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CONSTANCE MARKIEVICZ AND THE WOMEN OF 1916

+ Nurse O'Farrell: airbrushed from history

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Editor: Gerard Siggins
Editor1916@independent.ie
Design: Joe Coyle

For Irish Independent

Head of Features:
Fionnuala McCarthy
Education Editor:
Katherine Donnelly

For University College Dublin

Dr Conor Mulvagh, lecturer in Irish History with special responsibility for the Decade of Commemorations.

Elis O'Brien, Director of Communication and Marketing
Niamh Boyle, Marketing Manager

Cover, by Jon Berkeley, shows Constance Markievicz, Elizabeth O'Farrell and Margaret Skinnider

An INM Publication



Witness history from GPO at the heart of Rising

WITH its central role in Easter Week, it was inevitable focus would fall on the GPO for the Rising commemorations. And with the opening of the GPO Witness History exhibition, An Post hopes to immerse visitors in the building's 200-year past.

According to Anna McHugh, Head of Communications, the centre expects to welcome 300,000 visitors per year to O'Connell St following its March opening.

The existing postal museum had limited capacity so extensive building work has been taking place to develop permanent, more expansive exhibition space.

"We have built a centre within the courtyard at basement level, and at ground level, it cuts into the existing GPO," McHugh explains. "There will then be a new level courtyard where people can reflect on what they have experienced."

From campaigners to

newlyweds getting their photos taken, the GPO has always been a seat of "gathering, protest and celebration", according to McHugh. When it comes to its political past, the immersive, interactive centre does not set out to interpret the events of the time.

"It will show the facts as they were," McHugh says. "It allows you to tell a story without casting judgement in any way. There will be soundscapes, posterage; it's loud, it's colourful. And at the very centre of the exhibition, there will be a 15-minute video experience where you will be at the centre of the activity that week; you will get a bird's eye view of the decisions being made, the brutality, the individuals involved."

It is hoped that the centre will 'evolve' over time to take in travelling exhibitions. Meanwhile, the interest from the tourism trade has been extremely positive. An Post expects that the centre will

appeal to an international audience, as well as those closer to Dublin 1 who want a "window on Dublin at the time" and its residents.

As part of the exhibition, visitors will get to see inside a middle-class child's bedroom in a Georgian home, alongside a room where "you could have a tenement family of ten living in a room", McHugh says.

Visitors are encouraged to visit the centre at their leisure; there will be guided and self-guided tour options available. In addition to the permanent exhibition, additional events planned include dance performances and drama from theatre group Fishamble, among others. The GPO is also the subject of a forthcoming RTE fly-on-the-wall documentary.

GPO Witness History is open to the public from Easter Tuesday, March 29. See gpowitnesshistory.ie. **AM**

IN MEMORIAM



A selection of the stamps issued by An Post to mark the Rising over the years.

An Post puts own stamp on 1916 events

AN POST has issued no fewer than 16 stamps to mark the centenary of the Rising, and they are already proving popular with the public and collectors. Perhaps because of the central role of the GPO, several series of stamps have been issued by the authority that ran the postal service over the years.

The 25th anniversary was initially marked by a slogan overprinted on the standard

stamp of the day, but later in 1941 a stamp was issued showing a rebel with bayonet fixed outside the GPO.

In 1966 a colourful set was produced featuring Seán O'Sullivan's drawings of the seven signatories to the proclamation and an eighth stamp with an Edward Delaney design, 'The Rising', which depicted the GPO. There were other issues to mark the 75th

and 90th anniversaries of the rebellion.

Many other stamps have been issued to mark centenaries of the birth of individuals involved, such as James Connolly and Constance Markievicz (in 1968), Patrick Pearse (1979) and Cathal Brugha (1987).

Two years ago striking issues marked the centenary of the foundation of the Irish Citizen Army and Cumann na mBan. **LS**



PUBLIC EVENTS



International leaders line up for UCD conferences

THIS week sees a series of important public events at University College Dublin to mark the centenary.

Tonight (February 4), 'After Empire' will see three former leaders, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania and Salman Khurshid of India sharing a platform to discuss the transition to independence.

The 'Globalising the Rising' conference takes place in UCD O'Reilly Hall, Belfield tomorrow and Saturday (February 5 and 6), with leading historians and political scientists from Ireland and abroad discussing the international context of the rebellion.

Booking is essential. To register for either event, go to: www.ucd.ie/centenaries/events-calendar.

THE LOST CHILDREN

15-year-old shot in face by sniper

ELEANOR Warbrook was angry at the rebels. Her 17-year-old brother John had been killed in the War four months before, and another brother, Thomas, was at the front fighting the Germans.

Many men from Dublin's inner city were in France too, and many families depended on the separation allowance they received from the British.

It was part of the reason why the rebellion was not initially welcomed in all areas, and why witnesses described an encounter as The Battle of Fumbally Lane on Easter Monday, although no soldiers were to be seen.

Fumbally Lane is in the Liberties, an ancient part of Dublin where the brewing, weaving, distilling and tanning industries were carried out for centuries.

A 16-year-old volunteer called Martin Walton, founder of the music stores, told of how locals jeered at them: "Get off and fight in France you crowd of slackers." The scene turned ugly, with the civilians attacking the rebels before a sniper in Jacob's Factory shot a young woman in the face.

Eleanor Warbrook, who was 15, died later in the Meath hospital and was buried in Mount Jerome. Her eldest brother Thomas was killed five months later at Vimy Ridge in France. **LS**



Watch more online at independent.ie/1916

AS part of the *Irish Independent's* unrivalled coverage of the centenary of the Easter Rising, a dedicated website is now online. The site uses words, pictures and video to enhance understanding of a defining moment in our nation's history.

Read excerpts from important books, watch Ryan Tubridy talk about his grandfather, and marvel at the stunning photos of Dublin in 1916. The site also carries all the articles in our ongoing series 'My 1916' and from 'The Centenary Papers'.

The independent.ie/1916 site will continue to build into a brilliant resource for students in years to come.

FROM THE UCD ARCHIVES

1916 prisoners remembered in 'The Home Coming'

ALICE MILLIGAN'S 'The Home Coming (Lewes to Dublin, June 18th 1917)' is a poem marking the return to Ireland of prisoners released from Lewes prison in Sussex, England, and the welcome they received: *Thousands and thousands since early day/Have waited and thronged*. The poem also speaks to the grief of those who died in the Rising: *There are some, remember you who sing/Who can have no share in this triumphing/They are here in the crowd*.

Milligan grew up in a Methodist family in Omagh, Co Tyrone. She studied as a teacher-trainer and published her first novel in 1890, the start of a prolific writing life. The following year she moved to Dublin and attended Irish classes at the Royal Irish Academy. She was one of the founders and editor of the *Shan Van Vocht*, a monthly literary magazine started in 1896. Her mastery of early photographic technology enabled her to utilise gas-powered lanterns in theatre work for the Gaelic League.

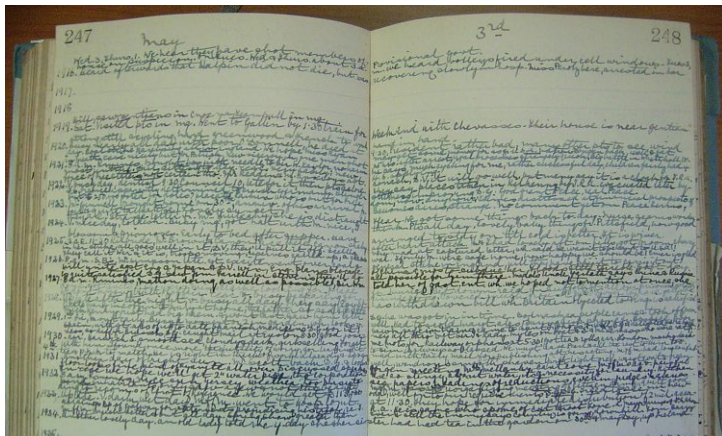
After the Rising she was involved in fundraising for the dependents of prisoners. She campaigned for the release of Roger Casement, and attended



Dr Kathleen Lynn (right), alongside Countess Markievicz) and her diary (left).

IRISH INDEPENDENT/NPA ARCHIVE

FRONTLINE ACCOUNT



Dr Lynn's Rising diaries to go on display

DR KATHLEEN LYNN, who commanded the Garrison at City Hall, was an important figure both in the Rising and in the new state that came later. She founded St Ultan's Hospital for infants in 1919.

A graduate of the Royal University, now UCD, Dr Lynn kept a diary recording the events of her extraordinary medical and political career from 1916 until her death in 1955. In 1990 her family donated them to Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI) to be held with the papers of St Ultan's.

To coincide with the commemorations, the RCPI will stage an exhibition at its

premises in Kildare Street, and will publish a daily entry from Dr Lynn's diaries from March 28 on, chronicling her involvement in the Easter Rising and its immediate aftermath and sharing her views and experiences of living and practicing medicine in Ireland at that time.

Her entry for Easter Monday 1916 begins: *Easter Monday. Revolution. Emer [Helena Molony] and I in City Hall, [Sean] Connolly shot quite early in day. Place taken in evg.*

The entries continue to chronicle her imprisonment in Ship Street Barracks, Mountjoy

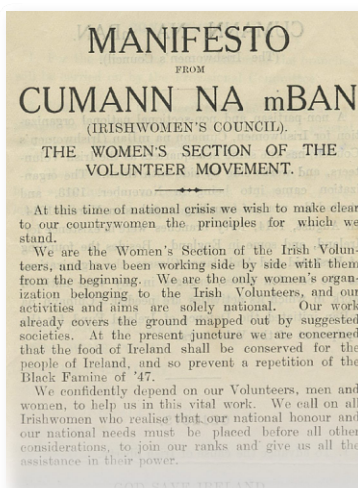
and Kilmainham jails. She writes about the conditions of her imprisonment, the support she received from the other women prisoners and the rumours that circulated about what was happening, who had been captured and later, who had been killed.

"Kathleen Lynn's diaries are among the most unique items in the College's Heritage Centre", said Harriet Wheelock, Keeper of Collections at RCPI. "They provide a fascinating insight into the political and medical career of a unique Irish female doctor."

