

Redmond Barton Cafferata – The Secret Agent in the Family

Part One – Early Life (1878-1914)

Researching family history is a bit like doing a jigsaw puzzle. The problem is that the family history jigsaw doesn't have a picture to work from and, not only are most pieces missing, they are scattered in many different places, and mixed in with pieces from many other puzzles. Sometimes tracking down just one piece can take years but occasionally several pieces are found together and a small part of the picture becomes a little clearer.

Such is the case with Redmond Barton Cafferata's story. There are some parts we know a lot about, such as his time on HMS Conway but we know much less about other periods of his life. So reading this biography is like looking at a half finished jigsaw; you only see some of the picture, and what you can see is uneven in its coverage. Hopefully though, it will give some idea of what his life was like.

Redmond Barton Cafferata was born on 14th April 1878⁽¹⁾ in Newark, Nottinghamshire, the sixth child and third son of Redmond Parker and Ellen Cafferata. In the 1881 census he was listed as living at 23 Millgate, a fine three storey Georgian house which reflected the prosperity of the family. Here the children were looked after by a Governess, Maria Sulburn and a nurse, Susan Kebber⁽²⁾.

At the age of only seven years he was sent away to boarding school, following his brothers Hubert and Louis to Stonyhurst College, starting there in September 1885. At Stonyhurst, his teachers included Father McMullin and Mr George Gruggen. In Mr Gruggen's Syntax class, Redmond was one of 33 boys. He was a pupil at Stonyhurst for eight years, leaving on August 1st 1893 at the age of 15⁽³⁾.

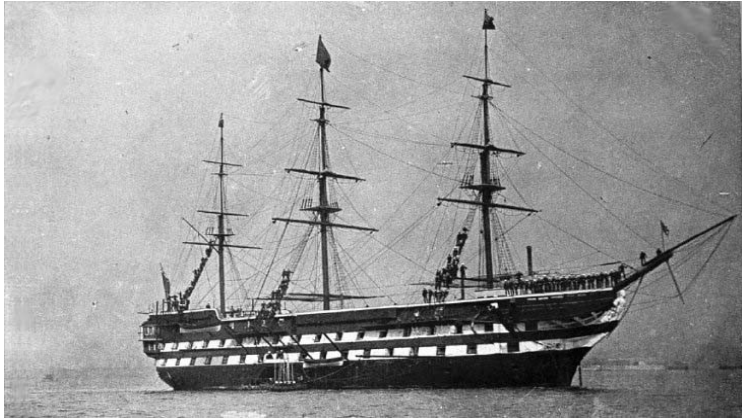


A Young Redmond Barton Cafferata

Information from Stonyhurst College indicated that when he left, Redmond signed on as a cadet on the Merchant Marine Training Ship HMS Conway. The archives at the Merseyside Maritime Museum provided a picture of Redmond's time as a cadet through two main sources, the Conway Cadet Register and the magazine "The Cadet". In the first of a number of literary coincidences in his life, Redmond was a contemporary of John Masefield, a Conway cadet who went on to become Poet Laureate and who wrote a book called "The Conway". This book provides a great deal of background about life on HMS Conway. These sources allow us to build up a fairly detailed picture

of Redmond's life from the 1st September 1893, when he started on HMS Conway, up until July 1895, when he left.

One of the jigsaw pieces that is still missing is Redmond's motivation for becoming a Conway cadet. The decision indicated he wanted to pursue a career in the mercantile marine, but we don't know why he chose this path, rather than following both of his elder brothers into the family



The third HMS Conway anchored off Rock Ferry

business. Redmond's father and grandfather had been born in Liverpool and there were still many members of the family living in the city. In addition, there were connections with other Catholic families in Liverpool such as the Kirby family and the Waterworth family. One of Redmond's relatives was Laurence Hugh Kirby. He was a grandson of Mary Anne Waterworth, sister of Redmond's grandmother Elizabeth Waterworth. Intriguingly, he was also a cadet on HMS Conway, albeit only for a term in 1894. One can't help

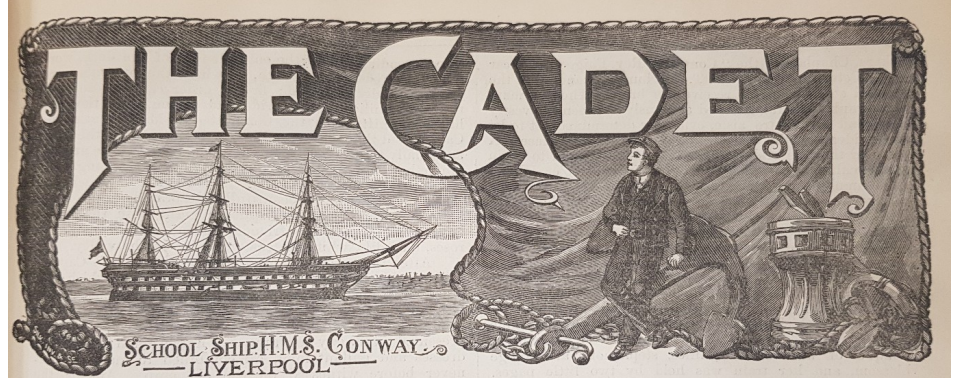
but wonder if the idea for signing onto HMS Conway was hatched during family gatherings in the early 1890s. Incidentally, Redmond's sister Cecilia ended up marrying another member of the Kirby family, Edmund, so the families were obviously in close contact at this time.

Whatever his motivation, a cadetship on Conway offered the boys a head start in their merchant marine careers. The HMS Conway Passing Out Certificate was an important one for all cadets, as it reduced the sea time needed to become a merchant naval officer from four years to three.

The idea of a training ship on the Mersey was first put forward in early 1858 by members of the Merchant Marine Service Association. Plans advanced quickly and HMS Conway was chosen⁽⁴⁾. In January 1859 Conway was moved to the Mersey and refitted before opening as a training ship on Monday August 1st 1859.

Almost immediately, HMS Conway was found to be too small and in 1861 she was replaced by (and swapped names with) HMS Winchester. The new HMS Conway was also too small but it took an outbreak of scarlet fever in 1874 to show up the shortcomings of this ship. After discussions with the Admiralty, HMS Nile was suggested⁽⁵⁾. A much larger ship, when operational HMS Nile had a complement of 700 sailors and 150 marines. She was brought to the Mersey in the summer of 1876 and refitted as the third HMS Conway. Captain Archibald T. Miller was appointed captain of HMS Conway in 1881 and was still captain in Redmond's time. He remained in command until 1903⁽⁶⁾.

When Redmond arrived in Liverpool to take up his position as cadet he was, thanks to the fact that he had been at boarding school since the age of seven, used to being away from home in a residential environment. However, living on a ship and coping in a strange situation must have been as difficult for Redmond as it was for the other boys. John Masefield described the confusion of life for a “New Chum” (or new cadet) aboard HMS Conway: From going to the Sailors’ Home to collect his uniform, to the noise and clutter on board the cadet would end up *“feeling utterly lost, not knowing his way about, in a world of decks, hatches, boatswains pipes and shouted, unintelligible orders, followed by rushing feet and charging men, in a new world, in which even the*



The Masthead of The Cadet Magazine

smells of paint, stores, tar and bilges were completely new, and in a new costume and a most uncomfortable cap⁽⁷⁾. And of course HMS Conway wasn’t a charitable institution – the uniform came at a cost of £6 10/- each year. Redmond’s entry in the cadet register shows that this was paid on the 19th September 1893, along with the termly fees of £23 10/-, £2 for “extras” and, in Redmond’s first term, a payment of £2 2/- for drawing⁽⁸⁾.

