



Trinity College Dublin  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

## Trinity and the Rising Commemorating the 1916 centenary





## Trinity and the Rising Commemorating the 1916 centenary

**This is a song sang  
This morning on a broken tree,  
It was about the little fields  
That call across the world to me.**

Soldier and poet, Francis Ledwidge

This booklet was produced by Katie Strickland Byrne  
in the Office of Public Affairs and Communications.

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## Introduction by the Dean of Research



Trinity's role in the 1916 Rising has often been viewed ambiguously. The University's complex position within Irish society of the 19th and early 20th centuries meant that Trinity's involvement in events surrounding the Rising have often been overlooked. The Decade of Commemorations presented a challenge to the University and its researchers: how to find a role for Trinity that engaged not only with our history as a university, but as a prominent institution at the time of the Rising, and also that adequately reflected our position as a cultural leader in the Ireland of the 21st century. The motto of the University, 'Perpetuis futuris temporibus duraturam' which translates roughly as 'It will last into endless future times' is particularly striking in the context of this Decade of Commemorations. Trinity is an institution that values its history, and consciously strives to have our traditions inform our future. So it should be with Trinity's role in the defining events of our nation.

Collected in this book, are reflections from leading academics and staff across our community. Eunan O'Halpin from the School of History outlines some of the events hosted by Trinity in the years leading up to 2016 that sought to look beyond the confines of the Rising and to place it in a broader historical context. Jane Ohlmeyer, director of the Trinity Long Room Hub Arts and Humanities Research Institute (TLRH), traces elements of this broader historical context in her analysis of how the Rising impacted on the British Empire, paying particular attention to how it was received in India, and notes the current day issues surrounding the fate of Northern Ireland in the wake of the recent Brexit vote. Ruth Barton from the School of Drama and Film discusses the reception of various television productions that sought to capitalise on the natural increase of interest in the events of 1916. Observing the hit and miss nature of these productions, Barton notes the difficulties in successfully translating significant historical moments to the screen. Similar issues of translation are discussed by Sarah Smyth of the Centre for Literary Translation in an address she made to mark the translation of the Proclamation into 17 different languages. The quirks of language and the nuances of interpretation through the ages are echoed in Iggy McGovern's poem 'Alliteration'. Echoing through the ages is something that Andrew O'Connell engages with in his account of how Trinity's CONNECT Centre recreated the radio message broadcast by the rebels announcing the Rising. The intersection of cutting edge technology with historical remembrance demonstrated the deep connections forged through the act of commemorating. Gerald Dawe notes connections of a similar sort in his account of the poet and soldier Francis Ledwidge who died during the First World War. Dawe's observation that history never ends, is

## Introduction by the Dean of Research

mirrored in the Library's account of its activities to mark the centenary. Bringing Trinity's archives to a wide public audience and using innovative online platforms, the Library was able to provide a hub, both physical and digital, to bring Trinity's history beyond the campus boundaries. Moving outside the physical walls of the city centre campus, Davis Coakley offers a summary of the role that St James's played in the events of the Rising and how these were commemorated. Taking events beyond the city of Dublin, Patrick Geoghegan notes that, among other events, Trinity was the first Irish university to host a major 1916 event outside of Ireland.

Taken together, these pieces reflect the local, national, and international importance of Trinity, our history, and our research. Embracing our nation's past and our place within it, allows us to more boldly face the future, which is something that honours the memory of the men and women of 1916.

### John Boland Dean of Research

**Professor John J. Boland** was appointed Dean of Research in 2015. The Dean of Research has responsibility for driving the University's research, innovation, technology transfer, and entrepreneurship strategies and ensuring that Trinity augments its position as an international reference point for research excellence.

Professor Boland previously held the position of Director at Ireland's leading nanoscience institute - the Centre for Research on Adaptive Nanostructures and Nanodevices (CRANN). Prior to this Prof. Boland was Head of Physical,

Computational and Materials Chemistry in the School of Chemistry. His impressive research profile was achieved during his time as a researcher at the IBM T.J. Watson Research Centre and the J.J. Hermans Chair Professor of Chemistry and Applied and Materials Sciences at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. His current research interests include electrical and mechanical properties of nanoscale materials and devices, connectivity in nanoscale systems and the development of neuromorphic devices. He holds the prestigious title of Science Foundation Ireland Principal Investigator and is also a successful recipient of a European Research Council's Advanced Grant Award.



CAPTAIN F. FAHY,

Who was Commandant in the Four Courts.



## Lest we forget: Trinity College and the Decade of Commemorations

**Eunan O’Halpin discusses Trinity’s engagement in a wide-ranging and innovative set of commemorative events, conferences, exhibitions, concerts, symposia and related engagements which brought Trinity to the public in Ireland and internationally, and the public to Trinity.**

Trinity played host to a series of 1916-related events that opened up the University and its research to the wider public. These included events such as the *First World War Roadshow* held in August 2014, and the Department of History’s phenomenally successful Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on ‘Irish Lives in War and Revolution: Exploring Ireland’s history 1912-1923’. The University has also mounted important commemorative events addressing other eras, including symposia, conferences, and debates with an emphasis on public inclusion to mark significant historical anniversaries. These included a national conference to mark the passage of a millennium since the Battle of Clontarf.

The Centre for Contemporary Irish History organised a symposium to mark the seventieth anniversary of the invasion of Normandy, in which thousands of Irish servicemen and women took part, which was addressed by a distinguished Normandy veteran, Brian Stewart CMG.

In March 2014, Trinity was the only public institution in either Ireland or the United Kingdom to mark the centenary of the Curragh Mutiny with *The Curragh Mutiny in Context*, which was by far the gravest crisis in civil/military relations in Britain since the 17th century. Organised in conjunction with the Defence Forces, the symposium was held at the Ceant Officers Mess at the Curragh on 20 March 2014. In addition to contributions from leading academic

authorities, the conference was addressed by the Honorable George Fergusson, Governor of Bermuda, whose grandfather Sir Charles Fergusson commanded the 5th Division at the Curragh in March 1914. The conference also heard arguments by distinguished barristers for and against the proposition that what happened in March 1914 constituted mutiny, and this part of proceedings was overseen by a distinguished Anglo-Irish judicial panel of Mr Justice Ronan Keane, Mr Justice Donal O’Donnell, and Mr Justice Sir Richard Aikens. A professionally produced podcast is publicly available at [www.tcd.ie/decade-commemoration/events/archive/curragh-mutiny/](http://www.tcd.ie/decade-commemoration/events/archive/curragh-mutiny/)

2014 also saw the publication of Tomás Irish’s widely praised *Trinity in War and Revolution 1912-1923* (Dublin, 2014), which explored Trinity’s difficult experience both of domestic political ferment, and of the Great War in which almost five hundred Trinity men lost their lives.

Professors Anne Dolan and Ciaran Brady of the Department of History also developed a MOOC, ‘Irish Lives in War and Revolution: Exploring Ireland’s history 1912-1923’. This imaginative initiative, which focussed on the lived lives of Irish women and men, girls and boys, in urban and in rural Ireland, has attracted over fifty thousand registered subscribers across the world. Further MOOCs and online initiatives which address themes and issues arising during the ‘Decade of Commemorations’ are in process of creation, in addition to a range of conferences, exhibitions, symposia and public events.

## Lest we forget: Trinity College and the Decade of Commemorations

### Remembering Bulmer Hobson

In June 2015 the Centre for Contemporary Irish History, in co-operation with the Department of History, St Patrick's College, Dublin City University, hosted a major public conference on the often overlooked issue of the experience of Northern nationalists and republicans in the first decades of the twentieth century. Adopting a longer perspective, the conference explored the crucial role of Ulster-based creative writers, musicians, dramatists and poets in the cultural revival of the Edwardian era, and the parallel spread of revolutionary doctrine particularly through the Irish Republican Brotherhood. There was a particular focus on Bulmer Hobson, founder of the Dungannon Clubs and of Fianna Éireann, whose pivotal role in revolutionary politics throughout Ireland before 1916 has largely been ignored because, in the end, he opposed the Rising as planned by Pearse, Connolly and Clarke. The conference was attended by many people with family links to Ulster cultural and political radicals who had had to leave Northern Ireland and make their lives elsewhere for fear of continuous political persecution.

