

Professor Tom Bartlett – Talk on Napoleon and Ireland

***Was Napoleon Bonaparte in the GPO in Dublin in 1916?
The influence of Napoleon on Ireland 1796 – 1916.***

**presented by Soloneion Book Centre and the Irish Embassy
at 19.00 on Thursday 22 June 2017
Vyzantiou 24 Strovolos**

The coastline of Ireland is protected by a series of robust granite fortifications. These Martello Towers were intended to warn of an expected invasion by Napoleon Bonaparte. While he never made it to Ireland, his influence in Irish history and folklore may be detected down to the Easter Rising in the General Post Office (GPO) in Dublin in 1916.

The opening scene in Ireland's most famous novel *Ulysses* by James Joyce is set in the Martello Tower in Sandycove, South County Dublin (now a James Joyce museum).

Professor Bartlett is well known as the author of a number of books including 'Ireland - A History' (Cambridge University Press, 2011) and editor of 'A Military History of Ireland' (1997). He is Professor of Irish History at the University of Aberdeen.

He has a distinguished academic career including several visiting professorships in the USA, Britain and Ireland. He was elected a member of the [Royal Irish Academy](#) in 1995. He is a stimulating speaker and will draw on audio-visual material in his presentation.



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Martello Towers

Fear of an invasion by Napoleon Bonaparte reached panic proportions among the authorities in Ireland and England in 1804 and was the reason Martello Towers were built, first in Ireland and then in England. Their purpose was to provide what were, in those days, very strong towers from which fire could be directed at the ships of the imminently expected French invasion fleet.

The name Martello is derived from the name of a tower at Mortella in the Gulf of Fiorenzo. The Royalist French along with the Royal Navy failed to take the tower after attempting to rebel against the Napoleonic French in 1794. So impressed were the British by the strength of the tower, they suggested that similar towers should be built in Ireland and England. However, an error occurred in communications between the sides and the word "Mortella" was written as "Martello".

The original Towers from the Napoleonic era were circular in shape with 2 to 4 metre thick walls, which were made from solid stone that was all sourced locally. The entrance doorways of the towers are 3 metres from the ground, which meant, at that time, that access to the entrance could only be made by a ladder. The ladder could then be removed to protect against an invader.

The Towers never fired a cannon in anger, as Napoleon never invaded Ireland or England. However, it is believed that they did act as a deterrent, as Napoleon had every intention of invading England using Ireland as a "back door".

The Military numbered the Towers for easy reference. Tower No. 1 is the Sutton Martello Tower in North County Dublin, Ireland.



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