

Research needed on Kilkenny in the 18th century

TWO direct descendants of men killed on June 11, 1798 laid wreaths at their graves in the old church yard on Thursday evening.

Martin Harrington of Raheenduff was concealed in the chimney of his home when the Redcoats called to the house on that evening.

A piece of soot became dislodged and he was shot where he crouched on the cross beam above the hearth.

His great great grandniece, Mary Audley placed the wreath on his grave.

Charles Audley was also killed on that day and research is continuing to find out how he died.

A wreath was also placed on his grave by his great great grandniece, Alice Audley.

The Graignamanagh Brass Band also played their part in the proceedings.

How apt that a band formed in 1760, and one of

the oldest in these islands, should play for those killed in 1798.

Brian Cleary who uncovered the story of the Wexford Republic and brought it back to public awareness was full of praise for the part played by the men of Kilkenny in 1798.

Introduced to the crowd in the churchyard by Rita Kavanagh, he was moved by the march of the pikemen from the Ferry bridge to the village in the company of their Wexford brothers.

He said it was an urgent necessity that the history of County Kilkenny in the 18th century be researched.

In the 1750s and 1760s the people of Kilkenny and Tipperary had no recourse to justice or political power and so the Whiteboys were formed in Co Kilkenny and then in Tipperary.

"In the face of grinding poverty their protests were

remarkably peaceful and achieved some degree of success".

He mentioned the part played by Henry Flood from Kilkenny and others in the "Free Parliament" and how the people of the region became aware of the change that was sweeping the rest of the world in the mid 18th century through pamphlets.

In the early part of 1798, Kilkenny was in a state of thorough insurrection and the people with nationalistic feelings were rigorously suppressed by Charles Asgill and others, according to Mr Cleary.

"Their leadership were hanged or deported well before May of 1798," he said.

He added that up to 70 wagons a week were arriving in New Ross full of Kilkenny men who had been planning a revolution.

It was so different in Wex-

ford were Lord Mountnorris regularly informed Dublin Castle that there were no United Irishmen in Wexford.

It was this tolerance that allowed the Wexford people to organise and achieve some level of success in 1798 in complete contrast to what happened in county Kilkenny, Mr Cleary said.

He said that the Crown Forces completely outnumbered the United Irishmen and they had no chance in the Rower.

He thanked the committee in the Rower for organising the event. It was the first time that the events of 1798 had been recalled so publicly in the Rower.

After Mr Cleary's address their followed an ecumenical blessing by Canon Seamus McEvoy and Mrs Joan Deacon representing Rev Denis Sandes.