

**Michael Davitt** (1846 - 1906) was born at Straide, Co. Mayo and grew up in Lancashire where he joined the I.R.B. in 1865. He was the chief arms buyer for the I.R.B. and was imprisoned for his activities in 1870 until he was released on a 'ticket of leave' on 18th December 1877 from Dartmoor Prison. On January 15th 1878 Davitt met Daly for the first time. Eleven days later Davitt visited Co. Mayo and addressed huge crowds in Balla, Castlebar, Swinford and Ballyhaunis before returning to England. He went to U.S. on July 26th and met with John Devoy with whom he formulated the "New Departure" whereby I.R.B. and Nationalists would co-operate on matters of common concern. Davitt returned to Mayo in February 1879.

**Thomas Brennan** (1854 - 1915), was a native of Slane, Co. Meath and was employed as a clerk at the Castlebar and Dublin offices of the North Dublin Milling Company. He was an active I.R.B. member and befriended **James Daly**, during his time in Castlebar.

**John O'Connor Power M. P.** (1848 - 1919), was a native of Ballinasloe, Co. Galway. He joined the I.R.B. in England in his teens and was active in military operations there. He studied at St. Jarlath's College, Tuam, Co. Galway in the late 1860s and early 1870s. He joined the Home Rule League in 1873 and was elected Member of Parliament for Co. Mayo in the following year mainly as a result of Daly's support for him in "*The Connaught Telegraph*". He backed Parnell's obstructionist policy at Westminster.

**John O'Kane** was a Claremorris shopkeeper and County Centre of the I.R.B. in Mayo. He directed I.R.B. activities locally.

**Patrick William Nally**, (1856 - 1891) was a farmer, a noted athlete and co-founder of the Gaelic Athletic Association. He was recruited into the I.R.B. in his teens by Dr. Mark Ryan and was chief organiser and Head Centre for Connaught in 1879. According to Davitt, P.W. Nally did not believe in constitutional agitation; "He was a physical force man"<sup>3</sup>.

**John William "Scrab" Nally** was a native of Balla, a farmer who, by all accounts, was a colourful character but was given to drink.

<sup>3</sup>Davitt to "Times" Commission.

He was an I.R.B. man and a brother of Patrick William Nally.

The Nallys' father, William Nally Esq.,<sup>4</sup> (1817 - 1899) was for many years agent of the estate of Blossie Lynch of Balla.

**Joseph P. Quinn** was a discharged school teacher in Claremorris and an I.R.B. member. (He was later to become National Secretary of the Land League.)

His brother, **Thomas J. Quinn** was, (subsequent to our story) forced to emigrate to Ouray, Colorado, U.S.A. for I.R.B. activities in 1882 bringing with him the famous "Land for the People" flag which was first unfurled at Irishtown.

**John W. Walshe**, was a native of Balla, a commercial traveller by profession and a member of the I.R.B. He was a cousin of Davitt and a relative of the Nally brothers.

**Pat 'Crop' Corr** of Kilvine, Irishtown was descended from a family that fled from the Province of Ulster following a sectarian skirmish known as 'The Battle of The Diamond' in 1795 and settled at Burriss townland. He was both a Whiteboy and an I.R.B. member. His appellation, 'Crop', was most likely an abbreviation of 'Cropper' - a common Whiteboy codename.

**Joseph F. D'Alton**<sup>5</sup> (1854 - 1883), a native of Claremorris, was supervisor of McDonald's Store in Milltown, Co. Galway in 1879 and briefly was a merchant in Claremorris before his death. Whether or not he was a sworn Fenian is unknown but, evidently, he was willing to meet with Davitt and support the Irishtown meeting which we will deal with anon. (His son was later to become Roman Catholic Primate of All Ireland).

**John James Loudon BL** (a barrister based in Westport and grazier of 7000 acres) was chairman of the Castlebar Tenants Defence Association. Neither Loudon nor James Daly of the '*Connaught Telegraph*' had any

<sup>4</sup>For a detailed account of the Nally family history, see The Nallys of Balla in Vol. V of the Journal of the South Mayo Family Research Society.

<sup>5</sup>D'Alton was father of John Cardinal D'Alton, Roman Catholic Primate of All Ireland in the 1960s.