The new chums were, as might be expected, the butt of tricks played by the more senior cadets, with errands such as being sent to the master-at-arms to be measured for a cutlass being one of the popular jokes. But there was also kindness shown to the newcomers as older cadets would seek them out “take them round the ship, show them the ways and names of things, help them aloft... and warn them against dangers”⁽⁹⁾.

Although a school like Stonyhurst would have had its own rules and ways, Redmond’s regimented life on HMS Conway would have been very different, with every aspect of his day being governed by marine routines: HMS Conway was divided into two watches, port and starboard, and each cadet was given a number in his watch – even numbers to port and odd numbers to starboard. The ships working parties were supplied by each watch according to whether it was an even or an odd day of the month. Each watch was subdivided into four divisions or tops; forecastlemen, foretopmen, maintopmen and mizentopmen. New cadets were put into the forecastle but later allocated one of the tops – these were allocated according to the size of the cadet – maintopmen were the largest, then foretopmen with mizentopmen being the smallest⁽¹⁰⁾.

In his first term as a forecastleman, Redmond was among the most junior on the ship. His education consisted of two parts, naval and school. He would have been placed in the lowest of the school’s five classes and the lowest class in practical seamanship, learning such things as tying

knots. At the end of Redmond's first term in December 1893, he was given a report listing his ability in seamanship as good and his school ability as very fair.

In their second term, cadets were no longer new chums, and were moved from the forecastle to become the "youngest hands" in a top. Redmond was allocated to the Port Fore. The tops were a community and the cadets now began to feel part of the ship and began to develop a sense of belonging. Moving up in the seamanship class was a matter of course and the second term's work included splicing and working aloft on the masts although the youngest cadets weren't, as a rule, employed on the topgallant (the highest) yards⁽¹¹⁾. Safety consisted of nets stretched out under the masts to catch any unfortunates who took a tumble. At night, the boys slept in hammocks and, amongst other duties also had to clean the decks daily⁽¹²⁾.

Winter on board the Conway could be challenging. On February 17th 1894 Conway was struck by the Norwegian barque Daphne which had dragged her anchor. Damage included the loss of the ship's dinghy and 50 feet of railing taken by the Daphne as she slid by.

A change came in February 1894, with the boys manoeuvring a generator on board which could supply power for electric lighting. Prior to this, lighting was supplied by oil filled copper lamps which were incredibly dangerous but had the benefit of making the boys adept at putting fires out!

(13)

There were a number of illicit pastimes enjoyed by the cadets, one of the most popular being smoking but we don't know whether Redmond was one of the participants. It is possible that he refrained, given his sporting interests. The smokers had to find a secure hiding place in which to enjoy their hobby. They sometimes went aloft hoping that shaking of the rigging would warn them of the approach of authority. There were other, more hazardous, hiding places on the ship in

Redmond's time. There was a large petroleum tank lashed to the side of the ship near the port fore chains which was a popular spot. On 12th April 1894, the Liverpool Mercury carried an interesting report about a fire on HMS Conway.

"Yesterday afternoon about three o'clock a fire was discovered on board the training ship Conway, lying at anchor off Rock Ferry. It appears that a tank containing about 15 gallons of petroleum was lashed to the side of the vessel, and it is supposed that a



HMS Conway's anchor

spark from the galley fire fell into the tank and set the oil ablaze. Before the fire was discovered a portion of the adjacent bulwarks was burned, but the fire did not extend further. The lashings of the tank were cut, and it was dropped into the river.

Information of the outbreak was telephoned to the Central Fire Station, Birkenhead, and Superintendent Monk and several firemen turned out with appliances, but their services were not required, as the fire was extinguished by the staff of the ship in a few minutes.⁽¹⁴⁾

When he wrote his book on the Conway in 1933, John Masefield shed some interesting light on this incident: “Three young smokers set fire to the petroleum tank and nearly ended themselves and the ship. Henry Owen, the seamanship instructor, a man of lion-like courage and a choice seaman, leapt into the flames, cut the tank lashings and hove the blazing tank adrift over the side, and luckily no great damage was done.”⁽¹⁵⁾

By his second term on HMS Conway, Redmond was already well on his way to establishing his sporting credentials, with The Cadet magazine reporting on the final match between the senior football teams. This was played on Wednesday 9th May between Port Main and Port Fore. Main dominated the first half but due to the “excellent defence of the Foretop backs.....the Main failed to score”. Redmond was one of the backs for the Port Fore team. In the second half, however, Main scored the only goal to win the match⁽¹⁶⁾.

The report stated that both teams were short of men – but John Masefield wrote that hardly anyone played football or cricket and there was no interest in the teams from those who weren’t involved. No-one would “dream of going to see the ship’s team play a match.”⁽¹⁷⁾

After the summer break in 1894, Redmond’s education continued in his third term, but the focus was now slightly different; he was observed and reported on by the ship’s officers and staff. If these reports were favourable he could expect a “rating” as a petty officer – a position of authority within the ship. Whether a cadet was rated was more to do with how he was seen within his top than about his ability in his school lessons. Each top had its petty officers who fulfilled the roles of captains of the top but there were also other petty officers responsible for different aspects of the ship⁽¹⁸⁾. And indeed, the Cadet Magazine of February 18th 1895 reported that, along with Cadet Hawke, Redmond had been appointed petty officer in Port Fore for the Spring term of 1895.

A petty officer would be in command of between 13 and 30 cadets according to overall numbers of cadets. “They were responsible for the order and efficiency of their divisions, for their behaviour at mess, in boats and at drills. They had to see their men up in the morning and to supervise their work during the day. The working of the ship depended on them.”⁽¹⁹⁾

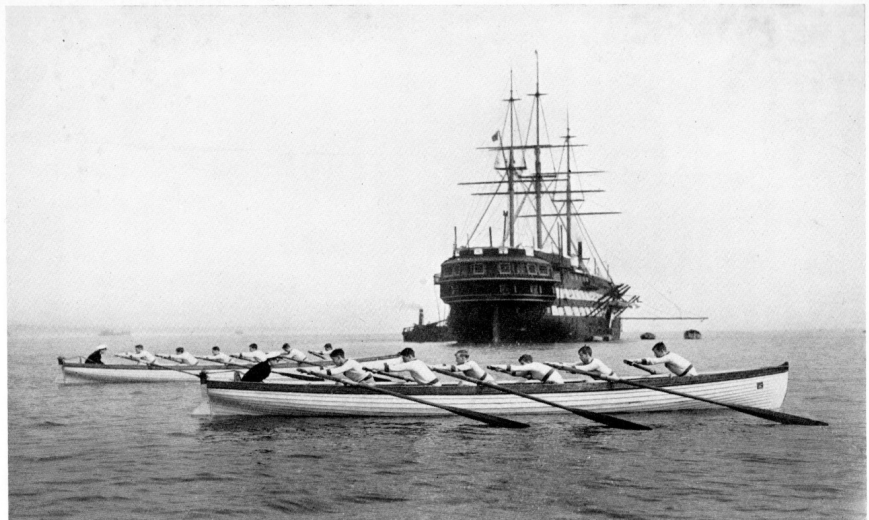
Life as a petty officer had privileges; hammock men to lash up, stow and sling the petty officer’s hammock; the best seats at messes; exemption from menial mess duty, from the messenger service and from rowing in the ship’s cutters (although they would steer); they had lockers in the petty officers’ room and they shared “an excellent supper every evening at 8pm, in the forward hospital. Of all the privileges this was the one the most enjoyed, it was the best mess and the pleasantest meal of the day.”⁽²⁰⁾

As part of their duties, petty officers judged and punished minor offences against ship's discipline although more serious offences went on the Captain's report. Minor offences included slackness in work, disobedience, playing the fool, lack of manners and untidiness. Punishments included looking after a petty officer's hammock, extra mess service, or assorted dirty and unpleasant duties on the ship⁽²¹⁾.