During 2016 Trinity organised a considerable number of historical and related commemorative and reflective events, many of which focused on the University's own role as a bastion of southern unionism, as a place of battle, as a provider of succour for the wounded, and as a rallying point for Crown reinforcements. The largest single event was *Reflecting The Rising*, which was produced jointly with RTÉ. Thousands of people attended a wide-ranging collection of talks, debates, and musical and dramatic performances in English and Irish featuring Trinity academics and public commentators. There were also performances by Trinity Singers, Trinitones, and Trinity Céilí Band, as well as vintage tennis matches.



In conjunction with branches of the Trinity Alumni Association, members of the University's academic community travelled to contribute to many commemorative functions in the United Kingdom, the United States, and elsewhere. In addition, departments such as English and History provided speakers for very many state, local authority and community symposia and conferences throughout the year.

Through the kindness of the Provost, Trinity was also an important site for the staging of RTÉ's award-winning documentary *Seven Women*, broadcast during the centenary commemorations. Trinity academics contributed to many Irish and British television and radio programmes focusing on the centenary and on the Great War, including TV3's two-part series *Revolution in Colour*.

## Lest we forget: Trinity College and the Decade of Commemorations

In 2017 Trinity will take the lead role in marking the centenary of the Irish Convention of 1917-18, the last sustained attempt to produce an agreed compromise on the inter-related questions of Irish dominion status, minority rights, and Unionist Ulster's demands that she should be excluded from home rule. Some of the exchanges and ideas which emerged from the Convention had a lengthy and significant afterlife in both of the Irish jurisdictions which emerged from the Government of Ireland Act of 1920.

**Eunan O'Halpin** is Bank of Ireland Professor of Contemporary Irish History at Trinity, and Director of the Centre for Contemporary Irish History. He was previously Professor of Government at Dublin City University (1998-2000). Educated at UCD and Cambridge, he has written widely on aspects of 20th century Irish and British history and politics, his most recent monograph being 'Spying on Ireland: British Intelligence and Irish Neutrality during the Second World War.'



## An unstoppable process

**Jane Ohlmeyer outlines the contexts and consequences of the 1916 Revolution including its role in the demise of the British Empire.**

On Easter Monday 1916 roughly 1,200 Irish insurgents seized the General Post Office and other strategic locations across Dublin's city centre. The British, mired in World War I (1914-18), suppressed the Rising with unnecessary force. Fighting lasted six days and resulted in 440 deaths, including 250 civilians, and the devastation of the city centre. To prevent further loss of life and destruction, Patrick Pearse, who on 24 April had proclaimed a free Irish Republic to a rather bewildered group of onlookers outside the GPO, declared an unconditional surrender.

The Easter Rising of 1916 may have been a failure militarily but, to quote Yeats, it 'changed, changed utterly' the face of Irish history, even if it was another 33 years before Ireland became a republic in 1949. The rising also set in train an unstoppable process, which led to the separation of Ireland from Great Britain and accelerated the demise of the British Empire, which by 1914 traversed the globe.

### Contexts

It was Friedrich Engels who first described Ireland as England's oldest colony. The Anglo Normans began the conquest of Ireland in the late twelfth century. With the onset of the Reformation from the 1530s Ireland, with its very large Catholic population, represented a real security risk to Protestant England. This meant that Ireland had to be fully conquered. During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the English crown also embarked on a series of initiatives that sought to 'civilise' and 'Anglicise' Ireland. Central to this was the widespread use of English law, the promotion of the English language, English culture, English architecture, English economic and agricultural practices and the English religion (Protestantism). English imperialism in early modern Ireland was thus exploitative and driven by military, political, cultural, religious and economic concerns, and by the determination to colonise the island with British settlers. Over the course of the seventeenth century c.350,000 (mostly) Protestant colonists from England, Wales and Scotland moved to Ireland, especially to Ulster. These people later comprised the Unionists who were determined to maintain the link with Britain.

Predictably, colonisation and 'long usurpation ... by a foreign people and government' bred resentment and led to resistance. The 1916 Proclamation also noted how 'In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty; six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms'. Of the six risings - 1641, 1689, 1798, 1803, 1848, and 1867 - that of 1641 was the most successful securing effective independence for Catholic Ireland for a decade.



## An unstoppable process

Other risings lasted a few months, a few days, or a few hours and appeared to achieve little.

Interestingly in 1641 Catholic Ireland had rebelled in the name of the British king, Charles I. Circumstances forced them to act as separatists but the Irish Confederates saw themselves as constitutional nationalists who wanted to secure greater autonomy within the context of the British Empire, something that the Home Rule movement later also sought to achieve. However, even from the 1640s a small minority of republican nationalists called for the creation of an independent Irish republic. Today we tend to see nationalism through a sectarian lens, but it is important to remember that Irish nationalists, whether constitutional, republican or later cultural, comprised members of both the Catholic and Protestant communities.

It is also important to appreciate how global events made possible and shaped Irish nationalism. The American Declaration of Independence (1776) and especially the French Revolution (1789) inspired generations of Irish nationalists. For radicals, like the United Irishman Wolfe Tone, the enunciation of the principles of liberty and equality, calls for popular sovereignty, the abolition of privileges, and the deliberate use of the printing press all seemed to herald the dawn of a new era. Interestingly, the language of the 1916 Proclamation echoes that of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789).

## Robert Emmet's legacy

Just because risings failed should not suggest that they were insignificant. On the contrary, the 1798 Rebellion profoundly influenced the thinking of later generations of nationalists, especially Robert Emmet who is famous not for his bungled attempt at rebellion in 1803 but for his stirring oration from the gallows. Emmet in turn became a role model for the likes of Pearse, who glorified him as a martyr.

The immediate consequence of the 1798 Rebellion was the passage of the Act of Union (1800/1) with Britain. The undoing of that union, whether through simple repeal or later through schemes for Home Rule, became the political hobbyhorse for constitutional nationalists. The maintenance of the union became the goal of many Protestants, especially the Unionists in Ulster, whose continued economic prosperity seemed to depend on the link with England. The Act of Union thus defined the context of Irish parliamentary politics for the next 100 years.



## An unstoppable process

During the 1840s members of the Young Ireland movement called for the repeal of the union and for Catholic emancipation. Their mouthpiece was the *Nation*, a newspaper launched by Thomas Davis, a Protestant lawyer from Dublin and Charles Gavan Duffy, a Catholic journalist from Belfast. For them the country was a spiritual entity in itself and they believed that it was their task to create a national spirit. As such they were the first exponents of cultural nationalism. They used the medium of print with great effect. The *Nation* ran stories celebrating the heroic past of Ireland; the rebellion of 1641, the 'patriot parliament' of 1689 and the 1798 and 1803 risings. It published biographies of saints, scholars and soldiers, along with patriotic ballads (we owe 'A nation once again' to Davis) and implored people to retain the Irish language as a badge of nationhood.

Pearse drew inspiration from the Young Irelanders and dubbed them the 'Fathers of Irish nationalism'. They put a high value on 'dying for Ireland' and helped inculcate a verbal cult of physical violence, something their revolutionary successors, the Fenians, also espoused. The Fenian movement had its origins in the disasters, which overwhelmed Ireland in the late 1840s, especially the Famine, and was unique in its longevity. It seemed to be a spent force after an abortive rising in 1867, but in fact it hung on for the next 50 years. In part, Fenianism owed its survival to the fact that many of its founders - especially O'Donovan Rossa (d. 1915) - lived to an influential old age and were able to pass on the torch to a younger generation; to men like Tom Clarke, a professional revolutionary and one of chief organisers of 1916 rebellion.

With the rise of a dynamic parliamentary, Home Rule party, the Fenian movement faced a serious challenge for the allegiance of Irish nationalists. Thanks to the charismatic

leadership of Charles Stewart Parnell Home Rule had become a viable option. If the first Home Rule bill (1886) - or even the second Home Rule bill (1893) - had become law at a time when unionist opposition was limited, the future course of Anglo-Irish relations - indeed Irish history - might have been very different.

