

Boston Tea Party

Words: Gerry Cody
Photos: Pat Shortall

Eoin MacDonald lived in the Cúl in the Village area of Kilkenny. A knowledgeable and articulate man, he was, throughout his life, particularly supportive of the arts. To enhance the experience of artistic events, Eoin, accompanied by his brother Dan, invariably arrived at a venue an hour or two before a performance commenced. He insisted that the early bird gained the advantage of beneficial insights.

I successfully adopted this strategy last Sunday when I attended a commemorative event for Thomas White at Rothe House, Parliament Street in Kilkenny.

The benefits were that I met many of the American delegation in an informal setting before official proceedings got under way. These participants were representing groups including Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum and Boston Revolution 250. An added bonus was meeting the articulate and ebullient Stephanie from Loeber Communications.

Other early attendees included members of Kilkenny's re-enactment group, Mayor Joe Malone, Councillor Michael Doyle and Fonsie Meally of Rothe House and the Kilkenny Archaeological Society.

I observed members of The Kilkenny re-enactment group, John Joe Cullen, Declan Cooke and Phil Cody act as wonderful ambassadors for our city as they chatted and welcomed the American visitors.

As the Irish and American flags were positioned I learned from Commandant (retired) Larry Scallan, that if both poles are of equal height, the Irish flag should fly on the left hand pole.

I watched as Sinead Gibbons from Rothe House and Donal Croghan from The Great Kilkenny War Memorial committee put the final touches to preparations.

It was also nice to get a few minutes to walk around the beautiful Tudor kitchen room at Rothe House where the event was being held and where gardener Mary



Mr Pat Nolan from Rothe House attended the Thomas White event at Rothe House

Pyke had prepared two glorious window boxes decorated with flowers in the American colours. Rothe House front of house staff Sinead Gibbons, Mary Flood, Mary Ann Vaughan, and Sean Allen who were pleasantness personified, embellished the occasion. You can't beat class.

COMMEMORATION

So, what was this Thomas White event all about?

Stephanie Loeber of American company Loeber Communications takes up the story.

"Two hundred and fifty years ago, over three hundred chests of tea were thrown into Boston Harbour in what has become known as The Boston Tea Party. Those involved were of various nationalities, including Thomas White, born in Kilkenny on March 19, 1739.

Stephanie continued: "This is a joint project between 'Boston Tea Party Ships and Museums', and 'Revolution 250' to place Commemorative markers at the graves of known Boston Tea Party participants."

Stephanie went on to explain that this year marks the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party and the event taking place in Kilkenny was to officially honour the role played by Thomas White, the sole participant from Ireland in this crucial, watershed event in American history.

Members of the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, Revolution 250 and Rothe House, Kilkenny hosted this commemorative event, which explored Thomas White's intriguing story and the role he played in the American Independence struggle.

Stephanie went on to explain that with the involvement of members of 'The Great Kilkenny War memorial Committee', Rothe House, The Kilkenny Archaeological Society and Cllr David Fitzgerald, it wasn't long before a plan was hatched and on Sunday, 24 September, 2023, that plan became a reality.

Thomas White's participation in the historic Boston Tea Party has largely gone unmarked in Kilkenny.

Thomas Alloway White was born on March 19, 1739 in Kilkenny, Ireland.

White emigrated to America sometime between 1755-1760. In that time, he moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he married Elizabeth (née Jones) on July 13, 1771 and took up the trade of tailor.

He eventually moved to Boston, Massachusetts with his family and was said to have been a Freemason and to have joined St. Andrew's Lodge giving him the connection the many known revolutionaries at the time.

On December 16, 2023, at 34 years old, he participated



Kilkennyman Thomas White - revolutionary soldier and patriot for American Independence



Reenactors of the Boston Tea party from America and Ireland photographed at Rothe House: Josiah George, Kelly Horan, John Joe Cullen and Phil Cody



SAYING IT WITH TEA: Boston reenactor Kelly Horan raise a cup of tea with Mayor Joe Malone at the Thomas White commemoration held in Kilkenny. Also pictured: Cllr Michael Doyle (Chairman, Kilkenny County Council), Commandant Larry Scallan, John Joe Cullen, Declan Cooke, Josiah George and Phil Cody