Contact heritagecentre@rcpi.ie for more information. **LS**



Hannah Sheehy Skeffington (front row, extreme left) takes her seat before the 1919 Sinn Féin Ard Fheis with, among others, Harry Boland, Éamon de Valera, Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith. IRISH INDEPENDENT/NLI COLLECTION



Left: the 1914 Cumann na mBan manifesto. UCD ARCHIVES

Right: Kathleen Clarke, widow of Tom Clarke, in mourning clothes some time after he was executed, with her sons John Daly Clarke, Tom Clarke Jnr and Emmet Clarke. NATIONAL LIBRARY

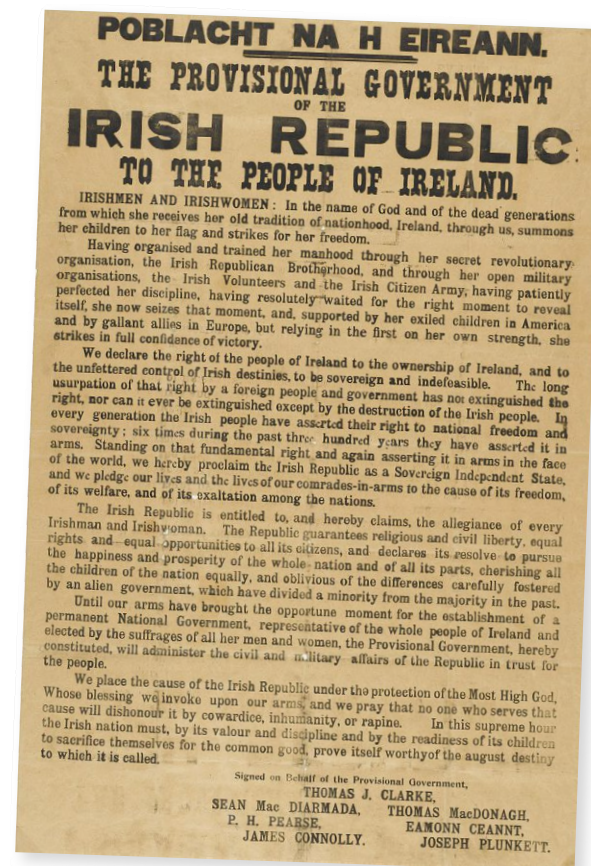


Below: The Proclamation of the Irish Republic.

Equality was a cornerstone of Proclamation



Importance to women activists of the promise of equal citizenship cannot be underestimated, writes **Mary McAuliffe**



IN May 1936, after the publication of the draft of a proposed new constitution, which was to be put to referendum for acceptance by the Irish people in 1937, journalist Gertrude Gaffney, in her *Irish Independent* column, made a call to arms from feminist activists and nationalist women to defend the women's rights. Under the proposed constitution, she argued, women 'are to be no longer citizens entitled to enjoy equal rights under a democratic constitution but laws are to be enacted which take into consideration our "differences of capacity, physical and moral and of social function"'

In particular, many feminists were angered by predominant discourse in the draft on: The life of women within the home; allusions to her inadequate strength; and the proposed restrictions on her working rights. The President of the National University Women Graduates' Association, Professor Mary Hayden, of UCD, called on women not to "let the empty promises of needless 'safeguards' and vague declarations of the value of 'her life within the home' blind our women to the fact that, under this proposed Constitution, her opportunity of earning, her civil status, her whole position as a citizen will depend on the judgment of perhaps a single minister or a single state department as to her "physical or moral capacity"."

Former Free State Senator Kathleen Clarke, widow of Thomas Clarke, one of the signatories to the Proclamation, and her

fellow former Senator, feminist campaigner Jennie Wyse Power, argued that the inclusion of articles which regulated the rights of women workers and articles 40.1 and 40.2 which placed women firmly in the domestic realm were a betrayal of the promises of the 1916 Proclamation and principles of equality contained therein.

Both Senators Clarke and Wyse Power had a long history of using the promises of equality in the Proclamation to counter the constant chipping away at women's rights as full and equal citizens by the governments of the Irish Free State from 1922. As early as 1925 Senator Wyse Power objected to the Juries Act, which sought to prevent women serving on juries, as 'unconstitutional'. She argued that the Act went against the rights guaranteed to women in the 1922 Constitution, to be equal citizens; rights first promised in 1916.

Later, in opposing the 1936 Conditions of Employment Bill, Senator Clarke said that section 16 (which curtailed the rights of women workers) went against the spirit of the Proclamation; "that proclamation gave to every citizen equal rights and equal opportunities, and it seems to me that if you legislate against one section of the community... where are the equal opportunities provided for in that Proclamation?"

Although its meaning and intent had already been severely limited by legislation in the 1920s and 1930s, the importance to women activists of the promise of equal

citizenship in the Proclamation of 1916 cannot be underestimated.

In its opposition to the 1937 Constitution, the Association of Old Cumann na mBan were particularly incensed about the inclusion of a reference to the "inadequate strength of women" (article 45.5.2): where, they wondered, were the feelings about the inadequate strength of women when they were engaged in "heavy muscular toil conveying machine guns, heavy explosives and rifles", during the War of Independence and Civil War. They felt that there was no need for the inclusion of these articles in a new Constitution as "the Proclamation of Easter week 1916 gave to us women equal rights and equal opportunities in simple language that no legislation could change or tamper with and on this Declaration of Independence did Cumann na mBan base its Constitution".

The main argument against the proposed 1937 Constitution was, for most women's groups, based on promises of equality contained in the 1916 Proclamation of Independence. In the simple, clear language admired by Cumann na mBan, the Proclamation claimed "the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman" and guaranteed "religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens". The Irish Republic envisaged by the signatories was to have a "permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland, and elected by the suffrage of all her men and women".

The importance of this promise of equality in the Proclamation was such that it became a touchstone for women activists in the succeeding years, especially as many of them felt that the subsequent Irish Free State viewed and treated women as second class citizens. The interesting question is how a promise of full and equal citizenship for women became a cornerstone of the Proclamation at a time when women did not even have the vote?

From the mid-19th century Irishwomen had campaigned for the right to vote and by the middle of the first decade of the 20th century that campaign had become more strident and militant. From involvement in the Ladies Land League in the early 1880s, through ongoing suffrage campaigns, as well as support of the campaign for Home Rule, and involvement in cultural nationalism, women had been engaged with all of the major political causes in early 20th century Ireland.

Groups such as Inghinidhe na hÉireann (founded in 1900 by Maud Gonne), the Irish Women's Franchise League (IWFL, founded in 1908), the Irish Women's Workers Union (1911), and Cumann na mBan (1914), allowed opportunities for female nationalists, suffragists and trade unionists to contribute to the various political ideologies, debates and events of the day. As Countess Markievicz said in a speech to the Students' National Literary Society in 1909, this was time where there was a "chance for our women to... Fix [their] mind on the ideal



Front row: Madeleine ffrench Mullen, Miss Foley, Dr Kathleen Lynn. Second row: Rose McNamara, Kathleen Kenny, MJ Walsh, Mrs Lawless, Jenny Milner, Eileen Walsh, K Kennedy, May Byrne, Eileen Cooney, Annie Cooney. Third row: M Moore; K Lane; Sara Kealy, Gertie Colley, Mary O'Hanrahan, Ameer Wisely, Bridget Murtagh, Cilla Quigley, Julia Grenan, Stasia Twomey, B Walsh. Fourth row: Nora Thornton, Rose Mullally, Sheila O'Hanlon, Maria Quigley, Margaret O'Flaherty, Josie McGowan, Eileen Cooney, Josie O'Keefe. Fifth row: Lucy Smith, Nora Foley, Pauline Morecombe, D Sullivan, M Elliott, Mary Sullivan, Tilley Simpson, Catherine Treston. Sixth row: M Kelly, Brigid Brady, Jeannie Shanahan, Kathleen Barrett, Rosie Hackett, Margaret Ryan, Brigid Davis, Chris Caffrey, Patricia Hoey. Standing (left side): A Tobin, Aoife Taaffe, Marcella Cosgrave, Kathleen Murphy, Bridget Foley. Standing (right side): May Kelly, Maire Nic Shuibhlaigh, Lily O'Brennan, Elizabeth O'Farrell, Nora O'Daly, Mary Murray. (There was more than one photo taken on this occasion, which has contributed to some discrepancies in lists of names. This list is taken from Sinead McCool's *No Ordinary Women*, 2003).

KILMAINHAM GAOL MUSEUM COLLECTION

of Ireland free, with her women enjoying the full rights of citizenship in their own nation..."

The actions of these advanced nationalist and feminist women in campaigning for the citizenship rights of women is vital in our understanding of the egalitarian ideals of the Proclamation, but equally vital are the alliances and networks which existed between these women and their male nationalist and socialist comrades, especially the alliances with those of the seven signatories who were supportive of women's rights.

The feminist campaigner and co-founder of the IWFL, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, recalled that James Connolly had assured her, a week before the Rising, that there was a full citizenship clause for women in the 1916 Proclamation and that six of the seven signatories were fully supportive of its inclusion. Who the demurring signatory was is unknown, but as Kathleen Clarke later mentioned, he was soon persuaded of the rightness of including full rights for women by the other men.

Looking at the statements and activism of all seven men prior to 1916, four of the signatories — Pearse, Ceannt, Clarke and Connolly — had been publicly supportive of the suffrage campaign prior to 1916. Patrick Pearse was a strong supporter of women's rights, saying in early 1916 that "every man and every woman within the nation has normally equal rights", while James Connolly was an avowed feminist

and was closely associated with many feminist women, such as Helena Molony, Kathleen Lynn and Countess Markievicz among others.

Two others, Thomas MacDonagh was married to, and Joseph Plunkett was in a relationship with, women who were members of both the separatist and feminist Inghinidhe na hÉireann and the militant suffrage IWFL (Muriel and Grace Gifford respectively). Both MacDonagh and Plunkett were fully supportive of the campaigns for women's rights. The inclusion of gender equality in the Proclamation therefore is a reflection of the importance and influence of the campaigns for women's rights on the thinking of the signatories and the alliances that women activists had with the advanced nationalist male leadership.

The Proclamation gave, as Hanna Sheehy Skeffington wrote in 1917, "equal citizenship to women", beating, she was proud to note, "all records except that of the Russian Revolution". The 1916 promise of full and equal citizenship formed the basis for the Cumann na mBan manifesto of 1918 which stated that the organisation was to "follow the policy of the Republican Proclamation [of 1916] by seeing that

women take up their proper position in the life of the nation".

The promise of equal citizenship for women also formed part of the 1922 Constitution which stated that "every person without distinction of sex... [shall] enjoy the privileges and be subject to the obligations of such citizenship". However, the reality of women's participation in the political and public life of the Irish Free State was soon undermined by the legislative, cultural and social ideals of 'respectability and domesticity' for women. Women who had participated in the fight for Irish freedom and who had rejoiced in the promises of the Proclamation were soon disheartened.