The other strand of Irish nationalism so potent from the 1880s was cultural nationalism, which placed great emphasis on the distinctiveness of Irish cultural identity and the need for economic, social and political self-reliance. The cultural nationalism that governed much of the most significant literary and intellectual activity in Ireland between 1890 and 1930 was a force distinct from, though intimately connected with, political nationalism. This is illustrated by the fact that four (of the seven) signatories of the 1916 Proclamation were also playwrights and active in the cultural revival (Pearse, Connolly, McDonough and Plunkett). Indeed the rising itself can be regarded as an act of (deadly) theatre redolent with symbolic spectacle; a true Greek tragedy.



## An unstoppable process

### Colonial consequences

From the mid-nineteenth century there were important global dimensions to Irish nationalism. The Fenian movement found great support among the displaced survivors of the Famine, especially those in Britain and North America. There, Fenianism gained a strong following amongst emigrant Irish labourers and second-generation Irish migrants. Americans helped to fund – via the veteran Fenian, John Devoy – the 1916 Rising, and the *New York Times* gave it front-page coverage for 14 consecutive days. Support for the fledgling Irish state continued throughout the twentieth century. Only with the bombings of the twin towers in New York on 11 September 2001 did American support for republican nationalism begin to dry up.

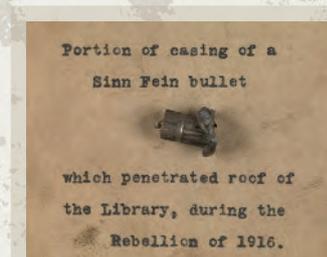
Britain lost its American colonies back in the late eighteenth century but this did not stop it from acquiring a global empire, on which the sun, quite literally, never set. With the advent of Irish nationalism from the 1880s the British government became concerned about how the Home Rule movement would play out across the Empire. For instance, in India Lord Dufferin, himself of Ulster planter stock, regarded with suspicion the foundation in 1885 of the Indian National Congress, which he referred to as the ‘Indian Home Rule movement’.

There were other strong links, especially with India. M. K. Gandhi later attributed the origin of his own mass movement of peaceful resistance to the Irish Land League, which served as a model of agrarian disturbance, and to Michael Davitt, who had pioneered peaceful methods of agitation and passive resistance, including the use of boycott, rent strikes and the press. In London, during the 1880s and 1890s, Davitt found common cause with

Dadabhai Naoroji who was originally from Bombay and had played a key role in founding the Indian National Congress before moving to London where he became the first Asian to sit in the Westminster parliament. In 1901 Naoroji published *Poverty and Un-British rule*, his very influential book on the drain of wealth from India into England through colonial rule.

This resonated with the Irish. The feminist nationalist, Maud Gonne, cited Naoroji’s work and speeches, suggesting that ‘all that Mr Naoroji says of India applies equally to Ireland’. She branded Queen Victoria as ‘the famine queen’ who was unfit to rule. In an article called ‘India’ Gonne suggested that ‘it is better to die fighting than starving’.

Cultural nationalists also found common cause. W. B. Yeats, who had made an immense contribution to the Irish literary revival, was fascinated by Indian mysticism. He was an avid supporter of the Bengali polymath, Rabindranath Tagore, who found aspects of Irish nationalism inspiring, especially the use of language, folklore and mythology. In fact Tagore’s play *The Post Office* was staged at the Abbey theatre in Dublin in May 1913, the first play by Tagore to be staged outside of India. Interestingly, the play was a benefit performance for St Enda’s College, the Dublin secondary school founded by Pearse.



## An unstoppable process

### The 1916 Rising and the Partition of India

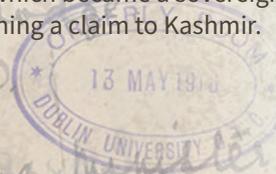
The reverberations of the 1916 Rising were felt around the British Empire and undoubtedly accelerated its demise. Republicanism found its mark in India as Bengali nationalists emulated Sinn Féin and Irish physical force tactics. The Chittagong armoury raid on Good Friday 1930 (18 April) drew direct inspiration from the 1916 Rising. Its leader, Surjya Sen, was a teacher like Pearse. The Chittagong Proclamation was almost identical in sentiment, and often in phrasing, to the 1916 Proclamation. Sen knew that Chittagong was doomed to fail and appreciated that its significance lay in the fact it was a blood sacrifice.

The Bengali pantheon of heroes included Pearse, but also Michael Collins, admired as the master of guerrilla warfare, and Terence McSwiney, the hunger striker, whose example was copied by Jatindranath Das who died in Lahore Jail (1929). Dan Breen's book, *My fight for Irish freedom* (1924), was translated into Hindi, Punjabi and Tamil and became 'one of our Bibles'. Writing in 1933 Subhas Chandra Bose, the Indian equivalent to Collins, added that 'in my part of India - Bengal - there is hardly an educated family where books about the Irish heroes are not read and if I may say so, devoured'. Of course acts of other European revolutionaries also inspired Bengali nationalists but from the 1920s and 1930s the example of Ireland took precedence.

Eamon De Valera, the founding father of the new Irish state, was another hero for Indian nationalists. From the 1920s De Valera made India's cause Ireland's cause. In a famous speech addressed to the 'Friends of Freedom for India' in New York in 1920, De Valera swore friendship between the two nations. De Valera visited Delhi in 1948 during his 'anti-partition world tour'. On 15 June 1948 the Mountbattens entertained both him and Jawaharlal Nehru at lunch in what was one of Lord Mountbatten's last official functions in his capacity as Governor General of India. It was rather fitting that De Valera was, to quote Trinity Visiting Research Fellow Kate O'Malley, 'the viceroy's last guest, given the part played by Ireland in the breakup of the British Empire'.

In addition to inspiring Indian nationalists, Ireland had provided a model for partition in India, as it also did in the case of Israel and Palestine. Mohamed Ali Jinnah, president of the Muslim League, invoked the example of Ireland as he pushed for the division of Bengal and Punjab along communal lines. The creation in the subcontinent of 'many Ulsters' particularly concerned Gandhi and Nehru, anxieties that De Valera shared. For his part, De Valera had never accepted the legitimacy of Irish partition. Articles 2 and 3 of the 1937 Irish Constitution claimed sovereignty over the six counties that comprise Northern Ireland, a lead that Pakistan, which became a sovereign state in 1947, followed in maintaining a claim to Kashmir.

Her Excellency with the Prime Minister  
will take tea with Provost to-day  
at 4.30.



## An unstoppable process

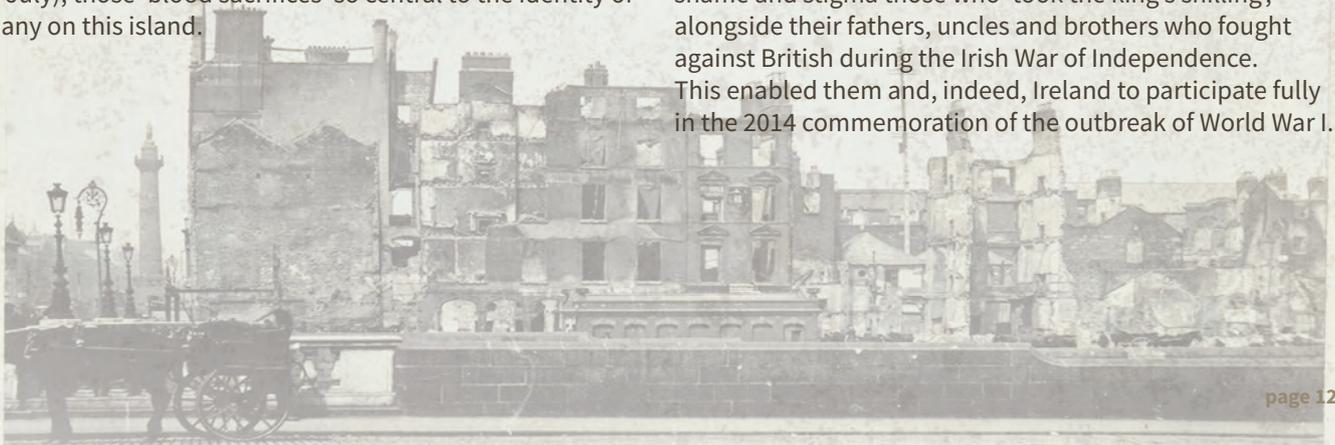
The reverberations of the breakup of the British Empire continued to be felt in both India and Ireland long after independence. Partition in India led to widespread communal violence, which resulted in the deaths of over 500,000 people and, as refugees poured into India from Pakistan, the dislocation of six million more, along with three major wars with Pakistan over the control of Kashmir.

