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The Irish delegation in London knew they faced the near-impossible task of returning to Dublin with a deal that would satisfy all political persuasions

The reluctant team sent to negotiate for Ireland

The Anglo-Irish Treaty resulted from a conference held in London from October 11 to December 6 to determine how “the association of Ireland with the community of nations known as the British Empire may be best reconciled with Irish national aspirations”. The Irish delegation was finalised at a Dáil cabinet meeting on September 4.

ARTHUR GRIFFITH (1871-1922) was chairman of the delegation and, at 50, its oldest member. A veteran advanced nationalist, he had made his mark as an editor, journalist, campaigner, and politician. He had apprenticed as a printer, progressing to copywriter for publications including the *Nation* and the *Irish Daily Independent*. He spent two years as a journalist in South Africa and returned to Ireland in 1898 to become editor of the *United Irishman* and later *Sinn Féin*, *Scissors and Paste* and *Nationality*. In his landmark work, *The Resurrection of Hungary* (1904), Griffith called for Ireland to follow the Hungarian model of parliamentary abstention, whereby MPs would refuse to sit at Westminster and instead set up their own parliament at home. The second pillar of his thinking was dual monarchy, whereby the crown alone would unite Ireland and Britain. These two policies became the basis for the foundation of Sinn Féin. Griffith was elected for Cavan East in the June 1918 by-election and re-elected in the December 1918 general election. Imprisoned several times from 1916 to 1921, he served as minister for home affairs from 1919 to 1921, then minister for foreign affairs from 1921 to 1922. He accompanied Éamon de

Valera to London for private meetings with David Lloyd George. He argued passionately in favour of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in the Dáil, and, after it was ratified on January 7, 1922, he was elected president of the Dáil and formed a new government. He died suddenly on August 12, 1922. **MICHAEL COLLINS** (1890-1922) was born at Woodfield, Sam’s Cross, Co Cork. He moved to London for work at 15. He was heavily involved in Irish organisations run by other emigrants, including the GAA, the Gaelic League and the Irish Volunteers. Most important was his membership of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), which put him at the centre of Irish revolutionary networks before Easter 1916. Collins returned to Ireland in January 1916 and served as Joseph Plunkett’s aide-de-camp at the GPO during the Rising. He was interned in Frongoch in north Wales until December 1916, where took a leadership role. Once he was released, he consolidated his power in the IRB and IRA. He was elected to the Sinn Féin executive board in 1917. The following year, he was appointed adjutant-general of the Irish Volunteers and in December was elected unopposed as Sinn Féin’s candidate for Cork South. He was appointed the minister for finance in April 1919, while also serving as the president of the Supreme Council of the IRB and the IRA’s director of intelligence. He was nominated by Éamon de Valera to attend the Anglo-Irish conference in London in late 1921. While he believed that de Valera was setting them up to fail, Collins was vital to the negotiations and frequently met British officials alone. After the signing of the treaty, he became chairman of the Provisional Government and continued to serve as minister of finance.

At the outbreak of the Civil War in June 1922, he took up the post of commander-in-chief of the fledgling Free State Army. He was killed on August 22, 1922, in an ambush at Béal na mBláth, Co Cork. **ROBERT BARTON** (1881-1975) was born in Co Wicklow to a traditionally unionist Anglo-Irish landowning family. He was an accomplished agriculturalist and introduced modern farming techniques to his estate and its tenants. He joined the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society in 1910. Barton became a member of the Irish Volunteers in 1913. In 1914, he took a commission with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and was dispatched to Dublin during the suppression of the Easter Rising. Appalled by the treatment of the Irish prisoners, he resigned from the army and joined the rebels. He was elected the Sinn Féin MP for Wicklow West in December 1918 and named minister for agriculture in 1919. He was arrested for sedition and escaped from Mountjoy prison in March 1919 but was re-arrested and sentenced to three years’ imprisonment. During his time inside he was elected chairman of Wicklow County Council. He was released in July 1921, re-elected to the Dáil for the Kildare-Wicklow constituency and appointed minister for economic affairs. Collins recommended Barton for the treaty delegation because of his economic expertise. He took much convincing to sign the treaty and was the last to do so. His discomfort was such that, although he honoured his commitment to vote in its favour in the Dáil, he took the anti-treaty side afterwards. After Fianna Fáil’s accession to power in 1932, he was appointed director of the *Irish Press* by de Valera and became chairman of the Agricultural Credit Corporation and chairman of Bord na Móna.

