

*climb The Liberty Tree*

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE  
ULSTER-SCOTS' ROLE IN  
THE UNITED IRISHMEN'S  
REBELLION OF 1798**



**PUPIL WORKBOOK 4**



**Down In Down:  
The Rebellion Crushed**

# Ulster-Scots Against Rebellion



The photograph shows Mount Stewart House, near Greyabbey on the Ards Peninsula. The House and its Gardens now belong to the National Trust, but were once the property of the Stewart family who purchased it in 1737. The family had come to Ulster from Scotland during the Plantation.

The family did not want rebellion in Ireland and although they at first supported reform of the laws which discriminated against Catholics and Presbyterians, they withdrew this support when the situation in the country began to look dangerous.

The head of the family was **Lord Londonderry**.

His son, **Lord Castlereagh**, became Chief Secretary to the British Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1798 .

You can find out more about Castlereagh by looking him up on the Ulster-Scots Agency website: [www.ulsterscotsagency.com](http://www.ulsterscotsagency.com)

# Ulster-Scots Against Rebellion

Suggest some reasons why the Stewart family opposed the Rebellion.

1.

2.

3.

## Presbyterians

Get a Bible and look up the First Book of Samuel in the Old Testament. Find Chapter 15, verse 23.

Write out the verse below:

Does this explain why many Ulster-Scots Presbyterians and their ministers believed it was wrong to support the United Irishmen, even if Presbyterians were being unfairly treated?

# Presbyterian United Irishmen

Not all Presbyterian ministers took the same view. The following men were suspected of supporting the Rebellion. They were all either ministers or waiting to become ministers.

**Rev. William Steel Dickson - Portaferry**

**Rev. James Porter - Greyabbey**

**Rev. Ledlie Birch - Saintfield**

**Rev. Arthur McMahon - Holywood**

**Archibald Warwick**

**David Bailie Warden**



Dickson said:

*It is the duty of ministers of religion, as watchmen of souls, stewards of the manifold grace of God and guardians of truth and righteousness, to observe errors and iniquities as they arise, to expose.... reprove and correct them with freedom and boldness.*

He meant that ministers should correct the Government if it was doing wrong. Dickson was arrested before the Rebellion began.

# Support for Rebellion

As many as 4000 men may have taken part in the 1798 Rebellion in Co Down. There were four battles and for three days the eastern part of the county, including the Ards Peninsula, was in rebel hands.