The Cumann na nGaedheal government introduced several pieces of legislation which positioned women firmly as second-

class citizens, while, in 1932, if feminists had any notion that a De Valera-led government might be any better, they were soon disabused. As Hanna Sheehy Skeffington said of him, he was "well-meaning, of course, better than Cosgrave, but really essentially conservative and Church-bound, anti-feminist, bourgeois and the like".

By 1943 Sheehy Skeffington, when running unsuccessfully for the

The reality of women's participation in the political and public life of the Irish Free State was soon undermined by the legislative, cultural and social ideals of 'respectability and domesticity' for women

Dáil said that "Irish women were given equal citizenship, equal rights and equal opportunities", but subsequent retrograde legislation and the 1937 Constitution had rendered the promises of equality in the 1916 Proclamation an "empty formulae" and "meaningless".

Perhaps, as many of the feminist and nationalist women later felt, if some or any of the signatories had survived, things would have been different. As late as in 1970, Rosie Hackett, a member of the Irish Citizen Army, the Irish Women Workers' Union and a trade union activist, who fought at St Stephen's Green/Royal College of Surgeons, remarked that if only "Mr Connolly were living, women would not be in the backward position we are in today".

Already by 1937 the Irish Women's Citizens' Association had noted that the position of women within the Irish State had deteriorated from the ideal implicit in the Proclamation. Gender equality, a cornerstone of that Proclamation, was by the second decade of the Irish Free State, despite the promise of 1916 and the achievement of the vote for some women in 1918 and equal suffrage for all in 1922, as distant a dream as it had ever been.

Dr Mary McAuliffe lectures on gender history at UCD Women's Studies. She is co-author of the forthcoming book 'Realists and Idealists: 77 women of the Easter Rising'. (March 2016)





Two versions of the photograph of Patrick Pearse surrendering to General Lowe, only one features Elizabeth O'Farrell by his side.

ELIZABETH O'FARRELL

The woman airbrushed from history

Nurse was trusted confidante of rebel leaders before and after the Rising, writes **Catherine Cox**

FOR many Elizabeth O'Farrell has come to symbolise the airbrushing of women from the history of Easter Week 1916. Today she is remembered in two ways: as the woman Patrick Pearse selected to carry his message seeking to open negotiations for the cessation of hostilities at the end of Easter Week. And, as the woman who, in an alleged act of wilful amnesia, was 'airbrushed' from the photograph of Pearse delivering the surrender to Brigadier General William Lowe. She is remembered for being forgotten.

So who was O'Farrell? Born in Dublin in 1884 — her father, Christopher, was a dock labourer and her mother, Margaret, a shopkeeper. Elizabeth was a trained midwife and became a fluent Irish speaker, a suffragist and trade unionist. In 1906, she, along with her lifelong friend Julia Grenan, joined Inghinidhe na hÉireann; they later became members of the Inghinidhe branch of Cumann na mBan, an auxiliary of the Irish Volunteers. She supported the workers during the 1913 Lockout and worked with Constance Markievicz, who is credited with introducing her and Grenan to James Connolly at Liberty Hall as "someone he could trust", at the start of Easter Week.

From Monday 24 April, she acted as a dispatch driver to the West of Ireland subsequently

reporting back to the GPO where most of the leaders of the Rising were based. She and Grenan acted as dispatch carriers, 'running', according to a 1957 *Irish Press* report, "the gauntlet of the military snipers taking food, ammunition and 'War News' copy to the printer". *The Catholic Bulletin's* 1917 description of the women's activities, is less dramatic, emphasising the role of Cumann na mBan women as assistants rather than participants in the Rising, a view shared by some of its members: "They looked after the needs of the men under arms, they nursed the wounded, they soothed the suffering and it was they who softly breathed the last prayer into the ear of the dying".

O'Farrell's own, very detailed account of the events of Easter Week suggests she did all these things and more. She, along with Grenan and Winifred Carney, accompanied Pearse and the Volunteers to Moore Street following the evacuation of the GPO. There, she nursed the wounded, including James Connolly, and cooked food for the Volunteers.

SNAPSHOT

ELIZABETH O'FARRELL

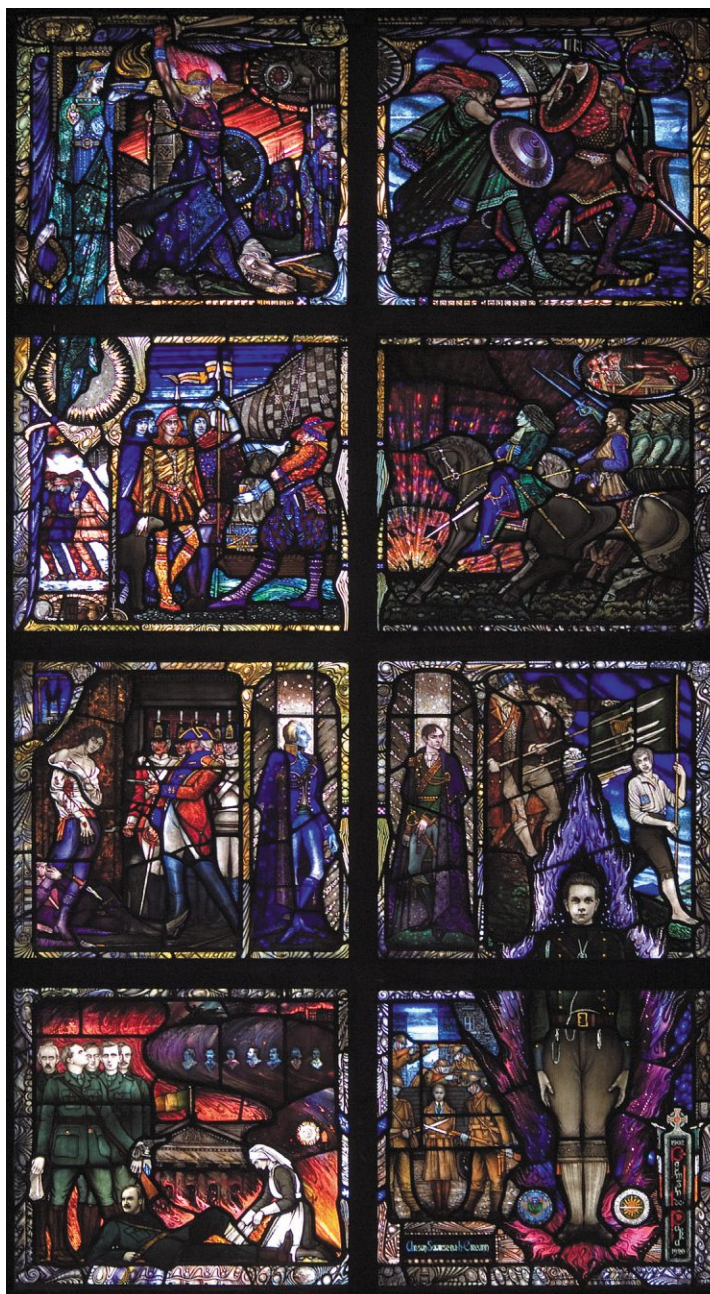
Born: 5 November 1884, City Quay, Dublin

Educated: Convent of Mercy

Affiliation: Cumann na mBan

Career: Nurse, midwife, activist

Died: 25 June 1957, Bray, Co Wicklow



Elizabeth O'Farrell is immortalised in a panel in the Kevin Barry Memorial Window at UCD. The stained glass window was commissioned from the Harry Clarke studio by medical graduates of UCD in the 1930s in memory of Kevin Barry, the UCD medical student executed during the War of Independence.

The next day, Saturday 29 April, O'Farrell left Moore Street armed with a "small white flag" and a red cross on her arm and apron to deliver Pearse's message to Lowe. When Lowe insisted on an unconditional surrender, she delivered the order to the other commandants throughout Dublin. This involved going to the Royal College of Surgeons where Markievicz was based and Grand Canal Street Dispensary, near Boland's Mill, where Eamon de Valera had moved to.

While traversing the city, she recalls seeing The O'Rahilly's body outside "Kelly's shop" on Moore Street and the shooting of a man behind her when she was crossing Grand Canal Street Bridge. De Valera's refusal to accept orders from

anyone but Thomas MacDonagh required her to cross the city a second time to consult with him.

Despite being assured by Lowe that she would not be taken prisoner, she spent a short time in Ship Street and Richmond Barracks and then in Kilmainham Gaol though she was released on 1 May on Lowe's orders who apologised; she found him to be 'most courteous'. Unlike her friend Grenan who remained in Kilmainham, she was spared hearing the execution of Pearse, Clarke and MacDonagh.

After the Rising, she continued to be active in Cumann na mBan, delivering dispatches for the IRA during the War of Independence. They both opposed the Treaty and were hostile to the Free State. During and after the Civil War they raised funds for the families of anti-Treaty prisoners, and she remained involved in Republican politics right up to the IRA's 1956-62 border campaigns. O'Farrell died in 1957.

Her role in the Rising has been marked in various ways. In a front-page report on her



Above: UCD's Catherine Cox. Below: Elizabeth O'Farrell.



death in the *Irish Press* she was described as "big, blonde and fearless". A decade later, during the period of commemoration marking the 50th anniversary of the Rising, a memorial plaque to her was unveiled at Holles Street Hospital and the Nurse Elizabeth O'Farrell foundation established. More recently, another plaque was unveiled at the renamed Elizabeth O'Farrell Park while in 2014 a play entitled *Airbrushed* was staged in Dublin.

The play reignited the old speculation that O'Farrell was removed from the photograph of Pearse delivering the surrender to Lowe. Though she was standing beside him, only the hem of O'Farrell's dress and her feet are visible. Allegedly, O'Farrell gave an account of the event to the Cistercian monks of Roscrea in May 1956, and explained that she deliberately hid from the camera, which she subsequently regretted. There is also a version of the photograph in which her dress and her feet are removed.

The contribution women like O'Farrell made to the Rising and other movements has received more attention over the last decades. Ground-breaking work of scholars publishing in the 1980s has been built upon, providing us with a nuanced and sophisticated history of the nature of Irish women's activism in this period. As Senia Paseta shows these "women built the foundations for the liberation of their sex and their country". Sadly, many subsequently became disillusioned with the state they helped to inaugurate.

Dr Catherine Cox, UCD School of History, is author of *Negotiating Insanity in the Southeast of Ireland, 1820-1900* and, with Dr Susannah Riordan, is co-editor of *Adolescence in Modern Irish History* (1915)



They fought with their brothers

As many as 200 women took an active part in the Easter Rising, writes **Joe O'Shea**

IT has taken 100 years and tireless research and campaigning on their behalf. In the years after the Rising, the new Irish state denied most of them recognition. And on a more practical level, the pensions and support offered as a matter of course to the men.

