

Irish Uprisings, Wars and Battles

A tour bus driver in Ireland remarked to his passengers as he passed an old castle, '*It was this on spot that the Irish defeated the British forces in 1315.*' Later, as they passed an open field, he announced, '*This is the field where the Irish forces beat the brutal and bloody Saxon in 1170.*' After identifying a third spot as the scene of another Irish victory, one perturbed British passenger shouted, '*Certainly, my good man, the British must have won a battle somewhere!*' To which the driver responded, '*Not on my bus, they didn't!*'

The subject of battles in Ireland is a very broad topic, especially when considering the number of battles that took place between various clans prior to the coming of the English. Then there were battles fought against the Viking invaders up to the Battle of Clontarf where Brian Boru finally established Irish control of Ireland. A website <List of Irish Battles> lists more than 350 since the fifth century alone. As for the site <List of Irish Wars>, that takes into consideration continental wars in which the Irish were involved.

When discussing Irish attempts to free themselves from the yoke of British oppression, many are the skirmishes and battles that took place since the arrival of the Normans under Strongbow in 1169. However, there were 14 major attempts in which the Irish clans and even Anglo-Irish united to oppose the Crown. These were:

- 1315 - The arrival of Edmund Bruce with a Scots army to assist the Irish in ousting the Brits
- 1534 - The rising led by Silken Thomas Fitzgerald, Earl of Kildare, against Henry VIII's anti-Catholic policies
- 1569 - Rising by the Earl of Desmond and his Irish allies against Elizabeth's English government of Munster
- 1579 - Second Desmond Rebellion with many more Irish allies against Catholic persecution and land grabs
- 1594 - Nine Years War of O'Neill, O'Donnell and Maguire against the Crown
- 1641 - Rising of northern clans against the Crown which led to the Confederation of Kilkenny in 1642 and ended with the Cromwellian invasion of 1649
- 1689 - Williamite War of King Billy which ended with the Battle of the Boyne in 1691
- 1798 - The Rising of the United Irishmen
- 1803 - The Rising of the Bold Robert Emmet
- 1867 - The Fenian Rebellion
- 1916 - The Easter Rising
- 1919 - The War of Independence
- 1956 - The Border Campaign
- 1969 - The Troubles which ended with the 1998 Good Friday Agreement

Hopefully, future historians will have no more conflicts to document or write about as Ireland draws ever nearer to one island - one Ireland and our song writers and balladeers can concentrate on the beauty and promise of God's Emerald Isle.