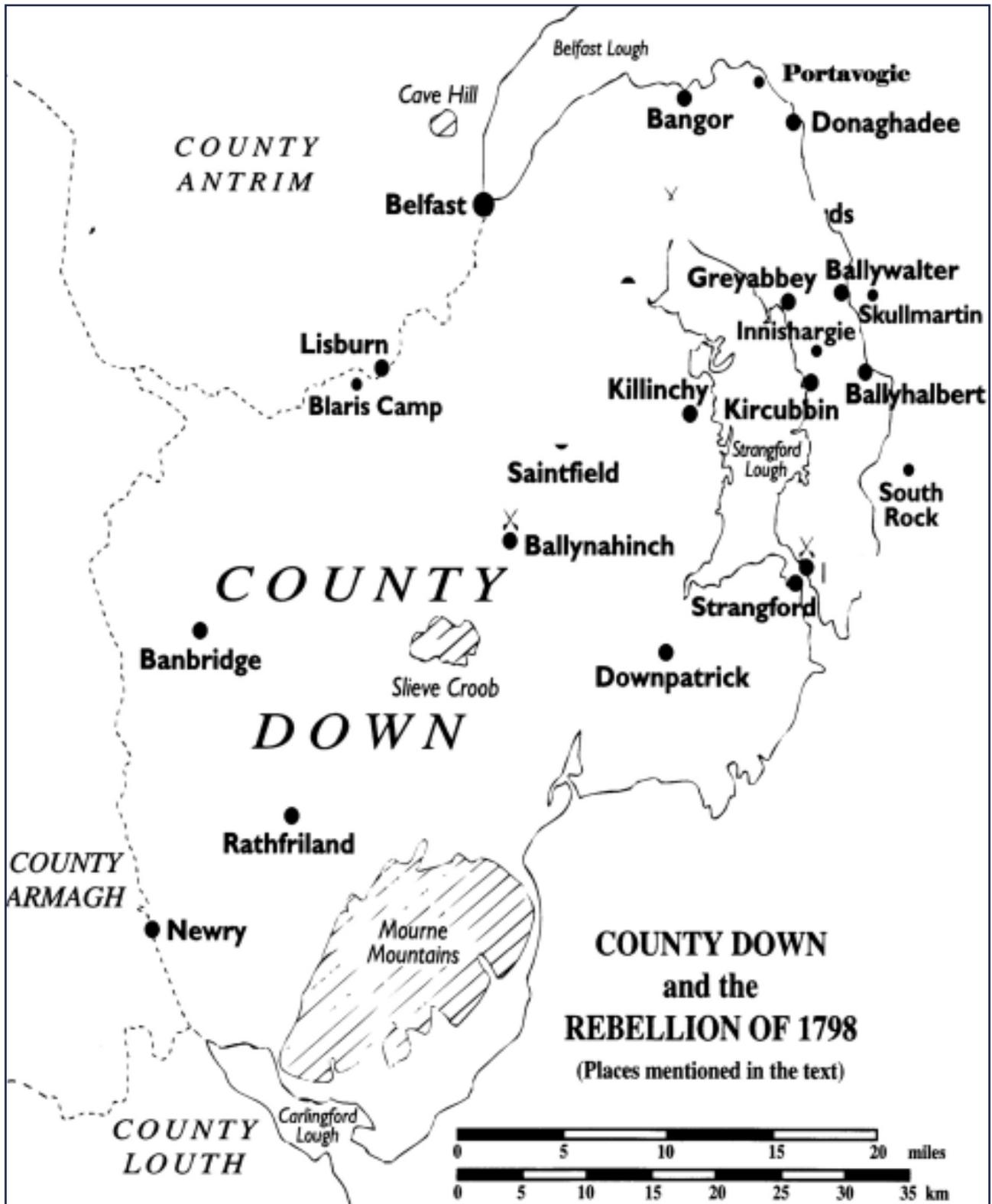
Unjumble the names of the towns where battles took place and add them to the map overleaf:

<b>Onwtdrasewn</b>	
<b>Refyratorp</b>	
<b>Fldeinitas</b>	
<b>Hnihcanallby</b>	

Why was there such support?

1. The area had a great many Presbyterians who wanted the Penal Laws removed.
2. The family at Mount Stewart stopped supporting the calls for reform. This angered many ordinary people.
3. A Church of Ireland minister, John Clelland, started collecting tithes (a tax) from Presbyterians.

# county DOWN in 1798



# Active Time

Choose two of the following. Work with a partner.

1. Make a poster calling for support for the United Irishmen's Rebellion in County Down.
3. Create a rap to express the views of County Down Presbyterians who believed it was wrong to rebel.
4. Find a selection of music (popular, rock, classical) that might help to inspire the rebels as they prepare for battle. Make a tape or CD of your selection and present it with a brief explanation of the reasons for your choices.



# Battles in Down



**Saintfield  
June 9**



**Newtownards  
"Pike Sunday"  
June 10**



**Portaferry  
June 10**



**Ballynahinch  
June 13**

Look at this diagram for 2 minutes then cover it up.  
Can you memorise it?

# Massacre of the McKees

Hugh McKee lived with his family at Carrickacessna, a mile and a half west of Saintfield. The family were loyalists and had informed against the United Irishmen in the area. Their home was attacked on the morning of June 9th by two waves of United Irishmen. They had barricaded themselves in and resisted with arms.

One of the attackers climbed on the roof and set it on fire. The whole family burned to death. This appears to be an atrocity committed by the rebels, although no others have been recorded in the district. However, here is the Rev. Ledlie Birch's account of what happened. Remember that Birch supported the Rebellion.

*Samuel Hewitt of Killinchy and a party under his command went to McKee's house for the purpose of securing his arms. McKee and his sons fired out of the house upon them. Hewitt and his party returned the fire. Hewitt entreated McKee to come out and deliver up his arms, and he and his family would not be injured. The answer he returned was a volley, fire was then ordered to be set fire to the house for the purpose of forcing McKee and his family out, and the door was burst open. McKee shut the door and kept in the family saying they would all die together.*

# Group Discussion



Work in groups of 5 or 6. Report your findings to the class.