But now the women of 1916, many of whom fought alongside or even commanded their male comrades, are finally being given a voice. And their stories, which take in the parallel struggles of the suffragette and trade union movements, the struggle for equality and basic rights, provide a fascinating counterpoint to the more familiar tales of brave Irishmen standing firm as the bullets flew and the bombs fell.

Up until very recently, if the women of 1916 were talked of at all, it was as nurses, angels of mercy and comfort, passively standing by with bandages and cups of tea as the men stood to their posts and took fire. But while estimates vary, as many as 60 women were combatants and between 170 and 200 took an active part, in many roles, from snipers and section commanders to nurses, HQ staff, quarter-masters and despatch runners (one of the most dangerous roles on a chaotic, urban battlefield).

On the day of the Rising, some 40 women entered the GPO with their male comrades. One, Winifred Carney, was armed with both a Webley revolver and a typewriter. By nightfall on the first day, there were women volunteers in all of the significant strongholds across the city. Except one.

In Boland's Mills, Eamon de Valera had no women under his command. Some sources later claimed that Dev straight-out refused to include women in the garrison, ignoring the direct orders of Pearse and Connolly. Sighle Bean Uí Donnachadha, a Cumann na mBan woman who fought, later said, "De Valera refused absolutely to have Cumann na mBan girls in the posts... the result, I believe, was that the garrison there did not stand up to the siege as well as in other posts."

Winifred Carney was a trade unionist from Belfast who became James Connolly's aide-de-camp, friend and confidante. She is said to have been the only woman present at the initial occupation of the GPO and was there until the end, with the rank of adjutant. She refused to leave the side of the wounded Connolly (despite direct orders to evacuate along with the other women) and alongside Elizabeth O'Farrell and Julia Greman, finally left the GPO with the last to surrender.

O'Farrell and her lifelong friend Greman were both nurses. It was O'Farrell who, at 12.45pm on April 24th, walked out into very heavy fire on Moore Street to deliver the final surrender. And she was sent back by the British commander to give the rebel leaders his call for an unconditional capitulation.

When O'Farrell and Greman were reunited with the wounded Connolly, he was said to have exclaimed: "When I was lying there in the lane I thought of how often the two of you went up and down there and nothing ever happened to ye!"

Margaret Skinnider was the daughter of Irish immigrant parents and grew up in Lanarkshire in Scotland. She joined Cumann na mBan after becoming involved in the Suffrage movement in Glasgow and then met Countess Markievicz in Dublin.

Skinnider started smuggling explosives and detonators to Dublin from Scotland (sometimes, she later recalled, the smaller components went in her hat). She later said she joined the struggle because the Republican Proclamation promised equal rights for women.

Ironically, since she became a sniper in



Above: A group of Limerick volunteers and members of Cumann na mBan photographed in 1915.

FRANZ S. HASELBECK'S IRELAND, THE COLLINS PRESS, 2013



Left: Winifred Carney was in the GPO in 1916. Below: Margaret Skinnider sniped at soldiers on top of the Royal College of Surgeons. 'More than once I saw the man I aimed at fall.'



the Rising, the young Margaret had become a crack shot in her youth after joining a rifle club which was set up to train young ladies to "defend the British Empire". When the Rising broke out, she took her rifle onto the roof of the Royal College of Surgeons and began sniping at soldiers.

HOW THE NUMBERS ADD UP

While the precise number of participants has been debated for a century, recent research by historians allows us to provide approximate numbers of those who fought with each garrison. One tally of the breakdown of men and women who fought there is as follows:

	Men	Women	Total
GPO	412	60	472
Boland's Mills	284	0	284
Cabra Bridge	13	0	13
City Hall	41	8	49
Four Courts	286	34	320
Jacob's Factory	180	11	191
Magazine Fort	12	0	12
Marrowbone Lane	116	21	137
Mendicity Institute	25	0	25
Roe's Distillery	19	0	19
St Stephen's Green	92	16	108
South Dublin Union	68	0	68
Enniscorthy	216	35	251
Fingal Volunteers	37	3	40
Galway	105	6	111
Other combatants	10	9	19

"It was dark there, full of smoke and the din of firing, but it was good to be in action... more than once I saw the man I aimed at fall".

Skinnider was wounded three times in the fighting. But she was typical of the Cumann na mBan (and Citizen's Army) women who were drilled and trained to be more than just passive supporters of the men.

The constitution of the organisation, set up by a committee of nationalist women in 1913, made it clear that its primary role was to "Advance the cause of Irish liberty", and by any means necessary.

Weapons training and military drill were an integral part of the training. Members were expected — as set out in the constitution — to become proficient with rifles.

Documents held in the Military Archives in Dublin report on Cumann women such as Lily O'Connor being "highly proficient in the use of a range of weapons including Webley, Colt and Smith & Wesson revolvers".

It was clear: In the event of the shooting starting, young women like Lily were not to cry out and look to the protection of the nearest Irishman. They were to stand and fight.

There were casualties. Nurse Margaretta Keogh was shot dead in the initial, confused fighting at the South Dublin Union. A nurse in the Union, she had rushed to tend to her patients when the shooting started. Volunteer commander Eamon Ceannt hailed the Carlow woman as "the first martyr of the Rising".

Ten men and nine women, under the command of Abbey actor Seán Connolly, tried to shoot their way through the gates

THE DISTILLERY WOMEN



THE Marrowbone Lane Distillery was occupied by a virtually all-female garrison under the command of Rose McNamara (above).

At the end of the fighting, she went to surrender herself and 21 other women volunteers to the British.

An account of that surrender from the Military Archives observes: "The women of the garrison could have evaded arrest but they marched down four deep in uniform along with the men."

"An attempt was made to get them to sign a statement recanting their stand but this failed. Miss McNamara who led the contingent went to the British OC (Officer Commanding) and explained they were part of the rebel contingent and were surrendering with the rest".

of Dublin Castle in the early stages of the fighting. They were beaten back and occupied City Hall. The actress and journalist Helena Molony took part in the fight and later helped tend the wounded. On Connolly's death Dr Lynn, chief medical officer of the Irish Citizen Army, took command and later surrendered.

The reaction of British officers was indicative of how they saw the armed women volunteers. They initially refused to take the surrender from Lynn, who survived imprisonment and a hunger strike before going on to have a long career in medicine in Ireland, setting up a children's hospital in Dublin and starting the first mass immunisation programme for Irish children.

In many cases, especially in the early stages of the fighting, baffled British officers simply told the women rebels to "go home".

When British soldiers ran into Citizen Army member Jenny Shanahan while they were storming City Hall, they mistook her for an innocent bystander. The quick thinking Shanahan immediately played the role assigned to her by the tommies and warned them that there was a large, well-armed force of rebels on the roof. The soldiers halted their storming of the building for several hours.

Across the burning city, in Easter 1916, in all the garrisons and posts (except de Valera's Boland's Mills) scores of women stood and fought, ran dangerous missions or acted as vital support. When the surrender came, they marched off to prison with their brothers in arms.

CONSTANCE MARKIEVICZ

Aristocratic leader of men



The 1916 story sought a handy Joan of Arc figure and this daughter of the gentrified world fitted the bill, writes **Conor Mulvagh**

It is perhaps predictable to focus on the figure of Constance Markievicz when considering the role of women in the Irish Revolution. Markievicz was one of the most identifiable and iconic female revolutionaries of the period. To her supporters, she was selfless and principled; she had foregone a life of comfort and opulence in order to champion the causes of labour and republicanism; and she had suffered for it. To her detractors, and there have been several, she has been denigrated both for her gender and her class. She has been singled out as the aristocrat who descended from the gentrified world of her youth and hogged the limelight, posing as a diva among Dublin's poor, both during the 1913 Lockout and in the 1916 Rising. Constance Markievicz has posed a challenge both to her contemporaries and to later biographers: she is anomalistic among Ireland's leading revolutionaries both in terms of her class and her gender.

Born in London to the prominent Anglo-Irish Gore-Booth Family of Lissadell, Co Sligo, Constance was the eldest of five children. Her prowess in horsemanship is something still celebrated at Lissadell today with photographs demonstrating her equestrian ability on display. Underlining the position of the Gore-Booths in society, at 19 Constance made her debut in high society being presented to Queen Victoria. A grand tour of the continent deepened Constance's interest in art and, despite parental reluctance, at 25 she entered art college in London. Student life exposed her to new ideas. The historian Senia Paseta notes how, when she returned to Sligo from London, Constance founded the Sligo Women's Suffrage Society.

Art also brought new people into her life. In 1898, further study in art brought her to Paris. There she met a fellow art student, a member of the Polish nobility, recently widowed with a young son but, at 25, six years her junior. Casimir Dunin-Markievicz married Constance in 1900 and, after a difficult birth, their only daughter, Maeve, was born in 1901. Like her step-brother Stanislaus, Maeve spent much of her infant years being reared by her grandmother and a governess at Lissadell. Once Constance's political life took off in 1908, Maeve was left almost permanently in the care of Lady Gore-Booth.

Interestingly, the charge of being

SNAPSHOT

CONSTANCE MARKIEVICZ

Born: Constance Gore-Booth, 4 February 1868, London

Educated: Slade School of Art, London; Académie Julien, Paris

Affiliation: Irish Citizen Army/IRB/Cumann na mBan

Career: Painter, activist, MP, Minister for Labour

Died: 15 July 1927, Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, Dublin

a 'bad mother' has been levelled at Markievicz by many of her detractors. However, it is interesting that Constance herself was raised by a governess for much of her youth and the same criticism has not been levelled at her parents. Equally, among the Easter rebels, none of the fathers who went out knowing the risks of their struggle have had the same criticism hang over them. Consider Connolly, Ceannt, Mallin, and MacDonagh. All left behind bereaved wives with young families. It speaks to the preconceptions of gender and motherhood both then and now that this criticism has stubbornly adhered to Markievicz's legacy.

A variety of explanations and turning points have been identified in Markievicz's political awakening: the Boer War, encountering suffrage in London, the Anglo-Irish literary revival, encountering Russian oppression on two summers home with Casimir, the list goes on. Underlining her rejection of her background and her dual commitment to feminism and nationalism, around 1908 Markievicz joined Sinn Féin and Maud

Gonne's Inghinidhe na hÉireann. In 1909, alongside Bulmer Hobson, she founded Fianna Éireann, a republican boy-scouts organisation. Its members, mostly boys from Dublin's most economically deprived neighbourhoods, developed a deep personal devotion to their Chief Scout, Madame Markievicz, and she actively encouraged their harassment of the rival Baden Powell Scouts and Boys' Brigade members.