With the partition in 1920 of Ireland, the British government created in Northern Ireland a Protestant state for a Protestant people. By 1969 the Catholic population had tired of living as second-class citizens and called for the end to state sponsored discrimination. What began as a peaceful protest as part of a wider Civil Rights movement quickly degenerated into a bitter tribal and sectarian civil war, known as the 'Troubles', that lasted 30 years. The 50th anniversary of Easter 1916 - 1966 - formed the backdrop to the rise of republican nationalism in Northern Ireland and the outbreak of the Troubles.

The Brexit referendum on the UK's membership of the EU formed the backdrop to the 2016 commemorations of both the Easter Rising (27 and 28 March) and of the Somme (1 July), those 'blood sacrifices' so central to the identity of many on this island.

In some quarters the 1916 Easter Rising continues to be remembered as the ultimate Republican (and Catholic) 'blood sacrifice'. Yet Protestants were amongst the most radical republicans both in 1916 and in the past - Tone, Emmet, and Davis immediately spring to mind. Many Protestant loyalists have appropriated the battle of the Somme as their moment of 'blood sacrifice' for king and empire. Yet Irish Catholics formed the majority of the 200,000 men from Ireland who enlisted to fight in World War I and featured amongst the 35,000 who died during it. Many fell at the Somme. Because the 1916 Rising changed things utterly, those Irish Catholics who survived the war were, on their return home, often excoriated as traitors. It is only recently, that families across Ireland have openly admitted and, more importantly, come to terms with the fact that a loved one served in the British Army. Until then it was a dark secret, never discussed, as shameful as an illegitimate pregnancy.

This transformation has been thanks in part to very public gestures by our presidents and Queen Elizabeth II and to the efforts of our poets, playwrights, creative writers and historians. People are now able to remember without shame and stigma those who 'took the king's shilling', alongside their fathers, uncles and brothers who fought against British during the Irish War of Independence. This enabled them and, indeed, Ireland to participate fully in the 2014 commemoration of the outbreak of World War I.



## An unstoppable process

### Brexit fears

The political consequences of Brexit for Ireland are very real. The securitisation of the border with the North could negate many of the gains achieved as a result of the Peace Process. Sharing a common European agenda has provided Ireland, north and south, with great scope to work together, to find common cause and to play down our differences. The car bomb planted in Belfast in May 2016 by the 'new IRA' highlights just how fragile the Peace Process is. It would take relatively little to destabilise Northern Ireland and the anxieties around Brexit could well fire up the nationalism, tribalism, sectarianism and inhumanity that characterised the 1970s and 1980s (and I write as someone who grew up in Belfast during these years). None of us wants to return to those dark days; yet one wonders if the gung-ho proponents of Brexit are even aware of the potential minefield that they are marching into?

If we have learned one thing from the study of Irish nationalism it is the way in which one generation of republicans passes the torch to the next. In other words, there is nothing 'new' about the 'new IRA'. It is incumbent on us all to do everything possible to ensure that we create an environment in which peace, not physical force republicanism, continues to flourish. For as Edmund Burke reminded us 'Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it'.

**Jane Ohlmeyer** is Director of the Long Room Hub Arts and Humanities Research Institute and the Erasmus Smith's Professor of Modern History at Trinity. She is Chair of the Irish Research Council and was the founding Vice President for Global Relations at Trinity (2011-14). She is an expert on Ireland and empire in the early modern period. Yale University Press published her most recent book, *Making Ireland English: The Irish Aristocracy in the seventeenth century*.



## Screening 1916

### **Ruth Barton's critique of on-screen portrayals of the Rising gives kudos to some lesser-known productions.**

Screen representations of the 1916 commemorations began with a controversy that few involved will choose to remember. On 12 November 2015, the 1916 Commemoration Committee released a promotional video entitled *Ireland Inspires* to coincide with the launch of the 2016 Centenary programme. Accompanied by an upbeat soundtrack, the video was a swift-paced montage of faces and events from contemporary Ireland, including the visit of Queen Elizabeth, Martin McGuinness with Ian Paisley and rugby player, Brian O'Driscoll, alongside camogie players, scientists at work in laboratories and other scenes of everyday life. Notably absent were images of any of the participants in the 1916 uprising. The production was credited to the head of the 2016 programme, John Concannon who had been responsible for the successful 'Discover Ireland' campaign and for promoting 'The Gathering' of 2013. On the back of the success of the latter, he had been invited to address the Cabinet where he developed his favoured hashtag themes, 'remember, reconcile, imagine, present and celebrate'. These themes also guided the content of the 1916 video. Reducing the commemorations to a series of hashtags was, however, not the least of Concannon's offences. As many of its detractors were quick to point out, *Ireland Inspires'* aesthetic was indistinguishable from that of 'The Gathering' and other tourism-related promotions. Diarmaid Ferriter, for instance, was cited in *The Irish Times* as labelling the video 'embarrassing, unhistorical sh\*t.' (Siggins, 2015) The promo was swiftly removed from official sites.

Behind this debacle lay an uneasiness about how to celebrate 1916. In a fractured society already on edge

through what were widely perceived as discriminatory austerity measures, officialdom was evidently keen to avoid awkward questioning around the legacy of the revolutionaries, particularly their aspirations to create a more equitable society. Although no official policy on commemoration was published, a consensus was to emerge as to the proper approach. This remained largely celebratory but with an emphasis on the people whom earlier histories had ignored. Following on the much publicised 'Waking the Feminists' campaign (for a more inclusive policy for women working in theatre), foregrounding women's lives and their participation in 1916 became a key concern for programme makers. RTÉ's flagship production *Rebellion*, written by Colin Teevan, set the tone of what was to come. In this €6m, five-part drama, the leaders of 1916 were awarded only cursory attention. Instead, the interweaving narratives foregrounded female characters, including Elizabeth Butler (Charlie Murphy), a medical student, who is engaged to Irish Member of Parliament, Stephen Duffy-Lyons (Paul Reid); May (Sarah Greene), a civil servant in Dublin Castle who finds herself pregnant by a British officer, and the militant nationalist, Frances (Ruth Bradley). The central male characters were two brothers on either side of the military divide, Jimmy (Brian Gleeson) and Arthur (Barry Ward). Despite what must have seemed a promising story outline, the series was greeted with a mixture of hostility and hilarity. Press and online commentary focused on the anachronistic nature of the dialogue, the failure to visualise period Dublin, and the storyline's descent into high melodrama. The fact that the computer-generated view of O'Connell St 1916 included the wrong Nelson's Pillar (with the London Nelson atop its column) seemed to encapsulate the carelessness of the production. Far better received was the Notre Dame Keough-Naughton Institute production, *The 1916 Irish*

## Screening 1916

*Rebellion*, written by Bríona Nic Dhiarmada and Ruán Magan. In its three parts, the documentary covered the historical period up to the Rising, the events of Easter Week 1916, and its aftermath. Not surprisingly, given its origins, the programme was at pains not only to include recognition of women's roles in the Rising but also the connections with Irish-America. Alternating between archival footage, reconstructions, interviews and expert commentary, the decision to include narration by Liam Neeson was nothing short of inspired. Not only is the actor widely remembered for portraying Michael Collins in Neil Jordan's 1996 film of the same title, his Northern accent bespeaks a bipartisanship that other commemorations hesitated to explore. Of course, since *Michael Collins*, Neeson's best-known roles have been as the action-hero father in the *Taken* series of blockbusters, lending a further associative quality to his narration.