1. Read Birch's account of the killing of the McKees. Who seems to be responsible for their deaths?
2. Should the McKees have come out when they were given the opportunity to do so?
3. Can you think of any reasons for doubting Birch's account?
4. What might make you inclined to believe him?
5. Newspapers that supported the Government reported this story in detail. Create a headline United Irishmen's behaviour seem much more ruthless than Birch does.

# Slaughter at Saintfield

## Crown Forces:

- Colonel Stapylton
- The York Fencibles
- Canon

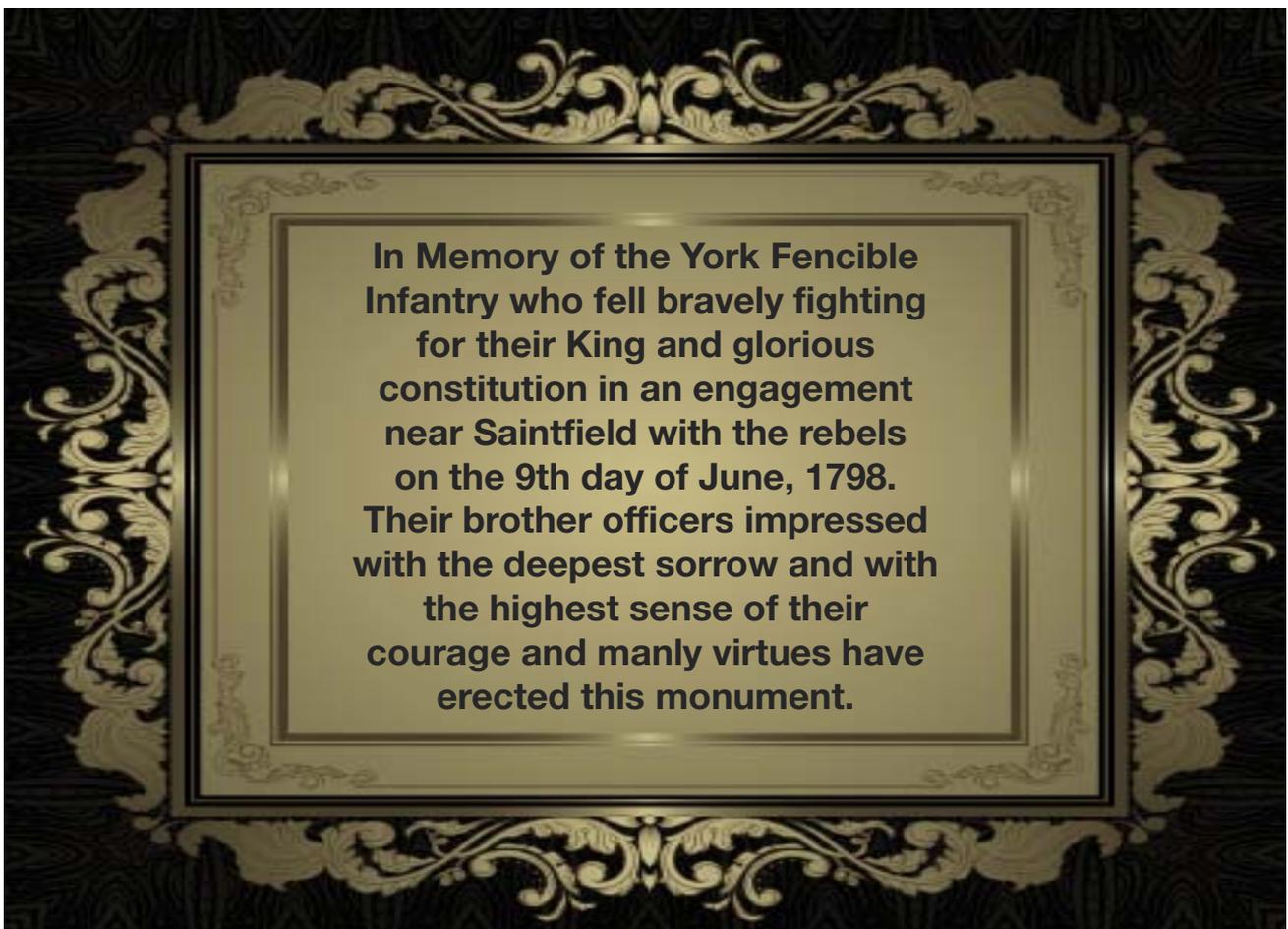


## The Rebels:

- No clear leader
- Pikemen
- Some arms



56 of Colonel Stapylton's men died when the Rebels ambushed them from a wood on high ground. In the Parish Church at Saintfield there is a memorial to some of them:



