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'THE EVOLUTION OF THE GARDA UNIFORM'

By

Patricia Geraldine Branigan

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INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this thesis is to research, the history of the Garda Siochana's uniform. I plan to accomplish this through five chapters.

Chapter one will examine the background history as far back as the first official uniform. This will be undertaken within the context of the social history of that time.

Chapter two will deal with the uniform and its stages of change and progression.

Chapter three will document the, accessories that accompany the uniform.

Chapter four will discuss what is a uniform and what does it stand for?

Finally, chapter five will analyse the uniform today and the role it plays in the everyday function of a Guard. This will include the controversy surrounding the continuing dispute over the uniform. I will also take a look at what the experts say about the uniform.

CHAPTER ONE

'THE BACKGROUND HISTORY OF THE GUARDS AND THE APPEARANCE OF THE FIRST UNIFORM

On the 12th of August 1922 a contingent of Garda Siochana were sent to attend the funeral of former president Arthur Griffith. In order to represent the force three hundred and eighty men travelled in plain clothes and stayed overnight in a ware house on Henry Street. On the morning of the funeral sixty five of the men put on, for the first time, as reported by the news papers of that time a 'Sky Blue' uniform. This memorable day might have gone unnoticed if it were not for a casual by-stander who captured the occassion with a box camera.

For over a hundred years, an organisation known as the Royal Irish Constabulary (R.I.C.) had formed the backbone of British administration in Rural Ireland. The R.I.C. symbolised the control which Britain exerted over Ireland and its people. The R.I.C. or the 'Peelers' as they were known by the Irish, owed its origins to Robert Peel. He was also the founder of the London Metropolitan Police (Bobbies).

In September 1812, Peel arrived in Ireland as Chief Secretary to find the country in chaos. In order to cope with this dangerous situation, and on behalf of the crown Peel went about assembling a new plan to meet the requirements of the Irish situation. His new force was called the 'Peace Preservation Force'. Peel recruited disbanded soldiers who were heavily armed, to be trained under the direction of a chief officer. The new force was to operate as a mobile unit which would be drafted into troubled areas when required.

In September 1814 the Barony of middle third in County Tipperary received the first detachment of the new force. Subsequently over a period of two years the country was introduced to the force. But the creation of a permanent force did not come until 1822.

When Westminster passed an Irish Constables Act, the force was to be known as the County Constabulary. This force was under the control of the local magistrate. The County Constabulary dealt firmly with law and order aiming to keep the peace in rural Ireland which it managed to do for fifteen years.

In 1835 the force was placed under the direction of a new secretary. Thomas Drummond, who saw that the constabulary was regarded by the Catholic peasant as a partisan force. This coincided with the growth of the campaign for Catholic Emancipation in the 1820's. By 1826 the campaign had reached its peak with massive Catholic protests. By 1828 the government had to deal with the unrest. The police played a major role in repressing the disturbances but their anti-catholic sympathies became clear. By 1829 a substantial measure of Catholic Emancipation had eased the political tensions but not the violence in rural Ireland. This did not improve relations between peasant and police. Drummond realised the fault with the constabulary lay with the degree of control held by local magistrates. Drummond now pushed through a second act which established an Inspector General who would be directly responsible to the Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary. The Inspector had power to appoint constables and direct the force at county level. The four provincial police depots of Ballinisloe, Armagh, Ballincollig and Philipstown were closed down and by 1839 they were replaced by one central depot at the Phoenix Park.

While the Police system of rural Ireland underwent considerable change, the city of Dublin developed its own force, 'The Thosel Guard'. This was merely a force comprised of elderly men patrolling the streets in uniforms of blue and gold buttoned overcoats. They worked at maintaining the peace until 1842 when they were phased out. This made way for an unarmed civil force the 'Dublin Metropolitan Police' which reached the strength of 1,200 men. They proved to be one of the most effective forces. But by 1913 they became the bitter enemies of the Dublin working class as violence erupted during the years surrounding the lockout led by James Larkin. The public response to the D.M.P. deteriorated again during the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921 and the setting up of the free state. Finally the D.M.P. were withdrawn from the streets. Their rehabilitation did not begin until 1925, when they were amalgamated with the 'Garda Siochana'. During 1913 also saw Sir Edward Carson organise the Ulster Volunteers to oppose Home Rule; and later that year, the Irish volunteers under the leadership of Eoin Mac Neil, broke into a brief bloody rebellion which left five hundred dead and two thousand injured. This was known as the Easter Rising. At this time the troubles also

became more sharply defined between Dublin and Ulster. Britians threat to introduce conscription for Ireland in 1918, reinforced support amongst the Irish people for Sinn Fein. Recruitment in the Irish Volunteers was now organised by Michael Collins and Sinn Fein was preferred.