RTÉ acted as co-producer on *The 1916 Irish Rebellion*, but for many it was its much lower budget documentaries, *Life Before the Rising* (directed by Máire Kearney and presented by Catriona Crowe) and *Children of the Revolution* (written and presented by Joe Duffy) that resonated most. Both focused on ordinary lives and untold stories of the period, with Duffy's programme drawing on his best-selling written account of the children who died in the Rising. An earlier release from 2015, the documentary *Older Than Ireland*, directed by Alex Fegan, followed the same successful formula. Its concept was straightforward – interviews with thirty Irish centenarians who talked to camera about their lives – but the warmth of its interviewees made it a cinema/DVD hit before playing to an audience of 367,200 viewers on RTÉ in September 2016. (Kearns, 2016)

If there is anything to be learned from this survey of screen commemorations, it is that audiences will more willingly engage with historiography via relatable stories than what seems to them far-fetched. It is also a lesson to broadcasters that to compete with the global costume drama you have to learn the rules of the competition. The past doesn't necessarily have to look like the actual past but it does need to look like other cinematic or televisual pasts. And, finally, tourism may not be the best model for telling our national story.

**Professor Ruth Barton** is an Associate Professor in Film Studies and School Director of Research at Trinity's School of Creative Arts. She is also the deputy director of the Trinity Long Room Hub Arts and Humanities Research Institute. The author of several books on Irish cinema, she has co-edited a volume of essays on Irish Cinema and Television as well as being the author of many articles on Irish and British cinema. She has also written a critical biography of the film star, Hedy Lamarr, and of the Irish silent director, Rex Ingram. Professor Barton appears regularly on radio as a film historian and film critic.

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## Small town - high walls

**Davis Coakley gives a concise history of St James's role in the Rising and outlines how they commemorated 1916 alongside Trinity College Dublin.**

St James's Hospital was built on the site of the South Dublin Union, the largest workhouse in the city. In 1916 the South Dublin Union was like a small town surrounded by high walls. There were several tall buildings connected by a maze of streets and lanes. On Easter Monday 1916 the South Dublin Union was occupied by the 4th Battalion of the Irish Volunteers under the command of Commandant Éamonn Ceannt and Vice Commandant Cathal Brugha. The Battalion chose the night nurses' home as their headquarters on the advice of Lt. W.T. Cosgrave. This fine old house still stands and it is situated on the grounds of the Trinity Centre for Health Sciences. The South Dublin Union was considered a strategic position being close to the Richmond Barracks and Island Bridge Barracks, and to Kingsbridge railway station.

Soldiers of the Royal Irish Regiment began an assault on the South Dublin Union shortly after the beginning of the Rising on Easter Monday.

Several soldiers and volunteers were fatally wounded in the first few hours of fighting. One of the nurses, Margaret Kehoe, was accidentally killed by soldiers, who mistook her for a volunteer. By the end of the first day, soldiers had gained entry to the Union and the volunteers were forced to retreat to their headquarters. Intermittent fighting continued during the week and a battle took place on Thursday when the soldiers made a determined effort to dislodge the volunteers. This assault failed and the rebels held their headquarters until the general surrender. In 2015 a committee was formed between Trinity College Dublin and St James's Hospital to plan an appropriate commemoration. The weekend beginning on Friday 6 May was chosen for this commemoration because 8 May 1916 was the date of the execution of two of the leaders of the 4th Battalion, Éamonn Ceannt and Con Colbert. W.T. Cosgrave was also sentenced to death but this was reprieved. Cathal Brugha was so badly injured by bullets and shrapnel, it was thought that he would not survive. The committee consulted with the 4th Battalion Relatives and Descendants Committee and the Rialto-Kilmainham 1916 Heritage Group when planning the programme.



## Small town - high walls

The commemoration began with the unveiling of a plaque by the former Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave, son of W.T. Cosgrave. The plaque used is interesting as it is the original plaque which was erected in 1949, the year that Ireland became a republic. When first erected it was placed near the night nurses' home, which was the site of the most intense fighting. However, it was moved when the site was being prepared for the construction of the Trinity Centre for Health Sciences. The plaque was refurbished and erected on a granite plinth directly outside the former night nurses' home.

### Uncommon valour

This ceremony was followed by a seminar in the Robert Smith lecture theatre. The first lecture was delivered by Paul O'Brien, military historian, who described the events of Easter week in the South Dublin Union. He is the author of *Uncommon Valour: 1916 and the South Dublin Union*. His lecture set the scene for the subsequent contributions. Mary Gallagher, grandniece of Éamonn Ceannt, gave a very nuanced presentation on Ceannt and his family background. Mary is the author of *Éamonn Ceannt* (16 LIVES series). Eunan O'Halpin, Professor of Contemporary Irish History, Trinity, spoke on the civilian dead and this led to a lively discussion about the rights and wrongs of the uprising. Derek Browne, advanced nurse practitioner in the Emergency Department, St James's Hospital, brought the evening's lectures to a close with a presentation about nursing in Dublin hospitals in 1916.

On Saturday morning the commemoration seminar continued with a lecture I gave on Major Sir Francis Fletcher Vane. Vane was the British officer who led the assault on the South Dublin Union on the Thursday of Easter week. He was a man of considerable integrity and his insistence on the exposure of the murder of three civilians in Portobello Barracks during the Rising, one of whom was the pacifist, Owen Sheehy-Skeffington, led to his subsequent dismissal from the army. The next speaker, Joseph Harbison, Associate Professor of Medical Gerontology, Trinity, and stroke physician at St James's Hospital, gave a fascinating lecture on treating wounds in 1916. John O'Callaghan, author of *Con Colbert* (16 LIVES series), spoke on Con Colbert and Marrowbone Lane. Cathal MacSwiney Brughá, grandson of Cathal Brughá and Professor of Decision Analytics, UCD, gave the final lecture of the morning which was entitled 'Cathal Brughá: A Life in Conflicts'.

On Saturday evening the relatives and friends of the 4th Battalion organised a very special event in the Robert Smith lecture theatre in the Trinity Centre for Health Sciences. Several of the descendants of the men and women of the 4th Battalion collected statements and letters of their relatives who fought in Easter week and published them in a book entitled *Ireland First*. The evening was centred on readings from the book and other sources. These were very moving and they were interspersed with traditional music played by the Rowsome family.

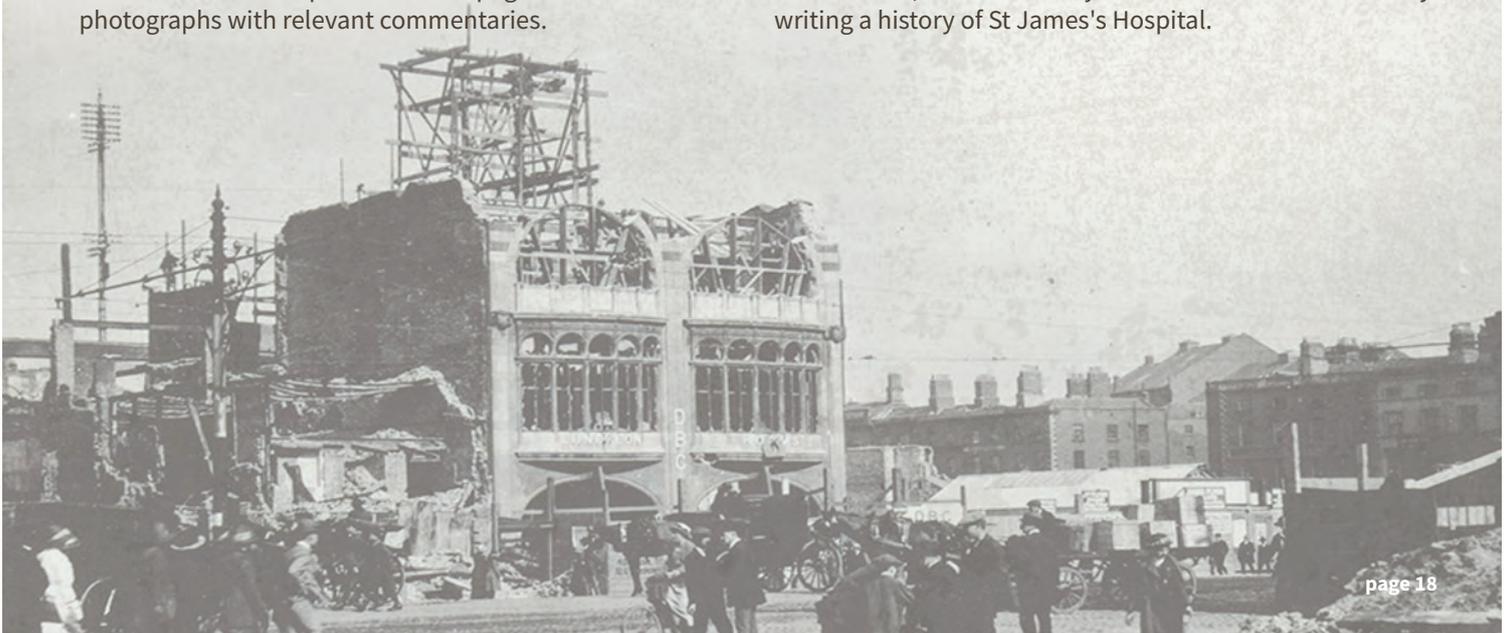
## Small town - high walls

On Sunday morning there was a multidenominational remembrance service in the Camino Rest (hospital chapel) for Nurse Margaret Kehoe, who was shot in the early hours of the rebellion. After this a small ceremony took place, attended by members of Nurse Kehoe's family, outside one of the new wards, which was named the Margaret Kehoe Ward.