The winter of 1894-1895 was another hard winter on HMS Conway with most of the boys being stuck on board for six weeks due to ice in the River Mersey⁽²²⁾. The Cadet called this "The Ice Age" and reported that boats could only get to the shore for an hour or so at high water. This limitation meant that transport of provisions was of the greatest importance. Fresh water had to be supplied by Cunard steam tender, Skirmisher on a weekly basis⁽²³⁾.

When the weather finally improved, life began to resume its normal rhythm. Redmond continued in playing for the Port Fore football team with their match against Starboard Fore on March 6th ending in a 2 – 1 win for Port Fore. Port Fore scored the opening goal near the end of the first half. In the second half Starboard Fore attacked but their shooting was bad and Port's backs were too strong for them. Both teams managed to score in the second half⁽²⁴⁾. Port Fore weren't so lucky in their game against Port Main. This was a one-sided game with Port Main winning 8 – 0.

As previously mentioned, football was only a minor distraction for the cadets. Their major sporting passions were swimming and rowing. (Captain Matthew Webb, the first man to swim the English Channel had been a Conway cadet.) Swimming was, however, only an occasional treat but rowing was an almost daily duty. HMS Conway carried ten rowing boats of between four and sixteen oars, the prime amongst



The Six-oared Racing Gigs of HMS Conway

them being two six-oared racing gigs. Throughout the summer and autumn the tops and watches raced each other with the best rowers being picked for the two ten-oared cutters. From these twenty the racing gigs crews were picked. Successful rowers used a particular style, displaying an apparently slow stroke-rate of between twenty-eight and thirty which was adapted to the quick tides and rough waters of the Mersey. The performances of the crews were closely watched and encouraged, as well as having their performances dissected by their appreciative audiences⁽²⁵⁾.

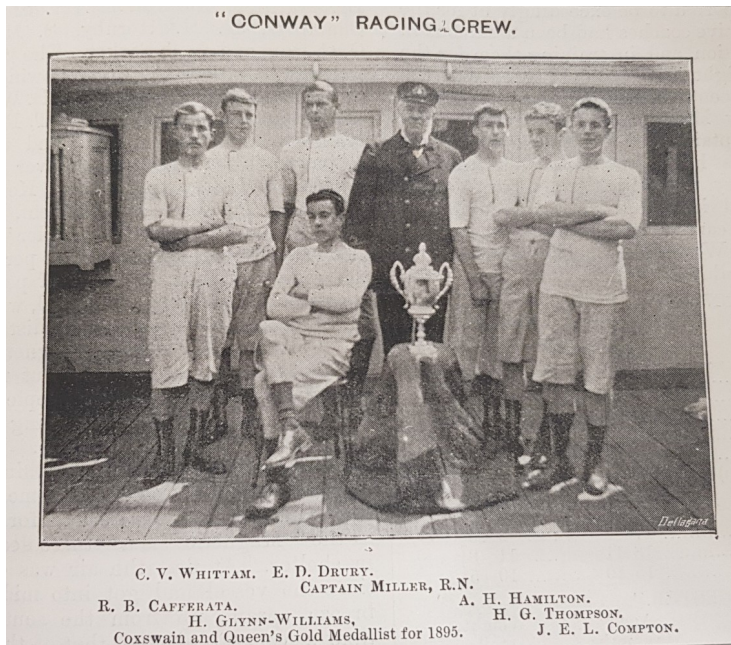
In the spring of 1895 the Cadet magazine asked the burning question "Who would form the racing crew?" Redmond was one of those who went through the selection process and was

selected to row for HMS Conway in the annual race against HMS Worcester. At the time of his selection Redmond was seventeen years and one month old. His vital statistics in the team list showed he was 5 feet 7.75 inches tall, he weighed 9 stone 2 pounds and had a chest measuring 33.5 inches⁽²⁶⁾. He was the smallest of the Conway team (apart from the cox, Glynn Williams), but he rowed the most important position, stroke. It was his job to manage the team and set the tempo during the race. Established in 1890, the race was between HMS Conway and HMS Worcester, a training ship based on the Thames at Greenhithe. HMS Worcester won the first race on the Thames. Conway won the second on the Mersey, but the next two were won by Worcester to lead the series 3 – 1. In 1894 Conway won once again. A victory in 1895 would bring HMS Conway level in the series.

The Conway crew received daily coaching from the Reverend Alan Williams of the Mersey Mission and Captain Miller. The race course was from the powder hulks off Bromborough to HMS Conway, avoiding the training ships, then finishing on the Liverpool side of Conway, a distance of 2 miles.

There was a huge amount of interest in the race, which took place on the 30th May 1895: The White Star tender “Magnetic” was the official steamer and the steamer America was chartered for a party of 1000 guests. Among the guests were the Lord and Lady mayor of Liverpool, Mr & Mrs Watts. The tugs “Toiler” and “Mersey King” were crowded with spectators and large numbers

gathered on shore. Unfortunately their view was somewhat restricted by a thick haze. A warm breeze blew from the south west. A band from the Royal Naval Reserve played for the guests and innumerable smaller vessels – rowing boats, steam launches and pleasure boats carried still more spectators.



The race should have commenced at 4pm but there was a 15 minute delay. Conway were given the Cheshire side of the river and Worcester the Lancashire side. As soon as the race was underway, Conway rowed at a much slower rate, 34, compared to Worcester’s much faster 39. But Worcester’s rowing

was sharp, short and jerky; Conway’s was long, regular and well-finished. Within the first two minutes it was obvious that Conway was going to win, they were already 1.5 lengths ahead. Worcester tried to lengthen their stroke but it became irregular, the rate varying between 27 and 32 compared to Conway’s “well finished lusty 30 strokes.” Twelve minutes into the race, Conway led by more than 6 lengths and their better conditioning was apparent: The Conway crew was well-knit and firm, whereas Worcester were of loose or lanky build. Worcester became

disheartened and to lusty cheers Conway Finished 140 yards ahead with a winning margin of 50 seconds.

The Cadet also provided another account of the race:

“At the word ready, Cafferata got his men well forward while West seemed content with a smaller reach forward. When off was ejaculated, West dashed his blade through the water with three rapid sharp strokes while Cafferata and those behind him, after a couple of small strokes put all they knew into one regular, stiff, long sweep. The result was that though his rival had got five strokes in to his two, the “Conway” boat was really going, while the Worcestrians had lost swing, and had to slacken instantly in order to keep anything like time...”

... A couple of minutes later Cafferata had slackened to 32, and the other stroke, possibly endeavouring to emulate that time, pulled for a bit at 28, then quickened to 36, and then slowed up once more. But it was all of no use, for, having now settled well down to 30, Cafferata took his boat along in such style as to gain appreciably every moment...”