Sinn Fein founded in 1905, by Arthur Griffith and Emon De Valera contributed to the establishment of the first Dail Eirin. This elected committee, in its effort to undermine the institutions of the Castle Government first targeted the R.I.C. with the force over two thousand strong, the Dail called for the boycott of the R.I.C. Sinn Fein had its own ideas concerning a police force for Ireland, and so with the growing strength of Sinn Fein the Castle had to resort to military force to hold the country together.

With the accelerating violence Michael Collins realised that the pressure was growing and that a new force was needed to stabilise the country, Collins, born in 1890 in County Cork, worked as a clerk in London before finally in 1921 becoming Commander in Chief of the Government Forces in the Civil War before being shot and killed on the 22nd of August 1922.

In early February 1922 Michael Collins, in partnership with Michael Staines, set about setting up a new force which was to be called the 'Civic Guard', a guard created for the people, by the people. On February 28th a reference was made in Dail Eireann to the new police force and how it would be run by a commissioner who would be responsible to the government concerning the progress of the force.

The guards were recruited from all over the country and although trained in very squalid conditions they were described as a 'splendid body of young men' by the Irish Independent when they appeared on the streets. With mutiny developing amongst the men in the force regarding their living and training conditions pressure pushed Collins to strengthen the force by appointing a new commissioner, who would be Eoin O'Duffy. The force was rocked by the untimely death of Michael Collins in 1922, along with the sudden death of Arthur Griffith.

This was the opportunity to stabilise the force for the public by allowing the force to march behind the coffin of Griffith through the streets of Dublin. Described as, a 'Sky' or pleasing 'Blue', this was the first appearance of the Garda uniform. By 1923 the Cadet Scheme was set up by O'Duffy which meant the men were educated as well drilled physically. The basis was now firmly law down for a solid police force.:

CHAPTER TWO

'THE UNIFORM, THE STAGES OF CHANGE AND PROGRESSION'

The first men's uniform was designed by the Government Design Agency. In 1922, the designer of the actual uniform is unknown as there are no garda records to this effect. The first male garda uniform was derived from the design of the old R.I.C. uniform. It consisted of a high necked tunic, long trousers and a great coat. The tunic varied depending on rank. Notwithstanding this variation the colour of the cloth remained the same for all ranks. The first cloth in the early years of the civic guard was a good grey cloth which had to be specially dyed to reach certain specifications laid down by Commissioner Michael Staines. The cloth was dyed a blue colour which proved unsuitable for the harsh weather conditions. The new Commissioner Eoin O'Duffy wanted a better cloth which would not fade. O'Duffy inspected samples of the only cloth readily available. It was unavoidably navy in colour but it was hardwearing and warm for outdoor use. In 1922 contracts were placed with Athlone Woollen Mills and the Limerick Clothing Company for supply of 4,000 uniforms, and deliveries were completed by the end of March 1923.

When the uniform was paraded for the first time at the funeral of former president Arthur Griffith, the newspaper reports at that time commented on the similarities with the R.I.C. uniform. It is important to note that there were no female uniforms at that time, because women were not admitted to the force until 1959.

