

MAYNOOTH LOCAL HISTORY GROUP



THE GRAVE OF RICHARD TURNER AT LADYCHAPEL MAYNOOTH

A Headstone at Ladychapel Cemetery some miles from Maynooth on the Donadea Road records commemorative details of the Turner Family including the following "*Richard Turner killed in the Irish Army at the Battle of Ovidstown in 1798. Aged 23 years*".

Estimates of fatalities in the brief 1798 Rebellion mentioned possibly 30,000, most of them being the anonymous Irish insurgents. It is unusual to find such a Headstone description as this Ovidstown is in the triangle between Kilcock, Timahoe and Enfield and close to the Bog of Allen. In June 1798 Rebel activity in North Kildare appeared static and isolated compared to the traumatic scale of events in Ulster and Wexford. On the 18th June 1798 large numbers of United Irishmen from West Dublin had travelled to the Timahoe area. The massing of Rebels in the Bog of Allen probably indicated the beginnings of a planned attack on Dublin. At "breakfast time" on the 19th June the Rebel Camp at Ovidstown Hill was surprised by the arrival of a force of Highlanders under Colonel Gordon, which had travelled from Trim via Kilcock. Despite efforts by the Rebels with muskets, who led the attack, the cannon of the Government Forces, with the new technology, shrapnel, quickly broke down the Rebel Discipline, and they finally fled with an estimated 200 killed, including Richard Turner. Local tradition is that his mother later retrieved his body from the battlefield and carted it home for burial in Ladychapel Cemetery.

On the 20th June 1998 the Local Maynooth 1798 Commemoration Committee assembled at Ladychapel Cemetery prior to joining the County Kildare Commemoration Ceremony at Ovidstown Hill. The Committee produced a Commemorative Booklet *1798 and Maynooth* which contained a number of Commemorative Poems, one of which remembered Richard Turner.