The post-race celebrations were recounted by a lady:

“... Another charming sight took place when the young victors rowed alongside the “Conway” training ship. Huzzas and music had saluted them all the way over the water – “See the Conquering Hero comes” – handkerchiefs waved in the air, and all the rest of it; but when they reached the “Conway” their comrades rushed from the riggings, from the lower decks and from the upper decks, and gave them a right hearty welcome of handshakes and sturdy slaps on the shoulder...”⁽²⁷⁾

Both crews were entertained with a banquet at the Adelphi Hotel the same evening. Captain Miller made a speech in which he praised the crews, saying to a round of applause that there was no finer set of fellows in her Majesty’s service or the mercantile marine than the young gentlemen turned out of the “Worcester” and the “Conway” who were occupying the highest positions, and were a credit to their ships.

The Cadet magazine carried numerous letters in a similarly proud vein:

“Dear Sir, Allow me to send you my hearty congratulations on the magnificent victory the crew have gained... .. Ten lengths was a good licking and no mistake. It can all be put down to good training and “Conway” PLUCK.

H. S. Matheson”⁽²⁸⁾

And so Redmond’s time on Conway drew to a triumphant close. In July 1895 he was given a certificate stating that his conduct and ability were both very good and the last entry in his record reported that he left HMS Conway to join the ship Bidston Hill, operated by Messrs Price & Co. A new chapter beckoned.

Redmond wasn't the only Ex-Conway cadet on Bidston Hill, J. V. Echevarria joined the ship at the same time as Redmond. Built in Liverpool in 1886 by T. Royden and sons, Bidston Hill was launched as a clipper but had recently been re-rigged as a four masted barque when Redmond joined her. Bidston Hill was owned by W. Price & Co, a small company based in Tower Buildings, Water Street, Liverpool. Redmond sailed around the world on Bidston Hill, with the Glasgow Herald reporting the ship's arrival in Port Pirie,



Bidston Hill

South Australia on November 11th 1895, after departing from Bremerhaven, Germany. The Cadet magazine kept a track of the ship's progress, with each issue in 1895 and 1896 listing her ports of call. She left Port Pirie on December 28th and subsequently called at Newcastle, New South Wales and then Manila in the Philippines, arriving there on April 6th 1896. From Manilla, Bidston Hill called at Cebu, leaving on July 5th 1896 for Boston. From Boston, the ship went to New York and then left there on February 18th 1897 headed for Hong Kong. At this point, the Cadet magazine still reported Redmond as on board but in actual fact, his voyage had come to a premature end in Boston where he, along with many of the crew, went down with diphtheria. This resulted in a long stay in hospital and brought an end to his career at sea⁽²⁹⁾. Redmond ultimately arrived back in Britain as a passenger on board S. S. Britannic on the 4th January 1897⁽³⁰⁾.

Following his return he went to work in the family firm of Cafferata & Co., taking over the running of the Hawton quarry and works in Newark. Amongst other tasks, Redmond set up an industrial laboratory to address the quality control problems which affected the firm, experimenting with different chemicals to improve the setting time of the plaster. When Redmond Parker Cafferata gave up the day to day running of the firm Redmond Barton, along with his brothers Hubert Marie and Louis William, took control, being made directors in Redmond Parker's will. Perhaps Redmond Barton always had something of the "rolling stone" about him because as well as his sailing career, he made other foreign visits. He mentioned at one point that he had been around the world twice, had visited every European country except Russia and that he had been abroad for five or six years in total⁽³¹⁾. Could it have been this inclination to travel that made Redmond Parker insert a clause into his will that the directors had to not just take an active part in the running of the company but also attend the premises?

The early years of the twentieth century were important times for Redmond personally; he met the daughter of the former Russian Ambassador to the USA, Rose Tatiana de Bartholomey,

and they were married in the Pro-Cathedral, Kensington on October 24th 1901 by Redmond's uncle, Henry Cafferata. Although the Newark Advertiser reported the wedding as being "of a quiet character" the church was an impressive building "pleasingly adorned with plants and flowers" with an organist who "played appropriate music on the arrival and departure of the wedding party." Tatiana was married in a grey travelling dress and was given away by Mr W Charleton as her father, Michel, had died by the time of the wedding. The best man was Redmond's brother Hubert and the reception was held in Victoria Road, Kensington after the ceremony. The newlyweds spent their honeymoon on the continent.

The list of wedding presents is impressive; amongst the gifts Redmond gave Tatiana two rings – one with rubies and diamonds, the other with sapphires and diamonds. She gave him a silver fitted travelling bag. From a family historian's perspective, the names of those who gave the presents is illuminating, containing many names connected to the family – not just Cafferata and Bartholomey but names like des Etangs, Baillon, Charleton and Waterworth also appear on the list⁽³²⁾.

Redmond's first son, Redmond Randolph, was born on 18th August 1903 at the family home of Orchardlea in Newark. They spent time travelling in Switzerland where Redmond Randolph learnt to ski at a very young age. It was whilst the family was on one of these visits to Montana, Switzerland that Tatiana gave birth to a second son, Gerald Waterworth on 31st May 1906. A daughter, Sonia Helene was born in Newark on 14th January 1908 and another daughter, Tatiana, on 26th February 1914.

In addition to running a demanding business and bringing up a young family, Redmond was also involved in civic life in the years before the outbreak of war in 1914; he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the in 4th (Nottinghamshire) Volunteer Battalion, the Sherwood Foresters on the 19th December 1900⁽³³⁾. In 1911 he stood as a candidate in the elections for Newark Town Council in the North Ward for the seat about to be vacated by Mr Mumby. In the notice he published to announce his candidature, Redmond said that he was doing so after being approached by "a deputation of influential ratepayers"⁽³⁴⁾. The Newark Advertiser opined that Redmond was "*just at the right age for Municipal work, and if elected he will bring to it trained powers and undoubted business experience ... If the burgesses of the North Ward know a*



**Redmond's wife, Tatiana and his daughters,
Sonia and Tatiana**

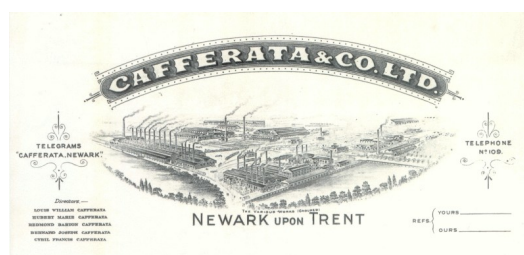
good representative when they see one, they will make no mistake about securing Mr. R. B. Cafferata's triumphant return."⁽³⁵⁾

The following week, the paper again promoted Redmond; *"My friends in the North Ward must leave no stone unturned, no effort undone, to secure the triumphant return of Mr Cafferata at the head of the poll"* describing him as *"a trained business mind, reinforced by education, travel and experience."*⁽³⁶⁾ In the same issue the paper announced that Mr Frank Hodgkinson would stand as Redmond's partner to fight for the two seats of the North Ward.