Despite minor changes concerning the high necked collar of the tunic to lapels in 1954 the Garda uniform has remained virtually static since the inception of the force in 1922. These minor changes of design were issued by the Government Design Agency, and again the designer is unknown. The next major design innovation was the introduction of the womens uniform in 1959 when women were admitted into the force. The female members uniform was similar in design to that of their male counterparts. The only difference between the male and female uniform was the trousers that were replaced by a skirt which varied in length depending on fashion of the

time. Although the tunic was described as "fitted and flattering" the skirt was described as most unflattering. This uniform was first worn by Bann Garda Brown who was the first female guard admitted to the force. The uniform for women members of the Garda Siochana was probably based on the British model. A woman Sergeant of the Liverpool City Police was seconded to the Garda Siochana, and she had considerable influence on setting up the garda arrangements for the reception of women into the Irish ranks. Again the design for the womens uniform was issued by the Government Design Agency. The women's tunic differed in certain specifications from those of the men. The design for the Bann Gardai was to consist of a single breasted step collar and lapels with shoulder straps. The fronts of the tunic were cut to introduce a panel of which the seam was followed down to give a tapered effect to the waist. The tunic was also equipped with light shoulder pads. Again although the females were a new addition to the force the colour and cloth was the same as that of the male gardai, and was produced by the same manufacturers and suppliers.

On recollections the uniform was described by the female guards as impractical and disabling to the women. In particular the tunic was criticised by the female ranks, as they felt that the main aim of their tunic was to try to disguise the female form underneath. They saw the breast pockets as an attempt to hide the form of the bust. Were it not for the cut of the tunic, with its emphasis on the waist, the female form would indeed be lost in the tunic. When the public was asked for their thoughts on the female uniform, they noted the similarity to the male uniform, overall they commented positively on the uniform as smart and dignified.

There were no further changes until 1987, when history repeated itself with the reintroduction for all ranks of the light blue colour of 1922. It was in fact four years later before any new design elements were introduced to the uniform. In 1991 a new Patrol Jacket was issued to all ranks, and at the same time, a 'V' neck pullover was issued for wearing in patrol cars and when on station duty. The jumpers went on official release on 31st of October 1991. The newer uniform element like the jumpers and patrol jacket were issued to the men first because of the greater number of males on the force. Also in that year, a major change came about

when the Bann Gardai were issued with slacks. The women, however, were given the trousers on the basis of rotation and occassion. They were intended to wear the trousers at certain times of the year, and the skirt at times when parading. The design of these female trousers were individually tailored. But the cloth for the female trousers was cut from the same cloth as the mens uniform.

The patrol jacket is made of gortex material which is both water-proof and warm. It is manufactured in Scotland. While the new woollen jumper is made by a company called 'Gordon'. The new addition to the uniform were very well received by the male garda and were described as being warm and comfortable. The female force, however, were not happy, there were problems with the breast pockets on the jumper which would have to be altered for wear. Most of these problems centred around the fact that the female members were not measured for items of uniform. The outcome of this problem resulted in eight women being elected from the force to keep in touch with the uniform committee in order to detect any up-and-coming changes in the dress in the future.

In other responses to the uniform, Michael Maher of the Kerry Branch said at the Annual Delegate Conference in 1991, "What we need is a quality uniform that is both good-looking and functional and perfected in a way that is uniform within definition, common to all ranks and above all reflect the ethos of the Garda Siochana".

CHAPTER THREE

'ACCESSORIES TO THE UNIFORM'

Although the uniform was issued in 1922, the insignia which defines the guards according to their rank, was introduced in July 1923. This was issued in order to clear up confusion which occurred between officers regarding their badges of rank and what they represented. An official document was sent to the Deputy Commissioners Office in order to define Garda Insignia. The document clarifies the following:-

(1) COMMISSIONER:

Three gold bars mounted on red on each shoulder-strap, a circle with red centre being attached to the 3rd bar. Two buttons worked gold thread on collar of uniform, one on each side, three gold bars on cuffs of sleeves.

(2) DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:

Three gold bars mounted on red on each shoulder-strap, a circle with plain centre being attached to 3rd bar, two buttons worked in gold thread on collar of uniform, one on each side, and two gold bars on cuffs of sleeves.

(3) ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER:

Two gold bars on each shoulder-strap mounted on red, a circle with plain centre being attached to the second bar, and two buttons worked in gold thread on neck of uniform, one on each side, and two gold bars on cuffs of sleeves.

(4) COMMANDANT:

Two gold bars on each shoulder-strap, first bar mounted on red line and circle with plain centre attached to 2nd bar.

(5) **BARRACK MASTER:**

One gold bar on each shoulder-strap, the bar being mounted on blue line and a circle with plain centre attached to bar.

(6) **CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT:**

One gold bar on each shoulder-strap and a circle attached to bar.

(7) **SUPERINTENDENT:**

Two gold bars on each shoulder-strap.