The Lord Mayor, Cll Críona Ní Dhálaigh, then opened a photographic exhibition in one of the principal corridors of St James's Hospital, which told the story of the 1916 Rising in the South Dublin Union. The old photographs of the people, places and buildings that played a role in the six-day battle, were of great interest and were beautifully displayed. They drew considerable attention in the following months. The exhibition was organised by the Rialto-Kilmainham commemoration committee. This committee also produced a 72-page booklet of the photographs with relevant commentaries.

A new plaque was unveiled in the central hospital square by David Ceannt, grandnephew of Éamonn Ceannt and by Cathal MacSwiney Brugha, grandson of Cathal Brugha. After the unveiling, a bugler from the St James's Brass and Reed Band played the Last Post as the Irish flag was raised on a flagpole standing immediately behind the plaque. The commemoration concluded with an open-air concert performed by the band, which was enjoyed by patients and their visitors as well as by those attending the commemoration ceremony.

**Davis Coakley** served as a consultant physician at St James's Hospital, Dublin (1979-2011), and was professor of medical gerontology in Trinity College Dublin (1996-2011). He is an honorary fellow of Trinity College Dublin and a fellow of the Irish, London, Edinburgh and Glasgow Colleges of Physicians. He is the author and editor of books on medicine, medical history and literature. He is currently writing a history of St James's Hospital.



## 'All changed, changed utterly': Commemorating the 1916 Easter Rising at the Library of Trinity College Dublin

**The Library developed a range of commemorative initiatives focusing on its diverse range of archival and rare printed material relating to the Rising, as well as the digital 'archiving' of the 2016 response to the centenary. Estelle Gittins focuses on the blog that highlighted the breath of our library resources as well as the strong talents of our researchers, library staff and academics alike.**

The flagship project *Changed Utterly* was a year-long blog project, which ran from 24 April 2015 up to the centenary in April 2016. The design of the project took its cue from the 1916 collections themselves, which are numerous, small and disparate, and which lend themselves easily to an episodic project like a blog. A collaboration between a number of Library departments and academics, it was deliberately started a year ahead of the anniversary to draw attention to the Library's resources and to act as a catalyst for research. Articles were posted on a weekly basis and were written by Library staff, Trinity researchers and other experts. Subjects reflected both sides of the political divide, with diverse posts ranging from eye-witness accounts of the action, photographs of armoured cars, burnt souvenirs from the rebel headquarters at the General Post Office (GPO), through to poetry, rugby, stained glass, and television dramas. Each post gives a fresh insight into contemporary experience of 1916 and contains links to Library catalogues and the Digital Collections site for further resources. The central aim of *Changed Utterly* was to introduce the Library's unique and distinct collections on this period to a wider audience and to foster discussion on the contents. This was aided effectively by the busy Twitter account @TCDLib1916 and during the course of the project the blog was nominated for two Irish Blog Awards and received over 65,000 views.

The blog's popularity also led to other 'spin off' projects including a physical exhibition, *Changed Utterly: Recording and Reflecting on the Rising 1916-2016* – staged in the Long Room – in the spring of 2016. The star exhibit was the Library's copy of the Proclamation which was torn from the walls of the GPO in the days following the Rising, and which was subsequently found to have eleven First World War recruiting posters pasted in layers on the back. An online exhibition was also produced – in conjunction with the Google Cultural Institute – to highlight a collection of photographs of the scenes of devastation in Dublin city centre. We also collaborated with the Irish Examiner in re-fashioning a selection of our blog posts into a regular feature in that newspaper.

Several outcomes of the project have taken us by surprise, not least an influx of donations of further archival collections relating to the period, and the media attention generated around certain items: the blog was featured on RTÉ News and in the *Irish Times* and *Guardian* newspapers. We have also been delighted to see the content exploited in myriad different ways by our users. We have had constant interaction with the student newspapers and societies, as well as with other Irish cultural institutions, broadcasters and historical sites who have used images of some of our manuscripts in their own exhibitions, programmes and installations. We have had great engagement with second-level teachers via Twitter and found that one particular post (on how Dublin Zoo coped during the Rising), was used by primary schools as a way into the subject for their students. We also established links with international counterparts working on similar 1916 projects, and even helped to inspire an onsite theatre production, *Meeting Ghosts in College Park*, featuring a number of characters based on individuals covered in the blog.

## ‘All changed, changed utterly’: Commemorating the 1916 Easter Rising at the Library of Trinity College Dublin

The Library also partnered with the Bodleian, Oxford and the British Library to develop a web archive of sites containing 1916 commemorative material. The project collected websites from both the Irish and UK web domains that reflect how the Easter Rising was represented on the web in 2016. The Easter Rising 1916 Web Archive will ensure their preservation and ongoing public availability.

**Estelle Gittins** is assistant librarian and archivist at Trinity. She was one of the organisers and curators of the blog and exhibition at Trinity to mark the 1916 Rising.



## Translations

**Sarah Smyth, Director of the Centre for Literary Translation, gave the following speech at a reception in the Provost's House to mark the translation of the Proclamation into 17 languages. She highlights the quirky challenges that arise when translating, such as our use of the word "arms".**

There is a naive view which imagines that the translator is a filter into whom an original text is poured and out of whom a translation flows.

The reality is very different. The translator must have a good understanding of the time, place and context in which the original text was produced; and he/she must have a good understanding of the cultural and linguistic norms of the time and place in which the translation is going to be received. Otherwise he/she will end up writing a version of nonsense.

Additionally, the mark of good translators is their skill in making the task of translation seem effortless (which is what leads to the naive understanding of their craft in the first place) and to making their voices inaudible and their selves invisible.

Before talking very briefly about the Centre for Literary Translation, I want to illustrate a few of the challenges faced by the translators of *The Proclamation*.

First, an anecdote. At the London Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party in 1903, Gorky and Lenin first met and got chatting. Amongst other things they talked about Gorky's novel *Mother*. Gorky apologised to Lenin for its lack of polish and explained that he had completed the work in a hurry. Lenin dismissed Gorky's apology and said

that Gorky had been right to rush — the novel was badly needed. The workers needed to understand why revolt was timely and imperative, and they would come to understand the necessity for their actions once they had read the novel. One of the challenges facing translators of *The Proclamation* is that the signatories too were in a bit of a rush — possibly a necessary rush — and the English is not as polished as it might have been.

Apart from contending with long meandering sentences, the translators had to decide on an appropriate idiom into which to translate the text: whether to transpose the text into the here and now and with solemnity and ardour address a contemporary audience, or whether to highlight that this is a historical document addressed to another people in another context at another time. This was much easier for some than others. The Russians could be said to have it easy; Russia was, after all, going through social, political and economic upheaval at much the same time as we in Ireland were. But there are risks in invoking the Russian-language rhetoric of 1917 which has gone through multiple processes of re-evaluation over the past 99 years. The task was problematic for the Germans: indeed many of the terms which would have been common place in German public discourse in the early part of the 20th century such as the people (*das Volk*) became sullied during the years of National Socialism. The task was most problematic for the translators into Classical Greek - the language of a culture that was still light years off conceiving of equal opportunities or, for that matter, republics. You'll be relieved that the *Republic* was turned into a *democracy*.