At a meeting of voters on Monday 23rd October 1911, Redmond said that, at first, it hadn't been his intention to run as a candidate as he thought there would be others, more qualified than himself, who would put themselves forward. In their absence, though, he would represent all voters if elected. He said that he didn't hold any extreme views in either politics or religion and would be available to anyone with a grievance. He would endeavour to see that everything was managed on economical lines. He also said that his views on education were influenced by what he had seen on his travels abroad and he advocated teaching children "practical things instead of things which they would have no need of in the future."⁽³⁷⁾

Not everyone was in favour of Redmond's candidature – a pamphlet appeared criticising the use of "cheap Italian labour" at the Cafferata works. Redmond's answer to that was that there were very few Italians in his workforce and they were paid at the same rate as everyone else. Once again the Newark Advertiser was strident in its support for Redmond, calling the pamphlet "a quarry of misstatements, purposely and knowingly made to deceive" and saying "the personal references to Mr. Cafferata are beneath contempt." The voters went to the polls on Wednesday 1st November and those in the North Ward were able to vote from 8am until 8pm at the Unitarian Schoolroom, King's Road, Newark.⁽³⁸⁾ Voting was steady during the day but as the evening wore on there was a greater influx of voters with a large number during the final hour. The result of the ballot was announced by the returning officer with Redmond coming second on the ballot with 438 votes. His running mate, Mr Hodgkinson came top with 560. The result may have been a little closer than Redmond had hoped for – he was only 33 votes above his main rival, Mr Collett, suspected by many as having been responsible for the leaflet which had briefed against Redmond.

Once elected, Redmond applied himself to council business, being elected chairman of the waterworks committee in May 1912⁽³⁹⁾. By 1914 though Redmond had decided to step aside from the Town Council to focus on the family business – his father had died at the end of 1913, followed shortly after by the death of his mother. Redmond and his brothers Hubert and Louis were left in charge of a business that needed restructuring urgently.



Part Two – The War and After (1914-1936)

The outbreak of war in August 1914 changed things for many people, not least the Cafferata family of Newark. Changes were needed to the family business and Redmond had decided to stand down as a town councillor. However, by the time of the November Council elections there was a shortage of candidates. Redmond's co-councillor for the North Ward, Frank Hodgkinson, had joined up and was now on active service and not seeking re-election. As a result, Redmond said that was willing to stand for another 12 months, or until the war was over⁽¹⁾. In the end there was no election with Redmond and the other councillors being re-elected unopposed⁽²⁾.

In face of the threat of a possible German invasion – albeit diminished after the Germans had been halted in their push towards Paris – a Newark Emergency Committee was set up at the end of 1914 under the leadership of the Mayor, Councillor Kew. Redmond was a part of this committee, becoming Group Leader in charge of “trenching and demolition working parties, and oxy-acetylene plant squad.” Cafferata and Company also lent a part of the Beacon Hill site to the War Office to use as a training area for the Royal Engineers who used it to practice digging different varieties of trenches⁽³⁾.

Redmond continued to be involved in supporting the war effort on the home front – he was involved with efforts to promote recruitment and he was concerned with the potential threat from German Zeppelins. In a meeting in February 1916 he put forward a motion calling for “more vigour and foresight as well as effectiveness on the part of the Government in the measures for the protection of the civilian population from dangers of hostile aircraft as well as the initiation of a vigorous counter-offensive against Zeppelins.” The motion was passed unanimously⁽⁴⁾. As a consequence, Redmond was involved in the setting up of an air raid warning system in Newark. The original warning system was a fire-bell which was to have been replaced by an electric horn. When Redmond and Councillor Kew experimented with it, they weren't satisfied and instead opted for a steam hooter which had been discarded by the Simpson's foundry at Lowfield after complaints it was too loud. It was attached to the boiler at the Cafferata works ready for use⁽⁵⁾.



Redmond's Passport Photo from June 1916

As part of Redmond's recruitment work he was the Chairman of the “Advisory Committee on the Derby Scheme”. He found it increasingly difficult to get recruits and all but impossible to get married men to join up. Faced with these problems, in April 1916 he “chucked all up and

volunteered my services to the then under sec. of War, Tennant”⁽⁶⁾. As usual, the Newark Advertiser was quick to promote Redmond’s enlistment, saying he “has set a fine example to the married men of Newark” noting that his withdrawal from the family business showed “the sacrifices Mr Cafferata’s military service entails.” ⁽⁷⁾

His time on HMS Conway and career at sea enabled Redmond to secure a commission in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve Reserve and he embarked on a career with Military Intelligence.

Prior to 1909 the British Intelligence Service had been a disparate group of organisations, including the Military and Naval Intelligence Departments, but these had been reorganised to meet the perceived threat from German spy networks operating in Britain. The new Secret Service Bureau was initially divided into Military and Naval sections. The Military section was the “Home Department” under the command of Captain Vernon Kell. This eventually evolved into the present day MI5. The Naval section or “Foreign Department” (today’s MI6) was placed under the command of Sir Mansfield Cumming (always signed himself, and was known as, “C”) and was charged with intelligence gathering from abroad.



A very different look for this passport photo, taken just three months after the previous photo.

When the war started, “Cumming’s priorities became military rather than naval”⁽⁸⁾ and in January 1916 his organisation was renamed MI 1(c). It joined MI 1(a) – Operations and Planning, and MI 1(b) – Enemy Intelligence relating to troop movements, morale etc. Intelligence summaries from each group were circulated about once a week to interested parties, including the War Office, GHQ and Army headquarters.

By the middle of the war, the intelligence networks in Switzerland were disorganised and much less productive than those at the other end of the Western Front, in France, Belgium and Holland. On his enlisting, Redmond Cafferata was charged by “C” to go out and re-organise Counter Espionage in Switzerland. Redmond’s work in

Switzerland provided another of the literary co-incidences in his life: Up until Redmond’s arrival, Counter-espionage in Switzerland was in the charge of W. Somerset Maugham. Maugham worked in Switzerland under the cover of being a writer. After the war he wrote a series of stories about a fictional agent in Switzerland called “Ashenden”. In the 1920s, Maugham lived at Cap Ferrat, in the south of France, very close to Redmond’s Villa Natacha in Nice. At the start of Redmond’s intelligence work, he was trained in Rotterdam by Richard Tinsley, a rough and rather shady agent⁽¹⁰⁾. In June 1916 he was back in London, obtaining the necessary permits and visas, before

departing for Switzerland around the 17th, via Le Havre and Paris. He crossed the border into Switzerland at Pontarlier on June 20th, travelling as a civilian and giving the reason for his journey as “for his health” and to join “family in Switzerland”⁽¹⁰⁾. It is interesting to note that he wasn’t, at this point, officially an officer – his RNVR Service record records his commission as dating from the 7th August 1916.

Pontarlier was to be his major base for nearly two years. It was on Allied soil; a major advantage, as neutral Switzerland guarded her independence from both sides. Yet it had good links with Berne, only 70 miles away. There were other benefits too; Pontarlier could provide safety and sanctuary to agents, it allowed instructors to move freely in and around Switzerland without having to establish an official position, could be used as a base for training from England and, of course, allowed close co-operation with the French Commissariat Special de Police. Throughout the autumn of 1916, (and presumably for the rest of his time in Switzerland) Redmond travelled frequently between Berne and Pontarlier, staying a few days in each place before setting off again. On these exchanges he travelled as a “Ministry of Munitions” representative.

From Pontarlier Redmond, known by the code-name “Zulu”, set about establishing his C.E. organisation in Switzerland. He was left to work on his own: In a memo to Colonel Dansey in London⁽¹¹⁾ he wrote that he had been sent to Pontarlier “without any advice, orders or a single agent”. Nonetheless he did “all the donkey’s work in establishing a Sw[iss] organisation, starting with the V[ice] Consular System etc. also founding of the active C.E. work” which by November 1917 had “bagged” 20 or 30 “Hun agents” from Switzerland and France.

