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Thomas Crowe of Mount Bruis

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The article "Turbulent Days Beneath Galteemore" in the 1993 *Tipperary Historical Journal* referred to Thomas Crowe, who was executed in Cork Jail on 25 August 1876 for his involvement in an attack on Patten Bridge, the agent of Nathaniel Buckley, near Kilbehenny, which resulted in the death of Bridge's driver, John Hyland. The author repeats an error made by earlier commentators in claiming that this attack occurred a few weeks after another assassination attempt on Bridge; in fact this assault happened a year earlier, on 22 March 1875. (See *Cork Examiner*, 24-3-1875).

Thomas Crowe was from the townland of Ardivillane in the parish of Mount Bruis near Tipperary town. Rather than volunteering to be part of the attack party it seems that his married brother was included in the initial group. Thomas, a bachelor, took his brother's place, realising that his capture or death would have less serious repercussions than that of a married man with a wife and family. On the day of the attack Patten Bridge, accompanied by his driver Hyland and land-steward O'Loughlen and protected by two armed policemen, Constable Nugent and Sub-Constable Jones, was returning to Galtee Castle from Mitchelstown, having collected half-yearly rents. Nugent arrested Crowe at the scene of the attack.

He had allegedly fired a blunderbuss; at his trial a number of witnesses cast doubt on police evidence. Indeed, it was suggested that Bridge and the policemen had framed Crowe because they needed a scapegoat for their own allegedly less than brave actions. At the inquest the jury found that the driver Hyland died of a gunshot wound, but refused to name any person as criminally responsible for his death.

Such incidents were common at the time on the slopes of the Galtees. At Midleton Quarter Sessions a week after the fatal attack a bailiff claimed that "civil bill decrees were of little value in the neighbourhood of Mitchelstown as the people were always ready to resist the bailiffs, and the latter were in fear of their lives". (See *Cork Examiner*, 10-4-1876). John Ryan, sought for the 1875 attack, was arrested in April 1876 at Lismore, in connection with the killing of Hyland. However, he was released as he had a cast-iron alibi for the date of the attack, 30 March 1876.

Crowe was hanged along with a Greek sailor, Christos Emmanuel Baumbos, who had been convicted of the murder of the officers of a ship the previous January. The inquest into the bodies stated that Crowe was 63 years old: the *Cork Examiner* had speculated that Crowe's official age was an underestimate. Although buried within the jail, Thomas Crowe was remembered in his home parish. A family headstone in Mount Bruis graveyard reads that he "died for agrarian agitation RIP". (See David Leahy: *Survey Mount Bruis Graveyard*, 1990).