(8) **INSPECTOR:**

One gold bar on each shoulder-strap.

Along with the insignia came a strict dress code. In 1923 the guards were issued with a list of uniform and equipment which all guards were to pay attention to. The list went as follows:-

DRESS

(1) **CAP:**

Blue cloth same material as frock and slacks. Peak covered with same cloth, two bronze buttons supporting glazed forrest band. Gold regulation badge in centre of front of cap, band two inches wide of approved braid.

(2) **TUNIC:**

Tunic with appropriate badges of rank.

(3) **TROUSERS:**

Standardise cut for all guards.

(4) **BOOTS:**

Black Derby Pattern with toe-cap. To ensure comfort, they should be made with wide welts and low heels, shoes not to be worn with uniform.

(5) **PUTTEES:**

Puttees to be a patent blue spiral pattern (without spats). They should be worn with laced boots, but never with shoes or any other kind of boots. They should not be worn with trousers.

(6) **WHISTLE & CHAIN:**

The whistle to be carried in left pocket of tunic, the hook being attached to shank of top button inside the fold.

(7) **WOLLEN GLOVES:**

The blue regulation gloves should be worn on all funeral or divine service parades. White gloves to be worn for point duty.

(8) **GREAT COAT:**

The great coat to be worn or rolled.

(9) **WATER PROOF COAT:**

Burbury pattern in dark blue, length six inches below knee, tabs on cuffs, straight pockets with three and a half inch flaps, plain smooth black buttons, collar three inches deep, epaulets on shoulder.

(10) **BELTS:**

The 'Sam Brown' belt, blue shade in leather with brass fittings.

(11) **WHIPCORD BREECHES:**

To be worn with puttees and boots when on cycling duty.

The guards equipment list consisted of the following:-

- (1) Truncheon.
- (2) Truncheon Case.
- (3) Handcuffs.

In comparison with the dress code of 1923 and the dress code of today there have been some eliminations and some additions the code goes as follows:-

(1) **CAP:**

Blue cloth same material as Tunic and Slacks, Peak covered with same cloth, two bronze buttons supporting glazed forrest band. Gold regulation badge in centre of front of cap, band two inches wide of approved braid.

(2) **TUNIC:**

Worn with appropriate badge of rank.

(3) **TROUSERS:**

Regulation blue trousers (regular fit).

(4) **SHOES:**

Black leather with regulation toe-cap and laces.

(5) **JUMPER:**

Regulation jumper with epulates on each shoulder and pocket on left chest region.

(6) **TIE:**

Clip on tie worn with tie clip with garda crest.

(7) **WHISTLE & CHAIN:**

The whistle to be carried in left pocket of tunic, the hook being attached to shank of top button inside the fold.

(8) **GLOVES:**

P.V.C. black gloves.

(9) **PATROL JACKET:**

Gortex Patrol Jacket with epulates and regulation pocket on left chest region.

The equipment list consists of the following:-

(1) Truncheon.

(2) Handcuffs.

From looking at today's dress code, we see the elimination of the boots and puttees, with shoes being issued for all ranks. Also the replacement of the great coat for the patrol jacket, although the great coat is still being issued, very few guards wear it as it tends to weight a considerable amount. The Gardai today seem to prefer the lightweight comfort of the patrol jacket. With cycling duty being disregarded, gone are the whipcord breeches and wollen gloves. In regard to the equipment the truncheon case has been replaced by a built in truncheon pocket which is located at the back right hand side of the trousers.

With the introduction of women in the force in 1959 with that they were also issued a strict dress code which goes as follows:-

(1) **CAP:**

Blue cloth same material as frock and skirt. Peak covered with same cloth, two bronze buttons supporting glazed forrest band. Gold regulation badge in centre of front of

cap, band two inches wide of approved braid.

(2) TUNIC:

Tunic with appropriate badges of rank.

(3) SHOES:

Black leather shoes laced or slip on black shoes with a heel height not be exceed 4cms.

(4) SKIRT:

Two inches below the knee, 'A' line style.

(5) WHISTLE & CHAIN:

To be carried in left pocket of the tunic, the hook being attached to shank of bottom button inside the fold.

(6) WOOLEN GLOVES:

Blue regulation gloves to be worn at funerals or divine services. White gloves for point duty.