The various Secret Service Organisations in Europe during the Great War were traditionally decentralised: agents would recruit sub-agents who would report to them, then the agent would report to his controller. A prime factor in this method of organisation was the ever-present risk of arrest; if caught, a sub-agent couldn’t bring down the whole organisation. In a neutral country like Switzerland it was also important for British Officials to try and remain within the law – removal of direct contact with agents helped in this regard.

However, on his arrival in Switzerland, Redmond immediately saw the advantages of using the British Vice Consuls in counter espionage, and in a Memorandum dated 5th November 1916, he proposed what he called “The Vice Consular Scheme”. His own experience had convinced him that agents should have access to the facilities the consuls offered. He also proposed combining Military Intelligence and Counter Espionage with Commercial attaché work: He thought it would be a waste of time, money and organisation NOT to combine these aspects: Agents in one area frequently came across work in the other areas that could easily be passed over if it didn’t come within their remit. Although Redmond accepted it as a “sound principle” that Consular Officers shouldn’t jeopardise their position through espionage, he also observed that “a consul is in an exceptionally favourable position to obtain information of a commercial and a military character which might prove of great service to the country in this period of national stress.”

Here he had learnt from the German system: they had a Staff Officer and Staff attached to each consulate to collect information: The German Consul General employed some 122 men in the matter of espionage (not to mention the sub-agents and freelance workers) compared to 10 men employed by the French, and 8 by the British.

For his Vice Consular Scheme, Redmond proposed to attach a Staff or other Officer to each consulate in the capacity of Commercial Attaché. They would collect information through agents and then forward the collected information to the British Consul General in Zurich. Military Intelligence and C.E. would then be sent on to Pontarlier.

This would give 11 officers spread throughout Switzerland collecting information and recruiting agents, close enough to their sources to support them and verify the information they were given.

Although the Vice Consular system was brought into being, it never seemed to work entirely to Redmond's expectations, as in his memos, he frequently asked for more resources, or complained that the officers attached to the consulates were being used for more mundane tasks such as passport control.



Faubourg St Pierre, Pontarlier – A view that would have been familiar to Redmond

“almost impossible to get the men of the necessary qualifications out here” – “2nd Class” agents were easy enough to find, but they weren't reliable enough to be put in touch with the Consuls direct, but were better suited to be used as sub-agents.

For the better class of agent, Redmond appealed for men from England: “If a man has even a slight excuse of health, business or other reason for being in Switzerland, it would be many months before the Swiss begin to ask awkward questions.”⁽¹³⁾

The winter of 1916-1917 had also proved unpleasant, prompting Anson to write to Redmond “I hope you are not frozen stiff up at Pontarlier: It must be very beastly up there now, you have my heartfelt sympathy”.

There was also a continual friction between different arms of the intelligence community in Switzerland: In April 1917 he wrote to a superior named Anson “The P[ontarlier] organisation has never been used to full advantage” and, in another recurring theme in his correspondence, he complains that he was being sidelined. “It is hardly fair to delegate me, at the very moment when the organisation is beginning to work efficiently, to the rank of a simple instructing Agent.”⁽¹²⁾

It wasn't just his superiors that were proving difficult – Redmond found it

Throughout 1917 Redmond continued to promote his position; frequently writing to his superiors about the benefits of his base in Pontarlier, which included being able to offer the safety and sanctuary of an allied country, as well as the ease with which he could instruct agents coming from England.

It wasn't all work for Redmond. There were occasional trips back to England where he attended to business at Cafferata and Company and enjoyed his customary support from the Newark Advertiser which, in June 1917, offered him "hearty good wishes" on the occasion of one period of leave. The paper then went on to remind the readers of the sacrifices he had made and the example he had set by enlisting before he was called up⁽¹⁴⁾.

As well as the agents coming from England, Redmond inherited a network of agents which he ran whilst in Switzerland. He maintained a list of 20 or so agents, some of whom had their own sub-agents who worked for them. This list was fluid, with new agents being added and others being removed. They were mostly recruited in London or Switzerland, although two, known as Pastor and Alfonso, came from Spain. The Spanish experiment wasn't a success: Pastor was dismissed in January 1917 with the note "Has been absolutely useless." Alfonso was little better – he found it very difficult to get a visa for Germany and was forced to wait in Berne for a long time.

Not all agents were poor: the agents code-named Mary, Walfisch and Juliette were much better. Mary sent in excellent C.E. reports and recruited agents for M.I. work in Germany. Walfisch's C.E. work was described as "very useful" and he was "instrumental with Mary in getting several enemy agents notably "Joselet" arrested."

Redmond noted that Juliette "Has done good work in obtaining M.I. in districts around Delmont Basle etc. Also C.E. and contraband. Has several agents in Alsace, this man if carefully nursed should prove very valuable."⁽¹⁵⁾

The arrest of enemy agents in Switzerland was, of course, hugely important, but throughout the Great War British intelligence constantly tried to recruit and send agents to Germany. Their intelligence was enormously important: The Western Front was, for long periods of time, relatively static, with troop movements from one part of the front to another indicating where the next offensive might come. For this reason, the watching of troop trains was of great significance to gauge their movements. From Pontarlier, Redmond gave detailed instructions for agents going to Germany. These ranged from the identification and recording of troop movements, through the composition of German army units, to lists of specific information that was needed. Throughout his papers the importance of careful and correct observation of troop trains was constantly stressed.

Redmond also had to instruct agents in how to avoid detection – this applied as much to agents in Switzerland as those going to Germany: some of his advice may seem obvious, and even slightly comical – "Never confide in Women" or "Never give your photo to anyone, especially a female"⁽¹⁶⁾ – but, especially when considering the newness of the Secret Service, some still seems relevant and will be familiar to anyone who has watched spy movies – to escape when being followed "get on a tram and, as soon as the agent gets on, get off yourself."

Counter Espionage (C.E.) was an important part of Redmond's work in Switzerland. Its objects were "(1) To discover German agents in Switzerland, - active, passive, and recruiters. (2) To fight by all possible means the German organisations". Redmond divided C.E. into "active" and "passive". Active C.E. had as its objective "the extermination of the German organisation" by gathering proof against suspects, then luring them into France where they could be arrested. Alternatively they could be arrested by the Swiss authorities.

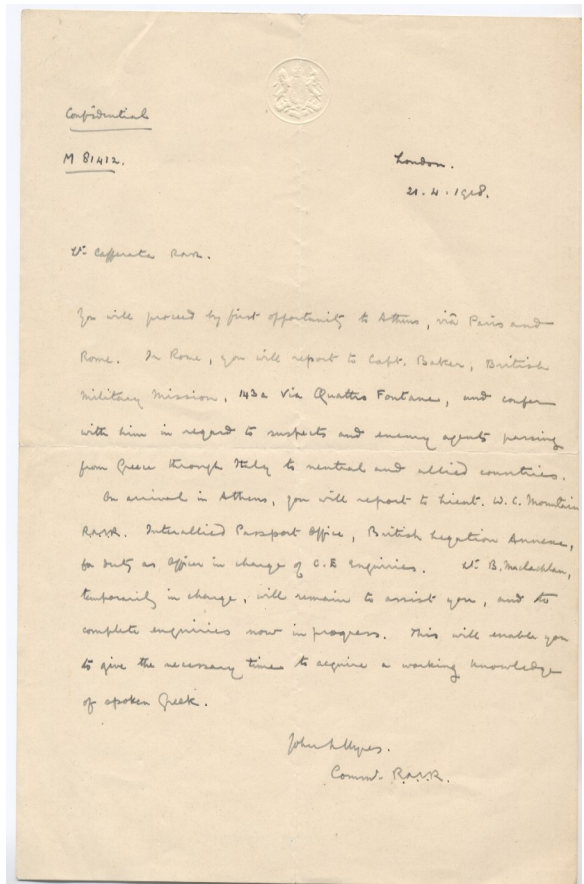
Passive C.E. was largely indirect information gathering, such as getting information on people applying for visas and passports. As mentioned above, this C.E. work was successful, with some 20 or 30 enemy agents being arrested by the end of 1917.