One of the men named on the monument is Captain William Chetwynd who was shot by local farmer, Daniel Millin. After this Stapylton retreated.

No-one knows exactly how many rebels died. Most were buried in a pit near the Presbyterian Church.



1. Pick out the words in the memorial that show how proud the soldiers were of the dead officers.
2. Use Word to create a memorial that the rebels might have written for their dead friends.
3. Imagine you are Daniel Millin. Write down how you felt some years later about killing Captain Chetwynd at Saintfield.

## Pike Sunday, June 10.

- David Bailie Warden leads rebel attack on Newtownards.
- Rebels attack Portaferry
- Rev Ledlie Birch preaches to the Rebel Army at Creevy Rocks on the road to Ballynahinch.
- Most of North Down and Ards is in the hands of the United Irishmen.

# Ballynahinch – the End of it All



Henry Munro, a linen manufacturer from Lisburn was elected leader of the rebel army at Creevy Rocks. He sent a troop to take control of Ballynahinch, which they did.

Munro then led his men to the Montalto Estate belonging to Lord Moira. A hill on the Estate overlooked the town of Ballynahinch where the final battle took place. Some reports say his forces were joined by members of the Catholic Defenders organisation.

Henry Joy McCracken left the Antrim hills and tried to link up with Monro, but the military were now out in force and he was unable to cross the Lagan to get from Antrim to Down. He had to go back into hiding.

General Nugent, determined to squash the Rebellion completely, led the Monaghan Militia to Ballynahinch for the confrontation with Monro's men.

On the next page you will find a description of the Rebel camp on Ednavaddy Hill.

# The Rebel camp overlooking Ballynahinch

The eye was presented with a mixed and motley multitude..... they wore no uniform yet they presented a tolerably decent appearance, being, no doubt, in their "Sunday clothes".

The only thing in which they all concurred, was the wearing of green; almost every individual having a knot of ribbons of that colour, sometimes intermixed with yellow, in his hat. ... The most common decorations were the harp entwined with shamrock or bays, but without the crown....

By far the majority had pikes, which were truly formidable instruments in close fight, but of no use in distant warfare. These had generally wooden shafts, seven or eight feet long, with sharpened heads of steel, of different forms and commonly ten or twelve inches in length. .... Others wore old swords, generally of the least efficient kind; and some had merely pitchforks. Those of the higher class were armed with guns.

James Thomson.