ÉAMONN DUGGAN (1874-1936) was a lawyer and politician from Longwood, Co Meath. In 1914, he became a solicitor, opened a practice in Dublin and enlisted as a private in the Irish Volunteers. He participated in the Easter Rising as a member of Commandant Edward Daly’s staff. He was tried by court martial and given a three-year prison sentence. Released on the general prisoners’ amnesty in 1917, he became a senior member of the IRB and was Collins’s predecessor as IRA director of intelligence. Duggan was elected for the Meath South constituency unopposed in 1918. He was arrested again in November 1920 and imprisoned in Mountjoy with Griffith. He was moved to Brixton prison and managed to continue his legal work while also, in his capacity as MP, occasionally dining at the House of Commons and exploring avenues towards Anglo-Irish peace. His intended role in the treaty delegation was to be the liaison with different British officials, having served as the principal truce liaison officer on the Irish side. After the signing of the treaty, Duggan remained a supporter of the document and defended it in the Dáil. He stayed in politics, serving as a TD until 1933. He was an ineffective minister for home affairs in the Provisional Government up to September 1922, when he became minister without portfolio. **GEORGE GAVAN DUFFY** (1882-1951) was the son of the Young Irishman Charles Gavan Duffy, who in 1871-2 was premier of Victoria in Australia. He was raised by three of his half-sisters in Nice after his mother died in 1889. He began his career as a solicitor in London in 1907 and gained prominence after defending Roger Casement at his trial for treason. The trial had a lasting impact on

Duffy. He moved to Ireland and was called to the bar in 1917. He joined Sinn Féin and won the Dublin County South seat in the December 1918 election. He was fluent in French and Italian, which allowed him to move throughout Europe to promote the Irish cause in different nations. Duffy was appointed to the treaty negotiation team by Éamon de Valera because of his legal expertise. He felt pressurised to sign the treaty when the other men did and he

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did not fully support it in its final form. In the Dáil debates, he said: “My heart is with those who are against the treaty, but my reason is against them, because I can see no rational alternative.” He was appointed minster for external affairs in January 1922 but resigned in July when the Dáil courts were disbanded by the Free State government after the outbreak of the Civil War. He stood as an independent candidate but missed out on re-election to the Dáil in 1923 and returned to his legal work. He became a judge in 1929 and was appointed to the High Court in 1936 and as president of the High Court in 1946.

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Big guns of British politics who boasted formidable experience



Catherine Holmes

The British delegation at the Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiations was a formidable group of experienced negotiators. **DAVID LLOYD GEORGE** (1863-1945) was the Prime Minister and chairman of the British delegation. During the World War I he had been an effective minister of munitions, before becoming secretary of state for war in 1916 under Liberal prime minister HH Asquith. In December 1916, Asquith resigned due to a lack of confidence in his war leadership and Lloyd George became leader of a coalition government that included many diehard unionists. Lloyd George oversaw the conscription crisis of 1918, when Westminster introduced but did not put into effect a law requiring Irish men to join the British military effort, and the Government of Ireland Act 1920 that partitioned Ireland. He excused the violence of the British authorities in Ireland and underestimated the growing support for Sinn Féin and the IRA. From July 1921, Lloyd George began a series of meetings with Sinn Féin leader Éamon de Valera at Downing Street. The talks made slow progress but led to the full-scale negotiations in October 1921 over the relationship between Ireland and the British Empire. Lloyd George was an experienced negotiator who had led the British delegation at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, resulting in the Treaty of Versailles. He used his rhetorical flair and the threat of hostilities to compel the Irish delegation to accept the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. He resigned as prime minister in 1922 when he lost the confidence of the coalition government. **FE SMITH, LORD BIRKENHEAD** (1872-1930) was a Conservative politician and supporter of Ulster unionism. He maintained close friendships across political divides with the likes of Winston Churchill and was one of Lloyd George’s most trusted colleagues. Smith was not a well-liked figure in Ireland, having first become known to the Irish people during the Home Rule crisis in 1912. He was by the side of Irish unionist politician Edward Carson in the lead-up to the signing of the Ulster Covenant, a pledge to defy Home Rule. In 1916, Smith, then attorney-general, led the prosecution in the treason case against Roger Casement. He was one of the first prominent politicians to advocate partition, accepting nationalists had a right to self-government but urging the British government to