## Translations

### Gendering Ireland

One of the most emotionally potent characteristics of this document is the identification of the Irish republic's gender. Indeed, Ireland is explicitly gendered as feminine. It is referred to as SHE. And this gendering is rhetorically very significant. The identity of the country is embodied in the feminine ideal of mother: protective and nurturing of her children on the one hand, and in need of protection by her men, on the other. Again in some languages this is unproblematic: Marianne as a symbol of Republican France, though possibly not the same kind of woman as Mother Ireland, is at least a woman. Conveying this femininity is problematic in languages which do not have gender; but it is even more problematic in languages which do have gender but which conceive of nations as masculine.

A few other simple things can cause stumbling blocks. I cite only two to give a flavour of the decisions a translator is required to make: The 'dead generations' is an unusual turn of phrase. Is 'dead' a moral indictment of former generations? How does one prevent it from conjuring up (irreverent only, I'm sure) images of the living dead? And then there are endless references to 'arms' in *The Proclamation*. Such a simple little word to name that body part which we stretch out in friendship to another. Not all languages turn that inoffensive body part into a lethal weapon. Nor indeed do many languages have a veritable arsenal of turns of phrase in which to couch our arms.

I conclude with a couple of words about the Centre for Literary Translation. The first and most important thing is that we now exist. We exist in a beautifully refurbished premises at 36 Fenian Street, Dublin 2. And for that we are hugely indebted to the Provost for his vision, for his

commitment and for his active support. This Centre houses the Director of the Centre, students on the M.Phil in literary translation, research students and post doctoral researchers, the literary translator in residence and our two partner organisations, Dalkey Archive Press and Literature Ireland. We host regular events and hope to see you at a book launch or lecture or reading in the near future. Without translation - there can be no culture. There is only stagnation, stunted growth and creative deterioration. My wish for the Centre is that the Provost's vision be realised: that literary translation assumes the same prominence and status in Irish culture as writing and performance, and that the names of literary translators be routinely celebrated as we celebrate them here today.

**Professor Sarah Smyth**, an authority on Russian and Slavonic Studies, has co-authored a number of Russian teaching manuals and other works which have contributed to a greater understanding of linguistic, cultural and social identities in the Russian world. She was awarded an honorary doctorate of literature by the Gorky Literary Institute, Moscow in 2002 and the Pushkin Medal in 2010.



## Alliteration

### Iggy McGovern

*When the boy from the Soldiers' Cottages  
allowed that I was a "Fuckin' Fenian"  
and clipped my ear, I ran home faster  
than speeding bullets, where my narrow-eyed  
mother must clip the other ear  
for using such "Lavatory Language".  
And that was also the very same year  
I trod on an up-turned six-inch nail  
that pierced my sole, and my mother's heart,  
as she set to work with Dettol and plaster,  
all the while murmuring "Christ Crucified"!  
And something else that formed a veil  
like a gas cloud rolling over the rampart:  
The murderous "Gang Green".*

**Iggy McGovern** is a poet and retired academic; he is a Fellow Emeritus in the School of Physics at Trinity and has published two collections of poetry. He edited the anthology *20/12: Twenty Irish Poets Respond to Science in Twelve Lines*. His most recent book, *A Mystic Dream of 4*, a poetic biography of William Rowan Hamilton, 19th century Irish Mathematician & Poet, is published by Quaternia Press (2013).



## An Affirming Flame

**Gerald Dawe takes a brief look at soldier and poet, Francis Ledwidge, one of the inspirational figures behind his book on Irish writing and wartime, *Of War and War's Alarms, Reflections on Modern Irish Writing* published by Cork University Press.**

**O**f *War and War's Alarms* deals with individual lives, writers' lives and their individual work, and of how history – literary or social - never really begins with a capital H or ends as a process of ends. History in *Of War and War's Alarms* is about the cultural ethics of sharing and understanding each other's different backgrounds as best we can. I hope the book also shows what happens when a society fails to do so for whatever politically exigent reasons.

The Meath poet, Francis Ledwidge who died in the First World War had a good friend, Robert (or Bob) Christie, a Belfast-born Protestant whom Ledwidge had befriended in Dublin during their army training. Ledwidge saved his friend's life when Christie was seriously injured on 15 August 1915 during the disastrous Gallipoli offensive. This is how Christie describes the moment:

*It was quite dark when I was picked up. Four men carried me in on a ground sheet and when they put me down, I thanked them. As I said, "Thanks, boys", Ledwidge's voice above me yelled, "Is it you, Bob?" He had been holding one of the corners of the sheet. As there were so many wounded, the Medical Corps could not cope with them and he had volunteered to help. Needless to say I was surprised – and pleased – to meet him again. He asked me about my injury and all I could tell him then was that I could not walk. He said, "See you in the morning", and darted away to carry in more wounded.*

As a result of his wounds, Christie was demobbed from the Army and returned to family life in Belfast where he continued dental studies.

### A Belfast farewell

On his way from Dublin *en route* to the regimental barracks in Derry in the late spring of 1916, Ledwidge visited Bob and his family in Belfast. Through the research of Dr. Sandra O'Connell, it was possible to identify the Christie home as 163 Duncairn Gardens, off the Antrim Road in north Belfast. The house was demolished sometime in the 1970s but it was, so far as I can tell, the same house in which my own mother grew up during the 1930s. The house must have been bought from the Christie family earlier in the late 1910s, early 1920s by my mother's grandparents. So a tentative alluring connection emerges, tenuous as these things always are in hindsight, with the image of Bob Christie of Belfast and Frank Ledwidge of Slane arguing – as they certainly would have – over the Easter Rising, the course of the Great War, and the future of the country they both loved, and doing so in the same rooms where my late mother and her brother had played as children of the 1930s before World War II forced their evacuation in 1940/41 to the County Antrim countryside.

Ledwidge stayed for only a couple of nights but it was more than he was entitled to under army regulations. He would get into trouble as a result of the delay. More importantly, it was the last time the pals would see one another because Ledwidge was killed the following July, at the Front. This is how Alice Curtayne sets the scene:

## An Affirming Flame

[...] the preliminary bombardment opened for the third battle of Ypres. Soon houses twelve miles behind the lines vibrated in the blasts, the most concentrated, continuous, and ear-splitting yet experienced. When the guns stopped for a brief spell, the silence assailed the ear with a kind of shock. The uproar of the guns was the prelude to a formidable assault, “the battle which all the world had been expecting” according to Philip Gibbs. One morning, during a lull in the bombardment, Ledwidge heard a robin singing. He stopped short and listened to the brave trilling until the noisy tumult of the guns roared again and drowned the little roundelay. This inspired the poem *Home*.

According to Ledwidge’s patron and advisor, Lord Dunsany, the poem ‘Home’ carries an untypical jolt, in its otherwise characteristically pastoral harmony. ‘The poem’, Dunsany continues, ‘that he wrote in France, nearly his last [...] shows how completely he cloaked himself with the Irish atmosphere and carried it always with him’:

This is a song sang  
This morning on a broken tree,  
It was about the little fields  
That call across the world to me.

Only one word in the poem shows that it was written on a battlefield during the Great War. The robin sang on a broken tree, and but for that one word ‘broken’ the poem would be an idyll of peace.

And maybe as well that ‘burst’ brings the booming artillery to mind. Yet if there are other ghosts on my mind, beyond the sad loss of Ledwidge and Donnelly, and all those other men and women who died tragically young, it is the ghost of Yeats himself. Because, in asking the hardest of questions, I realised more and more how much *Earth Voices Whispering* was indebted to Yeats’ idiosyncratic, partisan and self-delighting anthology, and particularly in his high-flown introduction. Such is the case with *Of War and War’s Alarms* as well, for this book is an extended argument with Yeats’ cultural legacy, his remaining prolific presence and his, to use Auden’s phrase ‘affirming flame’.

**Gerald Dawe**, *Of War and War’s Alarms: Reflections on Modern Irish Writing* is published by Cork University Press. Professor Dawe is the author of nine collections of poetry and has also edited several anthologies of Irish poetry and criticism. He is Professor of English at Trinity.



