Irish soldiers who fought in Ginchy, Major Dalton returned to Ireland, and later was known as “Ginchy” throughout his life. On demobilisation from the British army, he re-joined the Irish Volunteers, and fought in the War of Independence. He is on record as having no difficulty in fighting for Ireland with the British, and fighting for Ireland against the British.

In 1922, he was commissioned in the Free State’s National Army, attaining the rank of Major-General at the age of 24. In August 1922, he commanded the National Army’s forces that landed in Cork to attack the Anti-treaty IRA forces.

He developed a close friendship with General Michael Collins. On 22 August 1922, Major-General Dalton was a member of the convey that was ambushed in Beál na Bláth, resulting in the death of the

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<sup>6</sup> On the day before his death Lieutenant Kettle wrote: *“If I live, I mean to spend the rest of my life working for perpetual peace. I have seen war and faced artillery and know what an outrage it is against simple men.”*





## **Irish National War Memorial Trust**

National Army's Commander-in-Chief. In an interview screened by RTE on the day he died in 1978, he said, 'I loved him. I use no other word. I loved him as a man loves another man, with pure love'.

### **TEMPORARY DISPLAYS**

#### **France – April to December 2006**



Having received a formal request for the loan of the Ginchy Cross from the Chief Curator, Historial de la Grande Guerre, on 29 October 2005 the INWMT requested the OPW to act for the Trustees in project managing the loan of the Cross.

With the permission of the INWMT, in April 2006 the Ginchy Cross was displayed at an exhibition on the Battle of the Somme organised by the Historial de la Grande Guerre at Péronne, France, which ran until 10 December 2006.

As the Ginchy Cross was on loan in France during 2006 in Péronne, it was not available for display at the State Ceremony marking the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme.

#### **Armagh - June 2017**



From 06 through 10 June 2017, with the INWMT's permission, the Ginchy Cross transferred from the Irish National War Memorial and placed on display in the Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich Library and





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Archive, Moy Road, Armagh, during a series of lectures on the Battle of Messines, and on the local and social impact of the First World War.

### Armagh – 11 June 2017



As part of the Decades of Centenaries, with permission from the INWMT, the Ginchy Cross went on public display during a service of commemoration of the centenary of the battle of Messines-Wytschaete, organised by the Royal British Legion, which took place at the Armagh War Memorial, The Mall, Armagh on 11 June 2017.

The event was a cross-border, cross-community service to mark the sacrifices made by the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division and the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division (comprised largely of respectively, the Irish National Volunteers and the Ulster Volunteers) who fought side by side at Messines. The aim of the ceremony was to encourage reconciliation through remembrance between the two communities not only in Armagh but across the island of Ireland.

The INWMT is listed as a ‘Lender’s Name’ on the Loan Agreement. The Trust’s Secretary coordinated the plans for site visits, provision of a specialist wood conservator, independent technician / art handler, insurance, transportation, site preparation, lifting equipment and installation,

### State Ceremonies – 2011 and 2016



*State Visit 18 May 2011 Right: Maxwell*



## Irish National War Memorial Trust



### *Battle of the Somme Centenary 09 July 2016*

Displayed on the Central Lawn of the Irish National War Memorial, the Ginchy Cross was one of the focal points on the State Visit of HM Queen Elizabeth II to the location, during which the President of Ireland and Queen Elizabeth II laid wreaths at the War Stone (also known as the Stone of Remembrance) on 18 May 2011. The Ginchy Cross was also on temporary display in the Irish National War Memorial during the State Ceremony marking the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme on 09 July 2016. [The Ginchy Cross was on loan in France during 2006 in the 'Historial de la Grande Guerre' at Péronne, and was not available for display at the State Ceremony marking the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme.]

### **Annual Somme Ceremony of Commemoration and Wreath Laying - July**



*07 July 2018*



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Since 2007, with the permission of the INWMT, the Annual Somme Ceremony of Commemoration and Wreath Laying, hosted by the Royal British Legion (Republic of Ireland), takes place in July in the Irish National War Memorial. According to the minutes of the INWMT meeting of 22 May 2018, the Royal British Legion requested permission for the Ginchy Cross to be erected on temporary display on the Central Lawn, west of the War Stone (also known as the Stone of Remembrance) for the 2018 ceremony.



On account of Covid-19, a scaled back format of the ceremony was used in 2020 and 2021, and the Ginchy Cross was not on temporary display for these two ceremonies. Based on its condition, the INWMT was not able to give permission for the temporary display of the Ginchy Cross for the 2022 Annual Somme Ceremony of Commemoration and Wreath Laying.

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**Photographs**: The Royal British Legion (Republic of Ireland) Facebook Platform: <https://www.facebook.com/RBLROI/photos>, and Military Heritage of Ireland Trust's Flickr Platform: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mhit/albums/> were a source of some photographs, some of which are courtesy of Oliver Breen and Patrick Hugh Lynch. Photographs associated with the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Hampshire Regiment were kindly provided by The Royal Hampshire Regiment Trust.

**Material**: A range of material from the INWMT's Minutes of Meetings, Correspondence, Papers, and Financial Records including the Trust's documents archived in the Digital Repository of Dublin City Library and Archives, and information, data and photographs, from the following publications, documents and articles was used during the elaboration of this overview:

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### **Additional Photographs**





**Irish National War Memorial Trust**