# Group Discussion



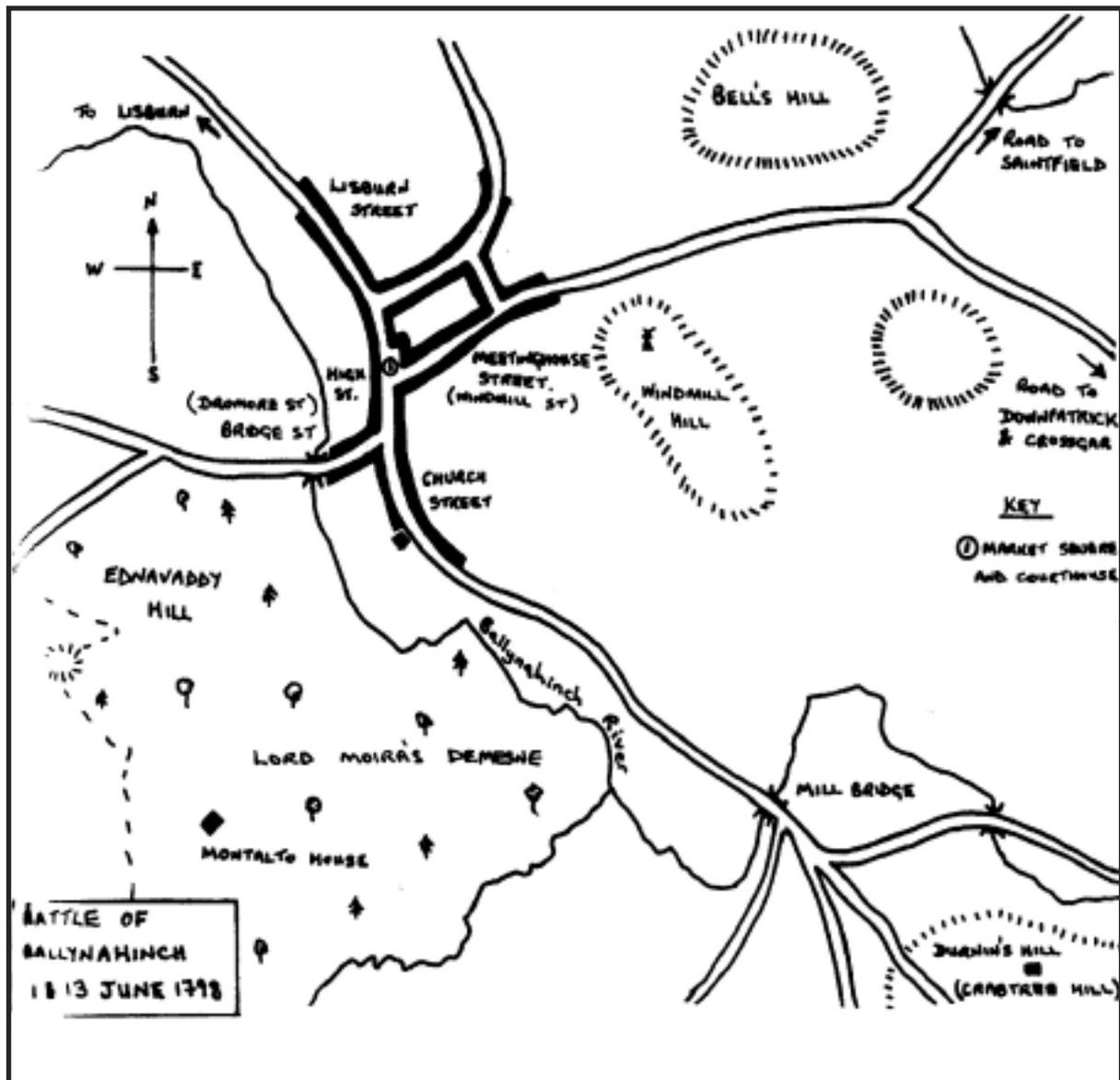
1. Why do you think the men dressed in their Sunday clothes for the battle?
2. What do you think was the significance of their wearing green and the other symbols mentioned?
3. How well armed were they?
4. James Thomson was a boy of twelve when he visited the camp. He wrote this account many years later. Suggest some reasons why it stayed in his mind so vividly all his life.



# The Battle of Ballynahinch: June 12 and 13

On the next page is a list of the events of the battle in the order in which they happened. Work with your partner to create a poster to present these events in a memorable way. Use Word or Publisher.

Use the map below to locate the places named.



# Events At Ballynahinch: June 12 and 13.

1. General Nugent himself led the Monaghan Militia and other troops to Ballynahinch. They united with further troops under Colonel Stewart.
2. Some of Monro's men were occupying Bell's Hill and Windmill Hill. Nugent ordered the Monaghans to clear them and occupy these positions.
3. Nugent's artillery bombarded the camp at Ednavaddy.
4. At 10.00 pm on June 12 Nugent's troops occupied Ballynahinch where they looted and burned.
5. Monro insisted on waiting till morning to attack. Then he sent columns from two directions: one up Bridge Street, the other along Church Street.
6. The Bridge Street column captured two canon and joined with the other column. They passed along High Street to the Market Square.
7. Nugent ordered his bugler to sound a retreat and Monro's troops mistook it for a counter-attack call. They fled in fear.
8. Colonel Stewart's men reached Ednavaddy Hill where he surrounded Monro's camp. Monro then ordered every man to escape.
9. The rebels were pursued through the countryside. Monro himself was captured after being betrayed by a pig farmer



Work in groups of 3-5 to create and present one of the following role plays that centre on events at Saintfield and Ballynahinch.