Markievicz had added socialism to her expanding range of political interests when she joined the Women's Workers Union in 1911. Arrest that year for anti-monarchist activities was followed by experience of police violence during the 1913 Lockout. Further eschewing the preconceptions of her gender, she later became one of the only women to take a full command and combat role in the Irish Citizen Army.

In 1916 itself, Markievicz has been criticised for the killing of an unarmed policeman and for taking credit for the actions of the Irish Citizen Army around St Stephen's Green when it was Michael Mallin and not her who was in command. On the latter charge, it should be borne in mind that Mallin had tried to avoid detection as garrison commander when his unit surrendered. He had four young children and his wife was pregnant with a fifth. It is a compelling theory that Markievicz's highly theatrical surrender may have been calculated to detract attention from him. When Mallin's daughter was born four months after her father's execution, her mother christened the child Mary Constance.

It is unnecessary to go through the well-worn but nonetheless remarkable story of Markievicz from 1916 through to her election as the first female MP in British history to the crowning achievement of being granted one of eight cabinet portfolios when De Valera announced the first Republican cabinet in April 1919. As Minister for Labour, Markievicz's ministry was no mere window dressing. With a staff largely comprised of women and an office that prided itself on never having been discovered, the Ministry of Labour proved highly successful in dealing with arbitration cases and related industrial relations issues. This was at a time when other departments of the revolutionary government were coming in for harsh criticism for inefficiency and disorganisation.



Countess Markievicz arriving at Liberty Hall marking the return of Irish Republican prisoners in June 1917.

UCD ARCHIVES PETER PAUL GALLIGAN PAPERS



So what place does Constance Markievicz have in Irish history? All revolutions are subjected to retrospective mythologisation. Likewise, all states and nations craft their foundation narratives. Think of America's 1776, of France's 1789, of Russia's 1917, and of the cultural and civic importance of Germany's unification in 1870 and of its re-unification in 1990. Foundation narratives do not have to be triumphs, nations can be forged through adversity. Ireland's 1916 was transformed from defeat into a triumph of failure. This has created two 1916s, one historical and one which is theatrical, elegiac, mythic. The former can never fully be recovered, the latter can never fully be unravelled.

What does all this have to do with Constance Markievicz, the daughter of aristocrats who turned on her own class and died a pauper? I would argue that, in assembling Ireland's foundation narrative out of the rubble of 1916 and all that followed, Markievicz presented a unique opportunity for the myth makers. Certainly there had been women casualties of the Rising, they numbered among the wounded and the dead but, out of these, no martyr was found. Borrowing from the French national tradition, what the Easter



From left: Constance Markievicz as a debutante in 1886, stirring soup in the Liberty Hall kitchen and with a revolver.

COURTESY OF: KILMAINHAM GAOL MUSEUM (17PC-1K43-08); SOUTH DUBLIN LIBRARIES HET LEVEN COLLECTION; SOUTH DUBLIN LIBRARIES JOHN MULLEN COLLECTION

Below: Eva Gore-Booth with her sister, Constance Markievicz



‘Comrades’

Eva Gore-Booth

*The peaceful night that round me flows,
Breaks through your iron prison doors,
Free through the world your spirit goes,
Forbidden hands are clasping yours.
The wind is our confederate,
The night has left her doors ajar,
We meet beyond earth's barred gate,
Where all the world's wild Rebels are.*

AN ASSESSMENT DR LUCY COLLINS

EVA GORE-BOOTH, poet and activist, was the sister of Constance Markievicz. Both women rejected their privileged upbringing in different ways: Constance became a revolutionary nationalist while Eva chose pacifism and social reform.



Though the sisters disagreed on the subject of violent rebellion, ‘Comrades’ powerfully expresses their deep personal bond — its simplicity reflects the poet’s need to speak of feelings unfettered by the descriptive detail of everyday life.

Night, traditionally a time for poetic reflection on mortality, offers release; single syllable words aptly express the flow of emotion across all obstacles and the convergence of these two lives.

The sisters were convinced of their power to communicate telepathically since childhood, and here their instinctive closeness finds poetic form.

In the spirit of love and solidarity the poem charts a move beyond earthly states towards spiritual transcendence — the place of pure feeling where idealists unite.

Dr Lucy Collins is a lecturer in English at University College Dublin (UCD). She is the curator of ‘Reading 1916’, launching tomorrow night, an exhibition at UCD Special Collections



1916 story needed was a Joan of Arc, a Liberty storming the barricades, ideally immortalised in some sort of Hibernicised Delacroix painting. They found it in a rebel Countess.

Markievicz was perfect in many ways. She had been handed down a death sentence; she had been dramatic in her surrender and arrest; and she had been a leader of men. Unlike the women of Cumann na mBan who had been consigned to the roles of cooks, nurses, and messengers, she was an equal and not a subordinate. However, this was only half the reason Markievicz best fit the bill. She had also died relatively early on, in 1927, before the paint had dried on the canvass of Ireland’s “four glorious years.”

Roy Foster has recently examined the lives of revolutionary women after independence. Eclipsed behind Markievicz were a host of other women activists, among them

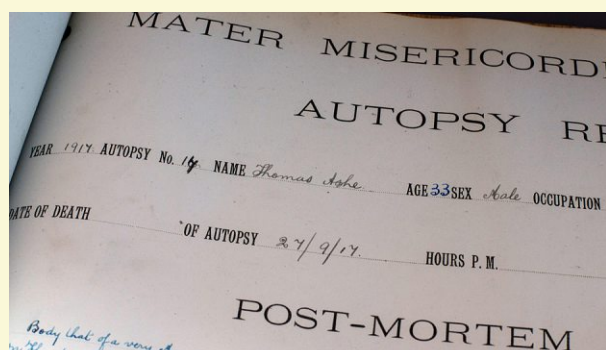
Kathleen Lynn, Margaret Skinnider, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, and Madeleine ffrench-Mullen. One who is worth examining briefly here is Jennie Wyse Power. Ten years Markievicz’s senior, Wyse Power was a veteran of the Ladies’ Land League, she campaigned in the first Sinn Féin by-election of 1908. Before the Rising, she ran a vegetarian restaurant on Henry Street which became a focal point for all

shades of advanced politics in the city. Indicating the proximity of Jennie Wyse Power to the leadership of the IRB, it was in her restaurant that the leaders of the Rising signed the Proclamation.

After independence however, Wyse Power lived on. A leading pro-treaty Cumann na mBan member, she became a Cumann na nGaedheal senator in 1922 but broke from the party in 1925. As an independent senator, she rallied against economically and gender-regressive legislation including the hotly-



Markievicz became valuable to propagandists because she was dead. Unlike Lynn, Skinnider, Sheehy Skeffington, or ffrench-Mullen, she could not speak back and pose awkward questions about what the revolution had achieved in terms of gender equality



Mater Hospital archivist and historian Sister Eugene Nolan with some of the records from 1916 held at the hospital, including (inset left) the post-mortem report of the hero of Ashbourne, Thomas Ashe.

MARK CONDREN

Rebels at the heart of Mater

Hospital staff conspired to protect Volunteers from arrest, finds **Kim Bielenberg**

IT was the scene of an audacious escape as nurses took pity on wounded volunteers. The Mater Hospital in Dublin's north inner city was close to some of the fiercest fighting during the Rising, and was to play a role in its aftermath when the hero of Ashbourne, Thomas Ashe, died there.

In the old part of the hospital, the Mater's archivist and historian Sr Eugene Nolan shows me some of the records, including a doctor's log, where medical staff registered as they arrived for work day-by-day. For Easter week 1916, each day is blank: just one word is scrawled across the bottom next to the date, April 24: "Riots!!"

Sr Nolan says: "The surgeon Alexander Blayney was on duty that week and never left the hospital. He was operating day and night."

One of the Sisters of Mercy who was there in Easter Week left a vivid anonymous account in a statement to the Bureau of Military History. She describes the difficulties faced by Dr Blayney when the gas and electricity were cut off.

"He had to operate by the light of candles brought from the sacristy. There was no sterilisation of instruments or dressings as there was no boiling water available..."

The Mater did not receive any casualties on the first day of the Rising, but on Tuesday, there was a sudden influx, and

some of those who were wounded were civilians.

As the nun's witness statement puts it: "One of the badly wounded, Margaret Nolan, a forewoman in Jacob's factory, died that day, as also did James Kelly, a schoolboy who was shot through the skull. Another schoolboy, John Healy, aged 14, a member of the Fianna whose brain was hanging all over his forehead when he was brought in, died after two days."

Dealing with Volunteer casualties had to be handled with political sensitivity, according to Sr Eugene. At the time, the Mater was also treating troops who had been injured in the First World War.

"Nurses helped to protect the wounded volunteers from police," says Sr Eugene.

One of the wounded rebels in the hospital was Patrick McCrea, who had been fighting in the GPO, and was shot twice — first in a skirmish on Jervis Street, and then as he crossed the street near the GPO.

McCrea was conveyed to the hospital covered up in a cart-load of cabbages. Once inside the hospital, he was recognised by a policeman, and a constant guard of one or two officers was put outside his room.

He was due to be transferred by the authorities to the hospital at Dublin Castle and arrested, but the doctors and nursing staff conspired to stop this happening. One medical student even suggested that the police guard should be chloroformed.

There are slight variations in the

accounts of how McCrea was able to get away. According to the nun's witness statement, the escape happened when a nurse distracted the police guard by asking him into the kitchen to have dinner. According to McCrea's own account in the Bureau of Military History, there were two policemen guarding him, and a nurse called Joy took the pair of them to the pantry for a drink, making out she was fond of them.

According to both accounts, while the police were distracted by one nurse, another sister led McCrea along a corridor down into the mortuary where she let him out an exit door onto the street. McCrea was put in a car and driven to Wicklow.

Sr Eugene says there were other similar incidents in Dublin hospitals. On one occasion, a Volunteer was hidden in a female ward, and a nurse attached plaits to his head to make him look like a woman.

In all, 75 people were taken to the Mater during the Rising, of whom 25 died.

Most casualties were Volunteers, but as one of the Sisters recalled: "There was one looter brought in. He was very drunk and wearing a couple of suits of clothes and was in possession of many other accessories including a toy revolver which was large enough to be taken for a real one."

The Mater was at the centre of media attention in the year after the Rising following the hunger strike of Thomas Ashe, commander of the 5th battalion,

which was involved in the Easter week battle at Ashbourne.

He had been released from prison after the Rising, but was rearrested for sedition before he went on hunger strike in Mountjoy.

After he was force-fed in jail, he took ill and was taken to the Mater in an ambulance. As the nurse recalled in her witness statement: "About 10 o'clock that night a great change came over him and we knew he was dying."