Redmond was a character who was not easily satisfied: by December 1917 he was expressing his disappointment with the direction C.E. work was going – he felt it had been "subordinated to use for passport work and enquiries from London and G.H.Q."⁽¹⁷⁾ To counter this Redmond proposed a "Militant" C.E. Branch – Col. Dansey held the view that the first C.E. role was to protect our own agents – Redmond proposed to do this by going on the offensive: infiltrating the enemy organisation and then destroying the organisation. Redmond also wanted to use his militant C.E. organisation to stem the flow of German agents across the Swiss border into France by setting up a network of allied agents in the main frontier towns.

Redmond continued his work through the spring of 1918 but at the beginning of April he was able to get home to Newark for a short period of leave⁽¹⁸⁾. On 21st April however, Commander Myres wrote to him with orders to proceed to the British Legation, Athens, via Rome, as Officer in charge of C.E. enquiries.

As well as having some leave, Redmond had been ill with gastro-enteritis in Paris in April, and there were many loose ends that needed tying up, including handing over large sums of cash – he gave more than 40,000 francs to Fanny Vanden Heuvel⁽¹⁹⁾, presumably the operating capital of the Pontarlier Station. There were also farewells – he had built up good relationships with the local French officials, and there were also the other members of the British Intelligence Community with whom he had spent nearly two years and to whom he now had to say goodbye.

When Redmond did finally arrive in Athens the situation he found was very different from that of Switzerland. For a start, Greece was on the allied



Redmond's orders to Greece, April 1918

side in the war, unlike Switzerland which jealously guarded its neutrality. A further contrast was the political instability which had dominated Greek society for years: King Constantine I had feuded with Prime Minister Venizelos over his support for the Germans. (He was, after all, married to Kaiser Wilhelm's sister and had been educated in Germany.) This ultimately led to Constantine being forced into exile and the "National Schism" between the Royalists and the Venizelists. This conflict would surface again and again in Redmond's work in Greece. It had also coloured British intelligence activities in Greece. One of Redmond's predecessors in Athens was another writer, Compton Mackenzie. Although his work in Athens was valued in some quarters, particularly by "C", Mackenzie had made himself unpopular amongst other groups through his support for the Venizelists and he was forced to leave Athens. As part of his work, he was responsible for the British involvement in passport checking – the process that led to many headaches for Redmond.

Redmond had two priorities on his arrival in Greece: First, to learn Greek and second, to familiarise himself with the intelligence work being carried out by M.I.1(c) and that of the other British military organisations in Greece.

His fluent French had assisted him in his Swiss work, but he didn't have that advantage in Athens. To this end, instead of resting from the heat of the day, (he wrote that it was about 110° in the shade) he had a Greek lesson. He was also assisted by a Professor Anatassievitch with his Greek translations.

By July, Redmond was able to make an assessment which, although stating that there was much promising material, found much that wasn't to his satisfaction. In the short time that he had been in Greece, Redmond had developed a great respect for the section head, Commander Myres, who regularly worked from early morning until midnight, with just a hurried lunch and dinner. Redmond was a forceful character who had been moulded by his business experience and family upbringing, and it is unsurprising that he was less enamoured by certain other members of staff who were "only filling places that could be better filled by competent people."⁽²⁰⁾ He listed the many things that needed doing by the Counter Espionage Department; interviewing agents; searching records; making extracts of work; visiting the police; liaising with other allied services; training staff and recruiting new agents.

Above all though, he complained of being swamped by the number of passport applications he had to deal with – about 1000 per week, for week after week. This raises the obvious question: Why were the British processing so many Greek passport applications? There are, I believe, two elements in the answer. Firstly, there was the reason why so many passport applications were being made during wartime. This was due to the internal conflict between the Royalists and Venizelists, which had led in 1916 to Venizelist military officers carrying out a coup in areas of Northern Greece, Crete and the Aegean. It resulted in the creation of what was virtually a separate state which Greeks from Athens needed a passport to visit. Redmond himself was quite definite about why the British were being used for this purpose – it was because they were trustworthy! He wrote "The English police, as we are called here, have the reputation of being uncorruptible."⁽²¹⁾

This was in stark contrast to many of the Greek officials who, for reasons of politics or pay, were not as reliable. Redmond reported that one Greek corporal who had been sent to work for him, told him that the rate of pay was totally inadequate and therefore the result of any searches he was ordered to carry out depended on the size of the bribe he was given.

Even high ranking officers such as Major Mavrakakis of the Ministry of the Interior despaired of the Greek way of doing things, telling Redmond that “his life had been made a misery since the arrest of a certain notorious character, as he had been pestered by close on 300 friends either begging his intercession or deliberately threatening him.”⁽²¹⁾ This was quite apart from the political manoeuvring – Captain Kolokotroni had been dismissed on a trumped up charge because he wouldn’t let certain Royalists come back. Many of the police had been “bought body and soul” by the Royalists and Redmond felt that his work was like “sitting on top of a volcano”⁽²²⁾.

As well as Anglo-Greek tensions, relationships between the various branches of the British services didn’t always run smoothly. Redmond was resolute in his support for C’s way of doing things – building up the Secret Service from nothing in 1909 to the world-wide organisation it had become by 1918. The army and navy didn’t always see things in this way though. At a conference about Greek strategy, Commander Talbot, the Naval Attaché, in particular proposed that M.I.1 (c) shouldn’t use Greek Agents but intelligence gathering should be handed over to the Greeks themselves, an attitude which made Redmond exclaim “Ye gods and little fishes!!!” in frustration.⁽²¹⁾

Quite apart from passports and politics, there was also the business of recruiting and getting information from agents. As in Switzerland, Redmond used a mixture of nationals and foreign agents. There were clearly defined duties which included keeping the office informed of:

- (1) suspects’ and agents’ movements.
- (2) information about submarines and signalling
- (3) news and rumours
- (4) local sentiments and politics, especially if unfriendly to the allies.
- (5) other suspicious activities.

It was equally clearly spelt out that if the agent broke confidentiality, then the arrangements and pay would be terminated immediately.

Foreign agents were also used; one who went under the code-name of “Walfisch” or “020” was sent to Athens with the cover of being a journalist for the Daily Mail, after getting Lord Northcliffe’s permission. To



The Hotel Grande Bretagne, from where 020 wrote to Redmond

make the cover more authentic, part of his salary was paid in London to the Daily Mail and then forwarded by them to him in Greece.