(7) BELT:

Belt to be 8cms wide, the end of the belt should be pointed and fitted with a press stud.

The equipment list:

- (1) Truncheon.
- (2) Truncheon Case.
- (3) Handcuffs.

Again like their male counterparts, the female guards dress code also went through some changes. Their most recent dress code consists of:-

(1) **CAP:**

Regulation box hat, material blue in colour, peak covered with two bronze buttons supporting glazed forrest band. Gold regulation badge in centre of front of cap, band two inches wide of approved braid.

(2) **TUNIC:**

With appropriate badge of rank.

(3) **TROUSERS:**

Tailor made regulation slacks, to be worn in conjunction with skirt.

(4) **SKIRT:**

To be worn two inches below knee.

(5) **SHOES:**

Regulation black leather lace up shoe with toe-caps, without ornamental or punching of leather.

(6) **JUMPER:**

Regulation jumper with epulates and breast pocket.

(7) **TIE:**

Clip on tie worn with tie clip with garda crest.

(8) **WHISTLE & CHAIN:**

To be carried in left pocket of the tunic, the hook being attached to shank of bottom button inside the fold.

(9) GLOVES:

P.V.C. black gloves.

(10) PATROL JACKET:

Patrol jacket with epulates and regulation pocket on front of jacket.

The equipment list:-

(1) Troucheon.

(2) Handcuffs.

As well as the above dress codes for male and female there was also a garda document issued in accordance with regulations for dress when going on duty. It states that no alterations or ornament is permitted without the commissioner consent. All uniforms to be kept in good condition. When a number of guards are detailed for any particular duty, they must appear either entirely in uniform or entirely in civilian clothes. Guards must also pay particular attention to personal grooming. This involves adhering to the guidelines set for jewellery, make-up and hair, the guidelines are as follows:-

(1) JEWELLERY:

Jewellery will not be permitted except for a wedding band (when appropriate) and only small study type earrings for women.

(2) MAKE-UP:

Must not be excessive, especially eye make-up. Coloured nail polish will not be permitted.

(3) HAIR:

While on duty in uniform, hair will be neatly groomed and worn in such a way that it does not fall over the ears or eyebrows or extend below the collar. Accessories for

hair should not be obvious. If female members wish to have long hair, then it will be worn tied back in such a way that it does not extend below the collar. The bulk or length of the hair will not interfere with the normal wear of the uniformed cap.

Finally be it the male or female uniform one accessory remains the same, the famous Garda Siochana symbol. The cap badge in the insignia for the Civic Guard, with acknowledgement to the artist John Francis Maxwell. The new insignia was first worn for the first time by a contingent of the Civic Guard in uniform, at the funeral of Arthur Griffith. The station plaques in cast iron were made by Duthie and Large, Foundrymen, Athy, Co. Kildare. They were formed from a mould made by Herbert Painting, teacher of art, Athy Technical School. The ornamented symbol is decorated with motifs derived from celtic art. The crest itself could not have been created a more striking contrast to the crowned harp in black metal which adorned the old R.I.C. uniform of the 1800's.

CHAPTER FOUR

'The Uniform - WHAT DOES IT STAND FOR?'

In this chapter, I will take a look at the Garda uniform and what it stands for. When thinking of the Garda Síochána, the familiar blue uniform automatically springs to mind. This is an indication that dress and uniform reflect an image. This gives the public an image they can identify with. Dress often makes a statement about an individual's social and economic status and rank - be it the uniform of a soldier, a nurse or a Council Worker - uniforms can be taken as a form of communication which identifies and reflects one's occupation.

In the case of the Garda uniform it not only serves as a means of identification, it also reinforces the idea of discipline that the Gardai, in their work must adhere to and enforce in others. The overall design of the uniform which is neat and simple, and also the fact that no deviations from this dress code is allowed, stands to reflect this disciplined and orderly image. The dress for the force, as in the case of any uniform, gives the wearer a sense of belonging - the idea that he or she is a part of an organisation -- thus giving the wearer a sense of pride and status. As a result of this 'sense' of belonging, it acts to encourage the wearer to take a pride in their appearance when wearing the Garda uniform. In examining the uniform of the force, it is interesting to question, at this point, whether the designers of the original Garda uniform considered the social and psychological implications of their designs.