In the Mater archives, Sr Eugene showed me the autopsy report for Ashe, immaculately written in blue ink.

Ashe's body was laid out in the hospital in a Volunteer uniform with the head of the bed draped in a tricolour — as up to 30,000 people came to pay respects.

The British authorities later complained of the republican leanings of hospital staff. One policeman wrote in a letter: "The community of nuns who manage this hospital, the majority of the medical staff, the nurses and practically all the staff are Sinn Féiners or Sinn Féin sympathisers. The Superioress is definitely hostile to the Police."

The Mater was regularly raided by the Black and Tans, looking for hidden IRA men.

During one search, they lifted a cloth covering a parrot cage and the disturbed bird let out an almighty shriek. The Black and Tans fell to the ground in terror, thinking they were the target of an attack. The nuns just stood by and laughed.

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IRELAND IN 1916

Catholicism had strong hold

Irish people's everyday lives were shaped by church teachings, writes **Fergus Cassidy**

IN 1916 over 98pc of the island's population were members of four main religious denominations. According to the 1911 census returns, the membership of those churches was accounted for as follows: Roman Catholic 73.8pc; Church of Ireland 13.1pc, Presbyterian 10pc and Methodist 1.4pc. Once baptised, which was usually within days following birth, the other major moments of a person's life — education, marriage, and death — were shaped by the laws and teachings of their church.

Covering almost three-quarters of the population, Catholic practice centred on the parish, the church and the school. In 1911 there were 15,397 priests, nuns, monks and brothers engaged in this and other work. Those numbers were a 21pc increase from the 1901 census. Nuns managed schools, hospitals, orphanages and homes for the aged. It was a devotional culture, with practices such as the Forty Hour Adoration, Blessed Sacramentals, Novena of Grace, First Fridays, May Devotions and Stations of the Cross. Particularly popular was devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to Mary, the Mother of God. The Mass liturgy was conducted in Latin, and fasting from midnight was a requirement for receiving communion. The Knights of Columbanus, an order of Catholic laymen was founded in Belfast in 1915, and groups such as the Pioneer Total Abstinence Society had a large membership.

The Church of Ireland also campaigned on alcohol use. In 1900 the Irish Women's Temperance Union was set up expanding to 87 branches throughout the country. The following year the Church of Ireland Temperance Society was launched. The church was disestablished in 1869, ending its position as the state church, but it maintained and strengthened its numbers over the following decades. It provided Bible and Sunday School classes and set up the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), and a Women's Association.

Protestant clergy numbered 2,657 in 1911. Almost two-thirds of Protestants recorded in the census lived in Ulster, with 96pc of Presbyterians lived in the northern province. The Jewish population grew from 1,500 in 1901 to 5,101 (0.1pc of population), based mainly in Dublin where a community grew up around Portobello and the South Circular Road. Many were immigrants from eastern Europe. The Religious Society of Friends, known as Quakers, numbered 2,480 in 1911. Members were very involved in education and business — including



Queen Mary meets the nuns at Maynooth College in Kildare during a visit in July 1911. GETTY IMAGES

biscuit makers Jacobs, and the Bewley family.

Catholic children were instructed in the articles of faith based around the question and answer format of the Catechism (*see panel*). Canon PA Sheehan, parish priest of Doneraile, Co Cork, wrote about confession of sin in 1899: "And so the young girls

and all the men go to Father Letheby's confessional. The old women and the little children come to me. They don't mind an occasional growl, which will escape me sometimes. Indeed, they say they'd rather hear one roar from the 'ould man' than if Father Letheby, 'wid his gran' accent', was preaching forever."

EXTRACTS FROM THE CATHOLIC CATECHISM (1891)

Q. Who made the world?

A. God made the world.

Q. Who is God?

A. God is the Creator and Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth and of all things.

Q. How many Gods are there?

A. There is but one God, who will reward the good and punish the wicked.

Q. What is sin?

A. Sin is any wilful thought, word, deed, or omission contrary to the law of God.

Q. What is original sin?

A. Original sin is the sin we inherit from our first

parents, and in which we were conceived and born children of wrath.

Q. Who were our first parents?

A. Our first parents were Adam and Eve, the first man and woman.

Q. Are there any other Commandments besides the Ten Commandments of God?

A. Besides the commandments of God there are the commandments or precepts of the Church, which are chiefly six.

1. To hear Mass on Sundays and all holidays of obligation

2. To fast and abstain on the days commanded.

3. To confess our sins at least once a year.

4. To receive *worthily* the Blessed Eucharist at Easter, or within the time appointed; that is from Ash Wednesday to Ascension Thursday...

5. To contribute to the support of our pastors.

6. Not to solemnise marriage at the forbidden times — nor to marry persons within the forbidden decrees of kindred — nor otherwise prohibited by the Church — not clandestinely.

Relationships between the two main religious denominations became strained after 1908 following the worldwide decree on marriage issued by Pope Pius X. The *Ne Temere* ('not rashly') decree sought to regulate canon law on Roman Catholic marriage, which from 1785 stated that a marriage did not have to be celebrated by a Catholic priest to be recognised. *Ne Temere* reversed this and stated that "... a mixed marriage performed by anyone but a Catholic priest is invalid in the eyes of God and his Church". The priest was expected to be from the bride's parish and the marriage had to be witnessed.

In 1911 Cardinal Logue, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, responded to the changed situation: "If the decree *Ne Temere* attains one object, which is no doubt among those chiefly intended by the Holy Father, the cessation or a decrease of mixed marriages, it will confer inestimable blessing on Roman Catholics."

The burial places of the dead were also determined by religion, largely due to which church controlled a particular graveyard. As most were owned by religious organisations, preference was given first to members of that church, with many graveyards, over time, appearing to be divided in two.

16 LIVES

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Women, suffrage and class



The groundwork for equality was laid well before events of 1916, writes **Mary McAuliffe**

FROM the mid-19th century, middle-class suffrage women in Ireland campaigned for the right to vote on the same basis as men. As well as seeking the right to vote, they supported changes to legislation on married women's property rights, they sought access to third level education and an improvement in the conditions for middle-class working women.

A major campaign which many of the early suffrage pioneers were engaged with was the campaign to repeal the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866, and 1869. In an effort to combat the spread of venereal diseases, especially among the members of the armed forces, the government introduced such stringent controls on women suspected of prostitution that middle-class women felt it reinforced the sexual double standard and undermined the civil liberties of all women. Belfast-based Isabella Tod, educator and reformer, and Dublin-based suffragette Anna Haslam were active in the Ladies' National Association which was founded in 1869 to campaign for repeal of the Acts.

Because of her work on the campaign Tod became convinced of the necessity of female participation in the public realm, and in 1872 she set up the first Irish suffrage group, the Northern Ireland Society for Women's Suffrage Committee. In Dublin, in 1876, Anna Haslam founded the Dublin Women's Suffrage Society, which later became known as the Irishwomen's Suffrage and Local Government Association.

While there were suffrage societies and groups in most urban centres in Ireland, the number of women, mostly protestant and middle class, actively engaged in suffrage campaigning remained small through the later 19th century. They were reformist rather than militant and used the 'soft' campaigning techniques of letter-writing, organising drawing room meetings, gathering signatures on petitions, contributing to supportive publications, issuing pamphlets and co-operating with their English counterparts. They supported the introduction of private members' bills in the House of Commons,

especially in 1884, when women were not included in the Reform Act which extended the male franchise. One of their successes came in 1898 when the Local Government (Ireland) Act allowed certain women to vote in and sit on rural and urban district councils and on town commissions.

However, by the early years of the 20th century, suffrage activists began to become more radical and militant. In 1908 Hanna Sheehy Skeffington and Margaret Cousins set up the Irish Women's Franchise League (IWFL), which represented a new generation of suffrage activists who had lost patience with the moderate, reformist tactics with the older suffrage organisations, and, influenced by the militancy of the British Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), were determined to push their ideology of 'Suffrage First, before all else'.

More radical and outspoken than previous suffrage groups initially, its main aim was to achieve female suffrage within the context of the campaign for Home Rule. Despite the support of individual

members, John Redmond's Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) was, in general, not in favour of female suffrage. However, the IWFL launched a determined campaign to have the right of women to the vote included in the third Home Rule Bill. In order to stabilise its political alliance with the Liberals and secure the passage of Home Rule, the

IPP refused, in March 1912, to support a conciliation Bill in the House of Commons which would have granted a limited female franchise.

The following month, when the third Home Rule Bill was introduced, it did not include a provision for the female franchise. In response the IWFL stepped up its militant campaign. Chaining themselves to railings and breaking windows in public buildings including Dublin Castle, the GPO and Custom House, led to a swift response from the authorities. Several activists, including Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, found themselves arrested and imprisoned.

In July 1912, two members of the WSPU travelled to Dublin to protest at a visit of Prime Minister Asquith. They threw an

axe which missed him and grazed John Redmond. The women, Mary Leigh and Gladys Evans, were arrested, imprisoned and went on hunger strike. Despite the fact that many of the Irish women resented the intrusion of WSPU members in Irish affairs, Sheehy Skeffington and other IWFL members in prison at the time went on a sympathetic hunger strike. The IWFL women were not force-fed while on hunger strike and were soon released, but Sheehy Skeffington did lose her job as a German teacher because of her imprisonment.

By 1913 militancy was dying down, and the suffrage movement was becoming more engaged with the labour movement. Members of the IWFL had taken an increasing interest in the plight of women workers, and, in 1911, Sheehy Skeffington and Countess Markievicz shared a platform with Delia and James Larkin at the launch of the female trade union, the Irish Women Worker's Union (IWWU). Here Markievicz declared that while women may not have the vote a "union such as now being formed will not alone help you obtain better wages, but will also be a means of helping you get votes".

During the Lockout of 1913 many of the middle-class IWFL women and the

working-class IWWU women worked together in the soup kitchen in Liberty Hall. However, working-class women did not, in general, join the IWFL, as Helena Molony later said, there grew "a deep feeling of social consciousness and revolt among women of a more favoured class, [which] passed over the heads of the Irish working woman and left her untouched". Rather the more radical middle-class suffrage campaigners began to lean left in their thinking, and influenced by the thinking and support of James Connolly, most of them joined the IWWU and, later, the Irish Citizen Army.

By late 1914 the largest women's organisation in the country was nationalist rather than feminist in orientation. In April 1914, Cumann na mBan was founded with the aim of creating an organisation where advanced nationalist women could work for the cause of Ireland. Its manifesto initially spoke of funding and "arming a body of men" for the defence of Ireland. This seeming auxiliary status to the Irish Volunteers did not endear it to suffrage activists. *The Irish Citizen* condemned its "crawling servility to the men", while Sheehy Skeffington described Cumann na mBan as little more than "animated



Second class citizens in health of the nation

Improvements were experienced unevenly, writes **Susannah Riordan**

LEVELS of health in Ireland improved enormously in the 30 years before the Easter Rising. However, the health of poor women and children, especially infants, gave cause for concern.