Boston Tea Party



Thomas White

pendence remembered at Rothe House

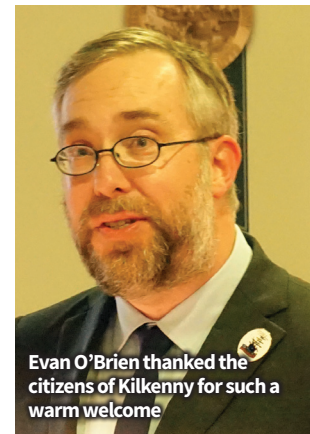
Main image: Attending the Thomas White Commemorative event at Rothe House were: BACK: John Joe Cullen (Kilkenny Reenactors group); Jonathan Lane (Executive Director, Revolution 250); Stephanie Loeber, (Loeber Communications), Kelly Horan, (Assistant Creative Manager, Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum and Boston Reenactor), Josiah George (Assistant Creative Manager, Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum and Boston Reenactor), Evan O'Brien (Creative Director, Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum), Declan Cooke (Kilkenny Reenactors), Phil Cody (Kilkenny Reenactor), Kristin Harris (Research Coordinator, Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum). Front Row: Donal Croghan, (Kilkenny Great War Memorial) Sinead Gibbons, Mary Flood, Ann Tierney, Mary Pyke and Mary Anne Vaughan, from Rothe House



Executive director of Revolution 250 Mr Johnathan Lane pictured at Rothe House Kilkenny



Mr Fonsie Mealy from Kilkenny Archaeological society spoke at Rothe House on the many contributions made by Kilkenny people in America



Evan O'Brien thanked the citizens of Kilkenny for such a warm welcome

in the Boston Tea Party. He served in the Revolutionary War joining the Continental Army in the 2nd Pennsylvania Regiment in 1776/1777 and served until 1791. Following the war, he and his family migrated to the West.

A NEW BEGINNING
They settled in what is now part of Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, near the present town of Robertsdale, on a tract of land which he cleared and developed a farm. They had a very large family of 21 children. Mr. White died in his frontier home on September 13, 1820. His descendants and members of various societies created a monument to his memory there, which was unveiled on July 4, 1889.

The inscription on the monument reads: 'In Memory of Thomas White of the Boston Tea Party December 16, 1773 and a Revolutionary Soldier and Patriot for American Independence.' Speaking at the event, Cllr. Michael Doyle, Chair of Kilkenny County Council said that it was a great honour for him to attend the commemoration. "The Boston Tea Party, was a momentous occasion in American History, and it is wonderful to hear of Thomas Whites involvement"

Joe Malone, Mayor of Kilkenny welcomed all to Rothe House and said he had just returned from Kilkenny in Minnesota which is twinned with Kilkenny Ireland. "The relationship between our countries is very special and the Thomas White connection is very important to us here" said the Mayor.

Mr. Fonsie Mealy, a director at Rothe House Trust and President of The Kilkenny Archaeological Society said it was wonderful to see this relationship between Boston and Kilkenny and the involvement of Mr White two hundred and fifty years ago is something that will be treasured in Kilkenny. Members of the visiting American party addressed the gathering of over one hundred people. Josiah George and Kelly Horan, members of the Boston Tea Party ships and Museums treated the audience to a re-enactment of the life of Thomas White.

Executive Director of 'Revolution 250', Johnathan Lane thanked the Kilkenny audience for turning out to mark the occasion, saying that the support and encouragement they received from Kilkenny was extra special.

COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE
Mr Evan O'Brien, Creative Director of 'The Boston Tea Party and Ships' presented a commemorative plaque to Fonsie Mealy. The plaque will be placed at Rothe House Gardens as a gift to the community in Kilkenny to mark the birthplace of Thomas White.

The ceremony also consisted of a white rose being planted in the garden of Rothe House to mark the occasion.

Special guests on the day included members of Kilkenny Archaeological Society, Ray Cleere, Jim Wellwood of Kilkenny Freemasons, Board members of Rothe House Trust, and members of The Kilkenny reenactors group.

Kilkenny piper Tony Coy provided music in the courtyard while staff at Rothe house ensured all enjoyed sandwiches and a nice drink on the day. Tea of course.



The Boston delegation who travelled to Kilkenny for the Thomas White commemoration: Johnathan Lane, Stephanie Loeber, Kelly Horan, Josiah George, Evan O'Brien and Kristin Harris



Mr Fonsie Mealy, President of Kilkenny Archaeological society attended the Thomas White commemorative event at Rothe House. Also included as Chair of Kilkenny Council Michael Doyle, Mayor Joe Malone, Josiah George and Kelly Horan



The attendance stands as The American national anthem is played



A commemorative plaque was presented to Fonsie Mealy and which will be placed at Rothe House gardens to remember Thomas White, a Kilkenny man who was part of The Boston Tea Party volunteers. Picture includes Donal Croghan, Cllr Joe Malone, Cllr Michael Doyle, Fonsie Mealy and Evan O'Brien