Watch a video of an interview for *Newsnight* first and note how the journalist asks awkward questions. Discuss how to make the interview uncomfortable!

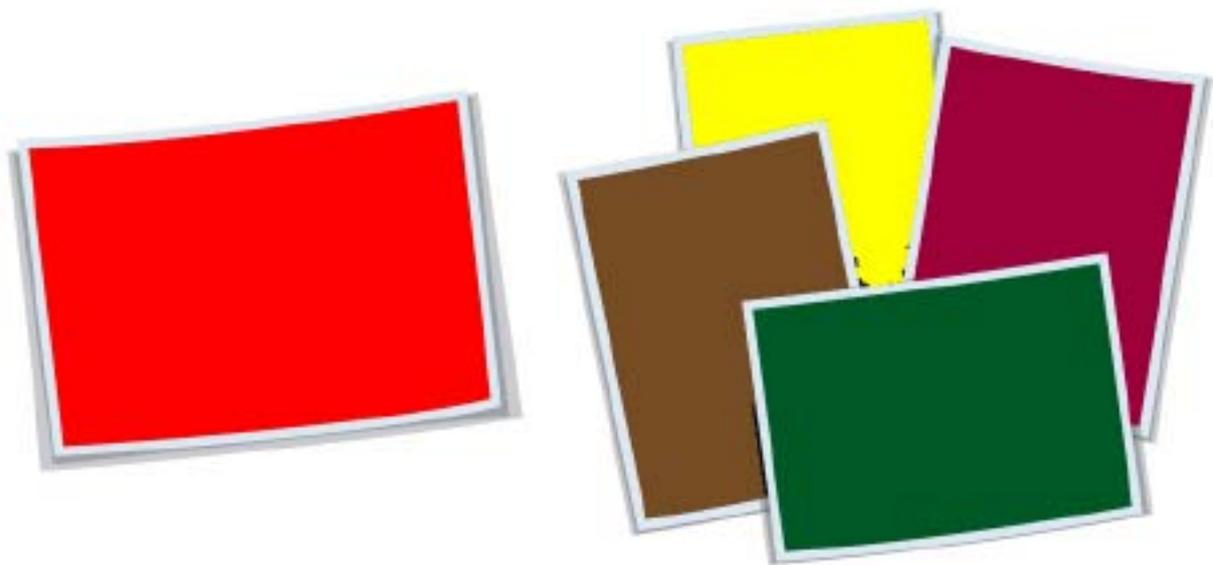
1. Interview for the BBC two of the eyewitnesses of the murder of the McKees. One witness should be sympathetic to the rebels, the other should not.
2. Interview some of the British officers who fought at Saintfield about the casualties they suffered. Include Colonel Stapylton. Challenge him about his decision to retreat to Newtownards.
3. Interview General Nugent following his success at the Battle of Ballynahinch. Include an interview with the pig farmer who betrayed Monro.



# Recalling the Rebellion In county Down

## The Big Names

Your teacher has given you a set of cards showing the surnames of people who were involved with the Rebellion in Co. Down. Separate these into two piles: one for people on the Government side, the other for supporters of the Rebels.



## Newsflashes

Class divides into 2-3 teams of 10. Each group is given a set of 10 cards showing 10 events that took place during the Rebellion in Co. Down. These must be put into the correct order. Each person takes one incident and words it appropriately as a brief newsflash which is then learned by heart. The news items are then presented in order.

Teams could stand in line and pass a ball or baton along the line to indicate each team member's turn to speak.

# concluding Activity: Individual Work

For this activity you will need

- the PowerPoint software on your computer.
- the 10 news flashes from the last activity
- the information in the Fourth Branch work book and earlier workbooks.

Prepare a PowerPoint Presentation to teach about the 1798 Rebellion in Co. Down. Include the background, major events, main characters and the outcome. You should have no more than 10 slides, including a title slide.

The target audience is a group of your peers who have no previous knowledge of this subject. Some of them have a very brief attention span and you will need to think about how to hold their interest, not just about getting the information across.

Also prepare a brief commentary to accompany each slide as notes.

When you have finished, save your presentation onto a disk and hand it in.