Rates of smallpox vaccination were high and incidences comparatively low. The numbers of deaths from scarlet fever, typhus, and gastro-enteritis (the main killer of infants) were all falling. Tuberculosis was an anomaly. Ireland was one of the few developed countries in which the tuberculosis mortality rate was not falling. In 1911 the disease still accounted for 13pc of all deaths.

Better health reflected many social changes. Measures had been taken by local authorities to address public and environmental health. Access to medical services and information about preserving health were becoming more widespread. But a general rise in household income was probably the most important development.

The old age pension, introduced in 1909, made a valuable contribution to family resources and may have improved conditions for every age group, not just the over-70s who were entitled to claim it. In 1911, the National Insurance Act provided maternity benefits for wives of insured workers. In 1915, 44,318 mothers — nearly half of those who gave birth — received this. It did not, of course, help the families of uninsured workers or the unemployed.

Higher incomes led to better nutrition. This meant greater resistance to disease and a greater chance of recovery. It also helped women to survive complications from childbirth. Deaths in childbirth fell from 6.18 per 1,000 in 1900 to 4.87 in 1920 but remained greatest among those who were poor and badly-fed.

Health improvements were experienced unevenly throughout the country. Life in rural areas was much healthier than cities due to fewer environmental hazards, lower incidences of infectious disease, better housing and access to better-quality food.

Dublin had the highest overall death rate of any city in Britain and Ireland. While this was declining, the impact was mainly felt among the wealthier classes. In 1909, the overall death rate in the affluent southern suburbs was 16 per 1,000 compared with 24.7 per 1,000 in the north inner city.

In Belfast, the death rate was 18.2 per 1,000 in 1909. However, the linen mills, which mainly employed young women and girls, were associated with a range of respiratory illnesses. Many contemporaries believed they were responsible for Belfast's unusually high death rate from tuberculosis among young women. Given the unreliability of urban milk supplies, the inability of millworkers to breast-feed for as long as other women may also have contributed to infant deaths in the city.

There were great discrepancies in infant mortality rates between city and town and between classes. In 1901, 150 infants died per thousand live births in urban areas, compared with 74 in rural areas. A baby born into a labourer's family was 17 times more likely to die within a year than one born into a professional household.



Children play in a street in Belfast, where, in 1909, the death rate was 18.2 per 1,000.

During the early years of the 20th century there was a new interest in the health of mothers and children. This arose from widespread European concern about national deterioration and a growing realisation that infant deaths could and should be prevented.

In Ireland, the official response was unenthusiastic. There was also strong local opposition to raising rates and taxes and religious suspicion of measures which intruded on the family. The vacuum was filled by pioneering women's organisations, both nationalist and unionist.

Maud Gonne became a champion of school meals for poor children when legislation to provide this service was not extended to Ireland. She founded the Ladies School Dinner Committee in 1911 and provided meals for 400 Dublin schoolchildren. The Committee also lobbied for Irish legislation. This was passed in 1914 and soon 4,000 Dublin children were being fed in national and convent schools.

In 1907, Lady Aberdeen, the viceroy's wife, set up the Women's National Health Association (WNHA) to educate women about preventing disease through better hygiene and nutrition. It established mother and baby clubs in Dublin and Belfast and, most importantly, made free or cheap pasteurised milk available to mothers.

Partly due to WNHA lobbying, local authorities were empowered to ensure that all births were registered. In 1915 registration became compulsory. Consequently, local authorities were able to identify poorer mothers — and it was inevitably poorer mothers — who were thought to be in need of advice on caring for their new babies.

Historians are divided about whether the drive to educate women about motherhood had much of an impact. Instructions from well-meaning middle-class social workers were often unrealistic. Hygiene was difficult to maintain by even the most house-proud mother on a small farm or in a tenement. Simple, nutritious food was not always available or affordable.

Women may have resented interference

with the traditional methods they had learned from their own mothers. Such advice may even have a detrimental effect, making practices like breast-feeding more regimented and therefore more difficult and unattractive.

Statistics reveal one major peculiarity about women's own health at this time. Usually, other things being equal, women enjoy a longer lifespan. In 1911, life expectancy for Irishwomen was 54.1 years, compared with 53.6 years for men. In England and Wales at this time, the difference was close to four years.

Strangely, it was only rural women who lacked an obvious female advantage. This suggests that while rural women were becoming healthier, they were less healthy than they should have been.

This can't be explained by the large size of Irish families. In 1911, 36pc of married women had seven children or more and this had an impact on their health, aging them prematurely. But, though women in towns and cities had access to better maternal healthcare, big families were equally common. Nor can the phenomenon be explained by harder physical labour in the countryside.

Historians have suggested that in other societies where there is little or no female advantage, it is due to cultural factors. If a low social value is placed on girls and women, they may have less access to scarce resources. Did girls have less access to food and healthcare than their brothers in late 19th and early 20th-century Ireland? Or, did feeding the men and children before sitting down to eat herself leave the Irish country mother dangerously undernourished?

Dr Susannah Riordan lectures in Modern Irish History in the UCD School of History. She is co-editor, with Dr Catherine Cox, of *Adolescence in Modern Irish History* (1915) and co-editor, with Professor Diarmaid Ferriter, of *Years of Turbulence: The Irish Revolution and Its Aftermath*



Female Irish Republican supporters pose for a photograph with an Irish tricolour to publicise a meeting in June 1916.

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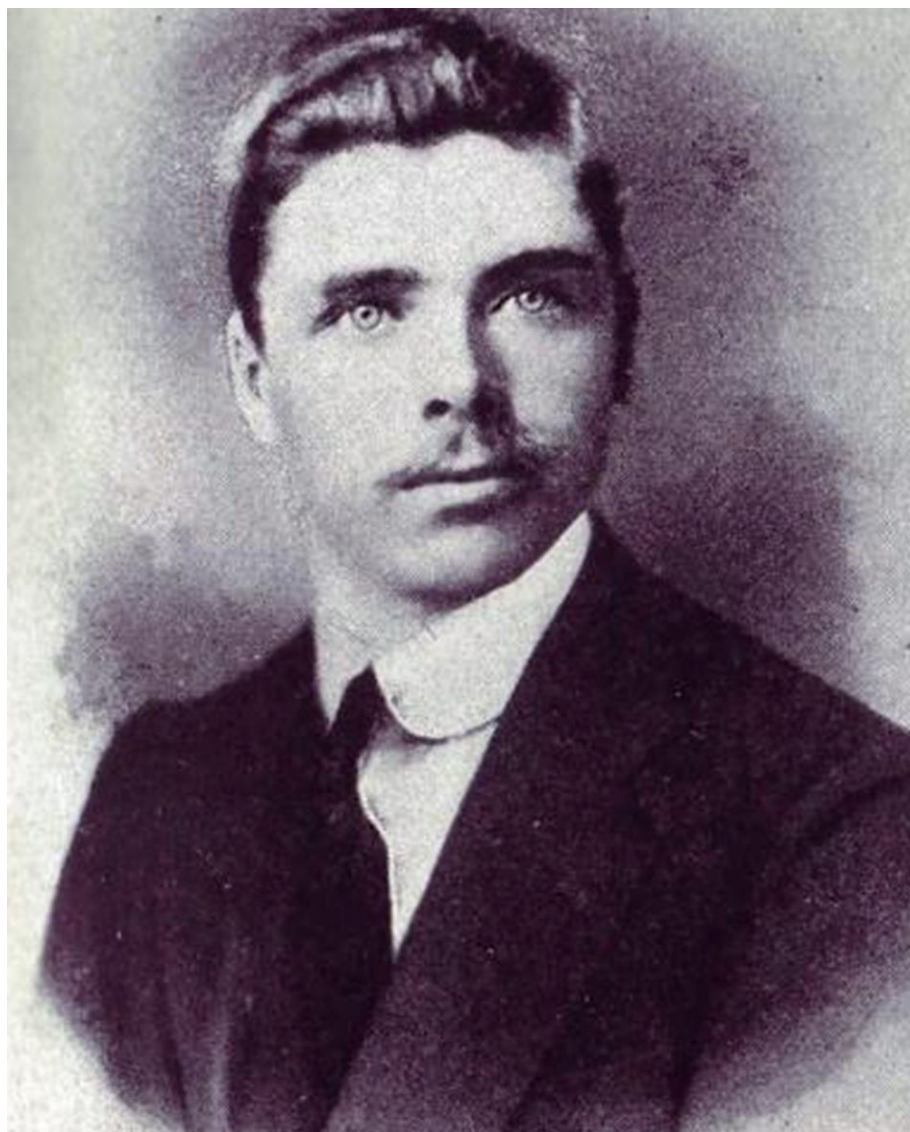
collecting boxes”.

The IWFL was unwilling to accept the nation first ideology of Cumann na mBan despite the fact that many suffrage activists were on its executive. However as Cumann na mBan grew in urban and rural areas many suffrage campaigners and members of the IWFL joined, and although initially middle-class, by 1915 it had become a cross-class organisation.

Despite their class difference and arguments, most especially their debates about suffrage first or nation first, the women in Cumann na mBan, the IWWU, the Irish Citizen Army and the IWFL co-operated on many issues including resistance to any move to introduce conscription in Ireland once war broke out in 1914. The influence in the activism and ideologies of these women can be best seen in the inclusion of the promise of full citizenship in the Proclamation of 1916.

Dr Mary McAuliffe lectures on gender history at UCD Women's Studies. She is co-author of the forthcoming book *Realists and Idealists: 77 women of the Easter Rising*.





Michael Mallin (left) and Darragh Gannon at the National Museum of Ireland.

STEVE HUMPHREYS



MICHAEL MALLIN

‘I am prepared’

Darragh Gannon on the Commandant who claimed to be a mere foot soldier at the St Stephen’s Green garrison

THE words, ‘I am prepared’, were among the last written by Michael Mallin to his wife Agnes hours before his execution. Lightly-worn within an emotional final letter, they are nonetheless thought provoking, for an assessment of Michael Mallin’s 1916 Rising is essentially a question of preparation, indeed questions. Was Michael Mallin organisationally prepared as Chief of Staff of the Irish Citizen Army? Was he militarily prepared as Commandant of the St Stephen’s Green garrison? Was Mallin personally prepared to face death after the Rising?