However, over recent decades, the significance of Police and military uniforms, has been subject to scientific analysis. This has proved that there is more to uniforms than meets the eye. A large proportion of the symbolism associated with uniforms, in general, is a consequence of perceived stereotypes of the wearer and their occupation. In a recent article, "The significance of uniformed dress", Sheila Gorman maintains that the main purpose of the Garda uniform is to make the wearer appear



1



2

3



4



larger and more dominant than he or she realistically is. (Irish Independent).. the Garda uniform does have this aspect of creating a larger image. Incorporated in its design, in the form of shoulder pads which are built into the tunic. These act to create the illusion of the wearer having broader shoulders. The cap also enforces this concept. It adds inches to the wearers height thus creating an authoritative image. This code of dress communicates the idea that the wearer would act to intimidate offenders by their stature alone. Hence, the uniform itself is, in a sense, a form of protection. The wearer appears larger thus it creates an illusion of strength which would act to create a confidence in the public, in the role of the Gardai.

The design of the Garda uniform was much more exaggerated in the force's earlier years. This is evident in figures 1 and 2 of the illustrated photographs. Figure 2 shows a photograph taken of the uniform as it was in the early years of the force. When compared to the uniform as it is today, one of the main differences, that can be seen is the actual size difference of the tunic. Today's tunic is much more compact and the fabric used has a better quality finish. Whereas the tunic of the 1950's looks very bulky and untailored. The difference can also be found in the female uniform as also seen in figures 3 and 4. These illustrations show the Bann Garda uniform, one being of 1959. This uniform is significantly large in size and is very heavy. This uniform would most definitely give female guards a more intimidating, more masculine appearance. However, the women's uniform of today is more lightweight but still retains an image of authority.

When considering the uniform as portraying an image of authority, the colour of the uniform must be taken into account. In terms of colour, the change to navy, from the ripple green worn by the Royal Irish Constabulary, may have been made for the practical purpose of distinguishing the newly established force from the old one. Uniforms, associated with authority, are often made up in the darker tones of blue or green. The change in colour of the Garda uniform, from navy to grey blue in

1989 was explained by the force as an attempt to align the uniform of the lower ranks with that of the superior officers. this change was significant for two reasons - firstly, it represented an increased cohesion between the ranks and secondly, the lighter colour served to reduce the authoritarian impact of the uniform. Even the baton that was originally carried on the outside of the uniform is now concealed now inside trouser pocket. This in itself also makes for a less authoritarian image.

Finally, therefore we can see how important a role the garda uniform plays with:-

- identification of gardai.
- sense of authority.
- psychological implications.

The uniform is therefore more than just a set of regulation clothes worn by our force.

CHAPTER FIVE

'THE UNIFORM TODAY AND WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY'

The appearance of the Gardai, when patrolling the streets shows that overall the actual design of the uniform has changed little since it first appeared. This gives us the impression that we are in a society slow to change and fond of tradition. This slow-to-change attitude was evident throughout the controversy surrounding the change in the overcoat, for example.

In a report in the spring issue of the 'Garda Review' Vol. No. 18 19 February 1990, titled 'A Uniform for all Seasons'. There was reference made to the overcoat and the effects of the hard weather conditions when on outside border patrol. As one guard reported;

"I am literally perished with the cold and the wet, I have been here since early morning". "After the first shower the seams of my coat let in the rain and I am now completely soaked through".

"The coat itself is useless as a means of retaining body heat, its as cold as charity itself".

There are also references to Gardai crouching down in muddy ditches, in an effort to withstand the cold and harsh weather conditions. The main problems, it seemed, was that the raincoat was not waterproof under operational conditions. With reports such as these is it any wonder that there were complaints about the overcoat? There was at one stage the issue of a cape, but this proved unsuitable as it tended to flap around the shoulders of the Gardai in wind and extreme conditions.

The criteria for the clothing should include being waterproof, warm and hygienic yet the fabric should not promote sweating. The gardai have been noted during these times as having the least practical and the worst clothing of all the forces.