understand unionists had a right to be excluded from this. As lord chancellor, he played a key role in the Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiations and drafted much of the document. His support for the treaty and the solid rapport with Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins angered some of his former unionist associates. He is most remembered for his much-quoted declaration that by signing the treaty he had signed his “political death warrant”, to which Michael Collins shot back that he had signed his “actual death warrant”. Smith defended the treaty and remained in politics until 1928, serving as secretary of state for India. **AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN** (1863-1937) was part of a political family that included his half-brother and future prime minister Neville, and his father Joseph, who was a chief opponent of the first Home Rule Bill in 1886. When Joseph Chamberlain died in July 1914, Austen replaced him as Conservative MP for Birmingham. He became party leader in March 1921, taking over from Andrew Bonar Law, a strong supporter of Ulster unionism. He was not entirely opposed to Home Rule and played an important role in moving his party away from its absolutist stance. His calls for negotiations with the Sinn Féin leadership and his support for the articles of agreement during the negotiations alienated a substantial number of right-wing Conservatives, eroding his support within the party.

He resigned the leadership in 1922 and did not hold office in the Conservative governments of 1922-1924. **WINSTON CHURCHILL** (1874-1965) was a member of the Conservative party for most of his career but from 1904 to 1924 he was a member of the Liberal Party. At the time of the treaty negotiations, he was secretary of state for the colonies and chairman of the cabinet commission on Irish affairs. He was a key member of the war office when temporary recruits known as Black and Tans and auxiliary cadets were deployed to Ireland in attempts to reassert British authority. In May 1921, he urged the British cabinet to start talks with Sinn Féin. His primary aim was to maintain the empire. During the negotiations, he was chiefly responsible for the clauses of the treaty that reserved three naval bases for British use. Despite their differences of opinion and regular arguments during the negotiations, he had a good working relationship with Michael Collins. **SIR GORDON HEWART** (1870-1943) was a Liberal MP for Leicester East. He was appointed solicitor general for England and Wales by Lloyd George in 1916 and made attorney-general in 1919. It was in this role that he attended the treaty negotiations. He became lord chief justice of England and in May 1922 he worked with Chief Justice of Ireland Hugh Kennedy to draft the Irish Free State Constitution. **SIR LAMING WORTHINGTON-EVANS** (1868-1931) was a Conservative MP but a loyal member of Lloyd George’s inner circle. He had a reputation as an effective debater and attended several conferences in the aftermath of World War I. He attended the Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiations as secretary of state for war, a position he held from February 1921 until October 1922. **SIR HAMAR GREENWOOD** (1870-1948) was a lawyer and Liberal MP for Sunderland. Born in Canada of Welsh descent, he emigrated to England in 1895. Greenwood was a passionate imperialist who focused on recruitment during World War I and supported Home Rule as a way to keep Ireland connected to the empire. Lloyd George named Greenwood chief secretary of Ireland in April 1920. His reputation suffered as he publicly defended the British authorities in Ireland against charges of misconduct and reprisals, dismissing the charges as exaggerated or invented republican propaganda. Despite being the principal minister responsible for Irish affairs, he took little active role in the negotiations and was omitted from the subcommittees in the later stages. After the treaty, Greenwood remained chief secretary until October 1922 to play a small role in the winding-down of British administration in Ireland, working on RIC personnel’s pension rights.



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