Born in Dublin, Mallin joined the British Army Royal Scots Fusiliers at 15 in 1889. He served as a drummer for the majority of his time in uniform (1891-1902), and saw military action in India. On his return to Ireland he became secretary of the Silk Weavers’ Union and a member of the ITGWU.

Mallin was appointed as Irish Citizen Army Chief of Staff by James Connolly in October 1914. He had much to recommend him. Under his leadership, the ICA became a much more disciplined body than before, with members committing to regular, timely drill sessions. Countess Markievicz joined in several training exercises. Never as well armed as the Irish Volunteers, the ICA availed of Mallin’s contacts in Richmond Barracks to secure rifles, later joining the Volunteers in shooting competitions. His military strategies and tactics evidenced flexible preparation. He joined Connolly in delivering lectures on street fighting and defensive warfare but also illustrated the advantages of guerrilla warfare in a number of articles.

Michael Mallin was appointed Commandant of the St Stephen’s Green garrison. Countess Markievicz became his second-in-command later on Monday. Their objective was to secure the Green. On Mallin’s orders the rebels cleared it of civilians and dug defensive trenches at its four entrances. He declined to take the

SNAPSHOT

MICHAEL MALLIN

Born: 1 December 1874, Dublin

Educated: Denmark Street NS

Affiliation: Irish Socialist Party/ Irish Citizen Army

Career: Soldier, weaver, trade unionist

Died: 8 May 1916, Kilmainham Jail

Shelbourne Hotel, the dominant building overlooking the garrison, leaving the rebels fatally exposed. Machine gun fire from British positions in the hotel had, by Tuesday, forced the rebels into the nearby Royal College of Surgeons from where they surrendered that Sunday. Mallin, on the miscalculation of both garrison numbers and military tactics, was unprepared for the battle.

Michael Mallin was sentenced to death by field court martial on 5 May 1916. Unlike Patrick Pearse, he had clearly not prepared psychologically for this eventuality. During his trial Mallin denied holding any commission in the ICA; having prior knowledge of plans for a Rising; or being in the confidence of James Connolly. He claimed to have been a mere foot soldier in St Stephen’s Green, acting under the command of Countess Markievicz during Easter Week.

Brian Hughes, his biographer, has termed his misrepresentations a “particularly dishonourable” attempt to avoid the firing squad. The distress of leaving his wife and four, soon to be five, children to face into life without a husband and father, may have accounted for Mallin’s uncharacteristic behaviour.

Dr Darragh Gannon, UCD, is currently Curatorial Researcher to the National Museum of Ireland’s ‘Proclaiming a Republic: the 1916 Rising’ exhibition



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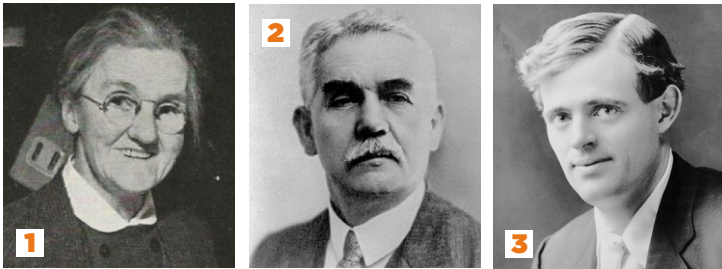
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NINE LIVES

Grainne Coyne on the artists and political activists of the era

1 Born in Dublin in 1892, at 18 **Rosie Hackett** helped to organise women protesting at poor working conditions in the Jacob's factory. She also joined the ITGWU and two weeks after the Jacob's strike she co-founded the Irish Women Workers Union which set up a soup kitchen in Liberty Hall for those who were affected by the 1913 Dublin Lockout. After losing her job in 1914, she joined the Irish Citizen Army, and occupied St Stephen's Green and the College of Surgeons during the Rising. Hackett continued her work in Liberty Hall and in 1970 was awarded a gold medal. She died in 1976, aged 82.

2 Born in 1870 in Paris, **Georges Claude** is best known for his invention of the neon light. In 1897 he discovered a safe way of transporting acetone, which helped expand the acetylene industry. He also proposed the use of liquid oxygen in iron smelting, but this wasn't adopted until after the Second World War. His most famous discovery came in 1910 when he found that passing electrical current through inert gases produces light, and from there he developed the neon lamp for use in lighting and signs. He died in 1960 aged 89.

3 Born John Griffith Chaney in San Francisco, California in 1876, **Jack London** was an American activist, author and journalist, best known for the adventure novels *The Call of the Wild* (1903) and *White Fang* (1906). In 1893 he entered a writing contest and won first prize. From there he decided to dedicate his life to writing short stories and in 1899 he began publishing stories in the *Overland Monthly*. He published more than 50 books in his lifetime and died at his Californian ranch in 1916.

4 Known as 'America's Sweetheart', **Mary Pickford** was an actress, producer and co-founder of United Artists along with Charlie Chaplin, and Douglas Fairbanks Sr. Born Gladys Smith in 1892 in Toronto, Canada, she took the stage name of Mary Pickford during her Broadway days. She made her debut in *The Warrens of Virginia* (1915) and soon after linked up with head of the American Biograph Company, DW Griffith. She moved to California, married Fairbanks, and helped establish the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 1927, winning an Oscar for her first talkie, *Coquette* in 1929. She was unable to recreate the same success she had with silent films, but continued to work as a producer.



5 **Michael Logue** was leader of the Catholic Church in Ireland for almost 37 years. Born in Kilmacrennan, Co Donegal in 1840, Logue attended Maynooth where he earned the nickname 'the Northern Star'. He was appointed Bishop of Raphoe in 1879 where he was active in famine relief and the temperance movement. In 1887 he became Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, and was later elevated to Cardinal. Logue publicly supported Home Rule and the Anglo-Irish Treaty, and issued a warning in 1917 to priests who were beginning to flirt with Sinn Féin. However, the following year he spoke out against conscription and helped broker election deals between SF and the Irish Parliamentary Party. He died in 1924.

6 **Baron Manfred von Richthofen** earned fame in World War One as an ace fighter pilot. Born in 1892, he first served as a German cavalry officer and in the infantry before being transferred to the Imperial Air Service in 1915. Despite some initial struggles with aircraft, Richtofen fought by plane at the battle of Verdun. He became leader of the squadron known as the Flying Circus, where he

developed a reputation thanks to his bright red Fokker triplane and was nicknamed the "red baron," and "diable rouge". He was credited with a total of 80 victories before being shot down over the Somme in 1918, where he died instantly.

7 Born Nikolai Aleksandrovich Romanov in 1868 Pushkin, **Nicholas II** was the last Tsar of Russia. He inherited the throne in 1894, but was not officially crowned until 1896. He faced immense criticism over his actions on Bloody Sunday in 1905, where his troops opened fire on peaceful demonstrators in St Petersburg. Further strikes and uprisings forced him to create an elected legislature, the Duma. He continued to resist reform and even appointed himself commander-in-chief during the First World War. Riots in 1917 led to full scale revolution and he was forced to abdicate. He and his family were executed by the Bolsheviks in 1918.

8 **George Boyd-Rochfort** was a multi-decorated soldier, including the highest award in the British Army, the Victoria Cross. Born in 1880 in Middleton Park House, Co Westmeath, he was a noted jockey before he



joined up at the outbreak of the First World War. In 1915 he was serving as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Scots Guards near Cambrin in France. A German mortar landed beside the trench he was stationed in, at which Boyd-Rochfort warned his men, rushed to the bomb, and hurled it over the parapet where it exploded harmlessly. His quick-thinking and bravery saved several lives and he was later promoted to captain. After the war he became a racehorse trainer like his very successful brother Cecil (who won 12 classics), and died in 1940.

9 Born Margaret Gillespie in 1878 at Boyle, Co. Roscommon, and marrying poet James Cousins in 1903, **Margaret Cousins** was a committed activist and suffragette in Ireland and India. Cousins was involved in groups such as the Irish Vegetarian Society and the Irish Women's Franchise League. In 1910 she was imprisoned for a month in Holloway prison for suffragette activity, and again in 1913 for breaking Dublin Castle windows. She and James later moved to India, where she became the first non-Indian member of the Indian Women's University at Poona and in 1917 helped organise the Women's India Association. She was paralysed after a stroke in the 1940s, and died in 1954.

LEARN MORE

- READ...**
- * *Realists and Idealists: 77 Women of the Easter Rising*, by Mary McAuliffe and Liz Gillis (Four Courts Press, 2016)
 - * *Elizabeth O'Farrell* by F. Clarke and J. Quinn in 1916. Portraits and Lives by LW White and J Quinn (Dublin, 2015)
 - * *Events of Easter week* by Elizabeth O'Farrell, Catholic Bulletin, 7 (1917), 265-70, 329-34.
 - * *Cumann na mBan and the*

- Irish Revolution* by Cal McCarthy (Collins Press 2007)
- * *Revolutionary Lives: Constance and Casimir Markievicz* by Lauren Harlington, (Princeton University Press, 2016)
 - * *Michael Mallin* by Brian Hughes (O'Brien Press 16 Lives, 2012)
 - * *Rosamund Jacob* by Leeann Lane, (UCD Press, 2010)
- WATCH...**
- * TG4's documentary on Cumann na mBan *Mná na*

- Réabhlóide* is available on the TG4 player, <http://bit.ly/1RN7QKf>
- * TG4's excellent documentary on Kathleen Lynn is also available, <http://bit.ly/1RN7QKf>
- LISTEN TO...**
- * *Rebel Countess*, RTÉ radio documentary, <http://bit.ly/1ZSpsn9>
 - * *Women of the Revolution*, 1971 RTÉ documentary in which



- Donncha O Dulaing interviews Nora Connolly O'Brien (left), Margaret Skinnider, Rosie Hackett and others who participated in the Rising, <http://bit.ly/1PDwixh>
- VISIT...**
- * Reading 1916, an exhibition of books, documents, private papers, periodicals and collected items held in UCD Archives and in

- UCD Special Collections, at UCD, Belfield, Dublin 4.
- DOWNLOAD...**
- * *Seven Women of the Labour Movement* by Sinéad McCool. Free PDF booklet with biographies of seven women who served with the Irish Citizen Army in 1916: Kathleen Lynn, Countess Markievicz, Helena Molony, Winnie Carney, Nora Connolly O'Brien, Margaret Skinnider and Madeleine French-Mullen, <http://bit.ly/1KEHXEH>

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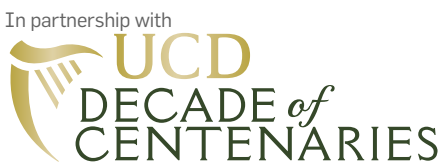
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