

DNA analysis identifies long-lost remains of executed 1916 rebel, Thomas Kent

September 22 2015

The long lost remains of Thomas Kent, one of the 16 men executed in 1916 following the Easter Rising, have been identified by scientific DNA analysis.

The [remains](#) were exhumed in Cork Prison in June 2015. They were discovered in a shallow grave, filled with quicklime. As no formal records were available, after 99 years, the only way to be sure that they were the remains of Thomas Kent was to conduct scientific DNA analysis.

The analysis involved the State Pathologist's Office, the National Forensic Coordination Office at the Garda Technical Bureau, Forensic Science Ireland and scientists from University College Dublin.

To conduct the analysis, the scientists matched DNA from the remains against blood samples from close living relatives. According to the scientists, the process would have costs an exorbitant amount of time and money a decade ago, but recent advances in next-generation ancient DNA sequencing have brought the testing within much closer reach.

The scientific team was lead by Dr Jens Carlsson from the UCD Earth Institute and DNA sequencing was conducted in the PINHASI-ERC ancient DNA laboratory.

An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny offered a State funeral to the Kent family earlier this year. The family accepted the offer, and the State Funeral for

Thomas Kent was held in Cork on 18 September 2015.

Thomas Kent, and his brother William, were arrested following a RIC raid at the family home on 2 May 1916. Richard, their brother, was wounded trying to escape and died shortly after. Thomas and William were tried by courts-martial at Cork Detention Barracks. William was acquitted, but Thomas was sentenced to death and was executed in Cork on 9th May 1916. He was unmarried.

Provided by University College Dublin

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