With comments like these, Mr. Michael Noonan, then Minister for Justice, officially launched the Patrol Jacket in December 1990, but the men would not issued the jackets until the following October when they were well received by the force. At the time of the jacket delivery the force was also issued with the clip on tie. This item was a necessity for Gardai who more and more deal with violent prisoners. The gortex jacket and clip-on tie are two of the most recent additions to the uniform as it stands today.

Another interesting angle the uniform is the obvious copycat designs, that specific security firms and businesses have adopted from the garda uniform. Proud as the force was over the years to wear the navy blue, the uniform has most definitely, in recent times, become almost indistinguishable from common security guard costumes. With the trend of duplicatance, forces, new uniform, which is already well established in private security firm circles, these companies were brazen enough to issue their employees with tunics resembling the forces own. This is a most intolerable situation given the years spent trying to establish a unique style of uniform for the Gardai.

In an article in the September issue of the 'Garda Review' Vol. No. 12, Mr. Fred Vidgen, M.D. Securicor, 'Security Firms and Uniforms' shows that there was concern expressed at the 1982 Garda Conference. the concern expressed was about some security companies trying to pass their own security men off as Police Officers. this was done by the use of similar clothing. 'Securicor'l, the firm in question is one of the world's leading security companies. This firm stresses its relationship between themselves and the Gardai as one of utmost importance. they also highlight how alarmed they were at the fact that this relationship might be endangered.

Although many trades and professions have traditionally worn the standard blue uniform, it is often misconstrued by some as an attempt by security firms to imbue their security men with more authority than they actually possess. Perhaps the real

reason for their choice of uniform is the same reason postmen, bus conductors, ambulance crews and many other uniformed officials chose this line of clothing. This line has less tendency to fade and the fabric itself tends to be extremely hard wearing and less prone to scuffing and accidental damage. To avoid any further misunderstandings 'Securicor' have recently introduced a newly designed uniform. The new uniform consists of a tunic but what differentiates it from the Garda tunic is its very distinctive arm badges. They have also been issued a white cap which is unique.

Securicor stress that their security people are trained to act as responsible members of the community. This is shown by the support they offer the Gardai in their pursuit of criminals and their availability to help in troublesome times. 'Securicor' also feel that they, like other security companies, have a role to play in preventing crime. With security firms doing their best to reduce incidences of crime this would relieve a lot of the pressures of the Gardai. It is interesting to note that be it not for such reputable security firms, crime rates would be a lot higher. This is very evident in Britain as crime statistics have escalated at an alarming rate. This has occurred since the 'Bobby' was phased out and more efficient Panda Cars were put in its place. Therefore they were not only phasing out the 'Bobby' but also the relationship which had been established between the people of Britain and the familiar policeman on the beat.

Both John Rocha and Louise Kennedy, two top fashion designers were asked what if any changes they would make to the Garda uniform. Their replies were carried in a recent report in the 'Irish Independent' titled 'Respecting the Uniforms Significance - and its Symbolism'. Rocha said;

"I travel a lot and I think that the Garda uniform looks very friendly compared to that of European police. I would change their coat, I don't think much of it, it looks quite restrictive, but I don't see how to improve on the actual uniform, I think it looks rather dashing".

However, when Louise Kennedy, designer to President Mary Robinson, was asked about her thoughts on the uniform, she said;

"The skirt looks pretty hideous and those flesh coloured tights are awful!" She also said, "the women would look much better wearing airforce navy tights with flat shoes".

Both designers feel that the proposal by the force to furnish all female members with trousers was a great idea. Kennedy states, that this should have been done a long time ago. Significantly I also had ideas for improving the women's jacket. She proposed a softer look for females. This could be achieved by rounding the shoulders for a more feminine look which would be a pleasant change from the square, hard edged masculine look of the male Gardai Siochana. Other alterations she suggested could be done on the cap. By sizing it down, this would make it more practical for everyday work associated with car duties. Maybe with suggestions like these, coming from such top designers like Rocha and Kennedy, it could very well be the shape of things to come.

In conclusion, the Gardai are portraying an image and the uniform is part of that image. Therefore it is essential that the force is equipped with a uniform which is made to the best possible standard. It is an important public event for the force when any alterations or changes occur in the uniform. Events like these should not be marred by differences within the ranks. The uniform is the grand product of years of effort and all those people who were and still are involved in the production of the uniform should be most graciously congratulated on such a fine achievement.

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