A letter, written in French and sent from the Hotel Grande Bretagne to Redmond gives an interesting insight into an agent's activities, so is worth quoting in full:

Dear Mr Z,

A quick note to say how things are going. – I have found a room here, but it costs me 29dr per day with breakfast. At noon I eat here; in the evening in town. I have, first, got to know the two representatives of the Continental Daily Mail, Mr Elephlheroudakis and Vafradis.

I have obtained from them a letter of introduction to Mr Bronnaire, director of "Progrès".

This man has been charming, he introduced me to the foreign press club and is going to call the other foreign journalists of Athens to introduce me. I have offered him lunch.

Then he introduced me to Mr Exinderis, director of the press office in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I had tea with this gentleman and he's going, tomorrow or the day after, to introduce me to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

It is certain that being in this hotel made all of this easier for me. I have even met Mr Kalapotakis, correspondent of the Morning Post and secretary at the American Consulate.

I invited Mr Exinderis to have lunch with me tomorrow. I hope you approve of this.

I am going to be introduced to Mr Butler, I was advised to offer him some whisky.

Mr Maurogodato is at the moment in Faliro, I will be introduced to him on his return.

As for Captain T..., affairs are on the right track. It is hard to see him at the hotel because he is at Piraeus almost all day. I have met his entourage and hope to be introduced to him tomorrow or the day after. He often comes to the hotel for 2 or 3 hours in the afternoon. He is a great lover of chess and I'll play with him.

Here at the hotel I am slowly meeting everyone.

So here I am, officially introduced into the press corps.

I have permission to go when I want, into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to get information.

Now, another thing, I met here a man who I considered a German agent who was in Switzerland. Unfortunately I can't remember his name. He says himself that he is an Argentinean navy captain. He arrived in Switzerland from Germany and tried several times to join the French and American navies. Each time he was refused entry into France.

He, if my memory is correct, made proposals to 2 Lausanne women to go to France.

I have seen here that man going out twice from the Pantheon Hotel, University Street. I suppose he is living there.

Here is his description:

Aged 40 years, size 1m80, broad shoulders, strong appearance, black hair, completely shaved, 2 days beard, broad face. Always wearing (even in Switzerland) big black

glasses. Always dressed in the same way as follows: big brimmed black felt hat, black jacket, grey trousers.

His complete file is in Ponté.

It would be interesting to know how that man came here.

If you are satisfied with the way my business is going, I pray you send a card without any view, without signing it or writing. I will know what it means and I will continue in that way.

Yours sincerely

020⁽²³⁾

As in Switzerland though, there were still some amateurish touches to the intelligence work. 020 delivered this note by hand to Redmond's flat, but was forced to send another a few days later asking Redmond to look for the first note as he thought he'd posted through the door of the wrong flat!

Redmond continued his work in Athens right through the autumn of 1918, and although he would have anticipated the end of the war before too long, the speed of the armistice on November 11th would have come as a welcome surprise. The only thing that remained was discharge and a return to civilian life.

Redmond's service record shows he was discharged on the 10th January 1919 but that it was post-dated to the 23rd. The service record also shows Redmond's main address as "Trent View", Newark on Trent, a house that Redmond had lived in since before the First World War, and continued to occupy until at least 1927⁽²⁴⁾.

An addition to the service record in June 1920 gave an alternative address of "Palais Donadei, 8 Rue Maréchal Joffre, Nice", a high class hotel in the centre of the French town. His arrival there marked the start of a long period of living in France, where he was to indulge in his consuming passion of astronomy. Redmond's initial expression of this was when, in 1923-24, he built Villa Natacha, a luxurious residence topped with an observatory dome for his Cassegrain 620mm telescope⁽²⁵⁾.



Villa Natacha, Nice

This was, of course a hugely expensive project which characterised Redmond's extravagant and expensive tastes. His position as one of the directors of Cafferata & Co. allowed him to finance his lifestyle but, at the time Redmond was building Villa Natacha, Cafferata & Co. was still

undergoing the re-organisation made necessary by the death of his father before the war. In a letter dated 8th January 1923 Frank Whitfield, the family solicitor, wrote:

"I still think the financial position will have to be carefully considered, and explained to Redmond, for it is obvious that he cannot, once the Company is in working order, to go on drawing Capital from the Concern.

"I am considering the best way of dealing with this, for it would be disastrous for everyone, including himself, if he continued his present heavy expenditure and, of course, there must come a day of reckoning, sooner or later."⁽²⁶⁾

Despite these warnings, Villa Natacha was completed and Redmond stayed there for four years. During this time he continued in his position with Cafferata & Co. and was handsomely rewarded. In addition to his salary, he also received the income from shares in the company. In the 1925-1926 tax year his income was declared as £2974, which put him firmly into the "Super Tax" bracket and necessitated the payment of £42 9s in Super Tax. In the years following, his income was assessed as lower; in 1927-8 Redmond paid £13 11s 6d Super Tax on a declared income of £2349 and in 1928-9 he paid Super Tax of £22 6s. (Super Tax was a sum payable in addition to Income tax, by people with large incomes.) In order to give an idea of Redmond's wealth, it should be noted that in 1926, the average wages for an agricultural labourer were about £1 11s 6d per week, whilst underground coal miners in Staffordshire earned about £3 per week. This contrasts with Redmond's salary which averaged about £57 4s per week for the year⁽²⁷⁾.

Over the course of the 1920s and 1930s Redmond and his family travelled around Europe – enjoying a motor car trip over the Grand St Bernard Pass in 1928, as well as visits to Paris and the up-market resort of Juin-les-Pins. Even after moving away from Nice the family still returned

there for regular visits. Redmond also travelled to indulge in his astronomical hobby; with his brother Louis he returned to Stonyhurst College in 1927 to observe the total solar eclipse on the 19th June. Whilst there, his wide travels fascinated other guests and his hosts found that "he spoke in an absorbingly interesting way of his adventures and experiences, particularly in Athens."⁽²⁸⁾



However, almost as soon as Villa Natacha was completed, Redmond wished to extend it, but the layout of the site and unavailability of building permits made this impossible. As a result he was drawn to the clean air of the lower Alps where, near Dignes-les-Bains, he began his final project, L'Observatoire. Here Redmond bought a 15 acre

L'Observatoire, Dignes-les-Bains

site in a pine forest inhabited mainly by local goats. Building on a terrace a good height up, in clear air which aided his observations, Redmond constructed an observatory which was completed in 1932. It consisted of a main building with two domes, one of which was built for his large Cooke telescope, which had an 8 inch lens. The observatory also contained other astronomical and meteorological instruments which Redmond used to take readings for the French government.

The complex also included tennis courts, garages and two residential villas in which his family and friends could stay. There was some domestic friction when he installed his young mistress Lucie Foltz, whom he had met in Digne, in one of these. Perhaps unsurprisingly Tatiana, his wife, carried her resentment of this act with her for many years afterwards.

At the end of 1935, the family sold their shares in Cafferata & Co to British Plaster Board Limited, a move which prompted Redmond's retirement to France and only a few weeks later he paid his last visit to England. On Saturday 21st March, 1936 Redmond played a game of tennis at L'Observatoire before going inside feeling tired. Sometime later he was found unconscious and he died soon afterwards. He was buried on the 25th March in a spot about 100m from the observatory. He left two wills, one in England and one in France. His French will divided all his possessions between his two sons, Redmond and Gerald. His English will, which was worth £109,460, included a provision of £5000 to Lucie Foltz but divided the rest of his assets between his wife and children.⁽²⁹⁾



Redmond at Villa Mirasol, Dignes



L'Observatoire in 2007

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