## Radio Rising

**Andrew O’Connell discusses how Trinity’s CONNECT Centre commemorated the role of radio in 1916 and tells us about what was possibly the world’s first dispersive radio broadcast.**

It was a poignant sound: valiant but forlorn, bold but desperate. Those who had gathered at CONNECT headquarters in Dunlop Oriel House on the evening of 25 April 2016 listened in silence as the staccato pulse of the Morse Code signal announced a message first heard during the 1916 Rising:

“Irish Republic declared in Dublin today. Irish troops have captured city and are in full possession. Enemy cannot move in city. The whole country rising.”

The signal pulsed to life at 5:30pm - the precise moment one hundred years before when the rebels relayed their dramatic news from O’Connell Street.

This was Radio Rising, CONNECT’s event to mark the centenary of what was possibly the world’s first dispersive radio broadcast. Radio Rising had two objectives: to mark the rebels’ broadcast as a significant milestone in global telecommunications history, and to do so in a manner embracing arts practices. The event was centred on a surround-sound installation created by award winning sound artist Jimmy Eadie. It evoked the memory of the rebels’ wireless broadcast through a soundscape of different pitches and rhythms beginning with the rebels’ Morse Code message. This provided the sound pattern for a moving composition that included excerpts of archival testimonies about the 1916 Rising. Sixteen speakers distributed around the room created an immersive experience offering the audience different spatial

experiences during the sixteen-minute piece. The experience was shared far beyond Trinity College as RTÉ Radio’s Drivetime covered the event, interviewing Jimmy Eadie and broadcasting the Morse Code signal to a national audience.

CONNECT, home to cutting edge telecommunications research, was a fitting location to recall the rebels’ use of modern technology. During a time of war, communication is vitally important, and the rebels of 1916 understood that well. Soon after the capture of the GPO on Easter Monday 1916, Joseph Mary Plunkett – himself a wireless radio enthusiast – dispatched several rebels to the Irish School of Wireless Telegraphy at the corner of O’Connell Street and Abbey Street (the site of today’s Grand Central Bar). Their aim was to send news of the Rising to allies in the United States.



## Radio Rising

### Dublin calling

The rebels managed to charge the batteries of a radio transmitter but were unable to revive the radio receiver. These circumstances contrived to create a moment of telecommunications history. Radio messages at that time were typically transmitted point-to-point, i.e. to a known recipient. In this instance, the rebels sent a message capable of being intercepted by anyone with a radio receiver.

Was this the world's first radio broadcast? Telecommunications folklore certainly remembers it as such. Marshal McLuhan, in his celebrated 1964 work 'Understanding Media' gives it a mention:

"That [1916] was the year of the Irish Easter rebellion and of the first radio broadcast. Wireless had already been used on ships as ship-to-shore "telegraph." The Irish Rebels used a ship's wireless to make, not a point-to-point message, but a diffused broadcast in hope of getting word to some ship that would relay their story to the American press."

Others dispute this conclusion pointing to similar broadcasts in the United States and France before this date. It is more widely accepted as being the first clandestine, pirate broadcast.

For hour after hour, the rebel garrison tapped out their message in the hope it would be received. Without a functioning radio receiver they had no way of knowing if their messages were being heard. The message was picked up as far away as Germany and Bulgaria, with some reports claiming it was heard by fishermen in Japan. One story tells of an amateur radio enthusiast in Wales picking up the

transmission and promptly reporting it to the local police. He was arrested for his trouble having breached the Defence of the Realm Act which prohibited the holding of wireless equipment.

### HMS Adventure responding

The rebels' communication was responsible for the American press reporting on details of the Rising before the London media, then subject to strict censorship. It was also intercepted by the HMS Adventure in Dun Laoghaire resulting in heavy bombardment of the rebels' position and forcing their eventual retreat to the GPO.

The 1916 Morse Code broadcast is part of Ireland's rich telecommunications heritage; a heritage which includes the landing of the first transatlantic telegraph cable at Valentia in County Kerry and the establishment by Guglielmo Marconi, the pioneer of radio communication, of a wireless transmitting station at Rosslare Strand in County Wexford. Marconi also established a transatlantic radio-telegraph between Clifden and Nova Scotia. This is a heritage worth rediscovering and celebrating. Radio Rising was part of that rediscovery and celebration. Indeed, Science Foundation Ireland adopted #ScienceRising as its theme for 2016 indicating an awakening of appreciation for Ireland's frequently overlooked scientific heritage.

Playing the rebels' Morse Code signal precisely one hundred years after it was first broadcast was powerful in itself. But Jimmy Eadie's surround-sound composition was more powerful still. Using an arts practice, a deep connection was created with a scientific event. It offered a space to interpret and to reflect.

## Radio Rising

The audience gathered in Trinity College on that evening in April 2016 were immersed in a unique moment of Irish history. And, for those who experienced it, it was mesmerising. It was also an inclusive event, accessible to those who might feel a certain ambivalence about certain features of the 1916 Rising and the military commemorations.

Afterwards, one participant confessed to feeling emotional during the broadcast: “I had a lump in my throat as I listened to the composition,” she said. “Though the message was delivered in Morse Code, it was as though one could hear the human voice and sense the human spirit.”

Hearing the human voice. Sensing the human spirit.  
The soulful unlocking of an historic and scientific moment by a skilful and creative artist.

**Dr Andrew O’Connell** is Communications, Education and Outreach Manager at CONNECT, the Science Foundation Ireland research centre for Future Networks which has its headquarters at Dunlop Oriel House in Trinity. He worked previously with Intel in the US and Ireland.



RINNEADH AN  
CHÉAD CHRAOLADH  
RAIDIÓ ÉIREANNACH  
Ón áit seo

IRELAND'S FIRST  
RADIO BROADCAST  
Was transmitted from here

25.04.1916

ÉIRÍ AMACH NA CÁSÇA 1916



## Trinity's public engagement and media interest

### **Caoimhe Ní Lochlainn discusses Trinity's public engagement around the centenary and the vast media coverage that followed.**

Easter Monday 1916 saw the Crown forces rallying in Front Square in preparation for combat to suppress the armed insurrection. One hundred years later, Easter Monday 2016 saw Ireland's citizens and visitors come in their thousands to Trinity to participate in lectures and debates as part of RTÉ *Reflecting the Rising*. In this centenary year, Trinity College Dublin was at the heart of activities marking the Easter Rising, and on no day was that more apparent than on that day of commemoration when Front Square was thronged with people attending the city-wide extravaganza.

Trinity, along with the Royal College of Surgeons, the National Library, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin Castle and others gave over their institutions for the day to host a stellar line up of historical and literary talks, political debates, re-enactments and plays. Whether it was Trinity's Gerald Dawe talking on the rebel poets, or Eunan O'Halpin's incisive historical analysis of the time, the public came in their droves. Their appetite for debate was palpable as well as a need to understand and review the memorable events that have so significantly shaped Ireland. Trinity took the lead as it so often does in informing that discourse. The views were many and diverse on the Irish Revolution. They included themes such as *Narratives of the Easter Rising*, *Political Imprisonment after the Rising*, *A journey through Education Policy since 1916*, *Transgressing Gender in 1916*, *Films of the Irish Revolution*, the list went on.

It was one of the University's finest moments of public engagement, with memorable contributions and analyses. The cast of participating academics included Jane Ohlmeyer, Patrick Geoghegan, Damian Murchan, Kevin Rockett, Anne Dolan, Joe Harbison, and Caitríona Curtis among many others. This was complemented by an equally star studded line up from RTÉ including great journalists such as Áine Lawlor, Cathal MacCoille, Richard Downes, Brian Dowling, Paul Cunningham, Tommie Gorman and John Bowman who chaired panel discussions and debates.

*RTÉ Reflecting the Rising* was the culmination of a year of activities for Trinity which generated inordinate media attention both nationally and internationally. The requests came in far and wide for our academics from the *Guardian*, *USA Today*, *CNN*, *NBC*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *New York Times*, the *BBC* and many more seeking expert comment and analysis. This was coupled with frequent outings to the Long Room where we were able to facilitate broadcast interviews for international media against the backdrop of such auspicious surroundings. It also had such key artefacts to hand such as the Library's copy of the Proclamation torn from the walls of the GPO. Or the wonderful historic photographs of the British Troops gathering in Front Square. Or the photographs shot by Trinity graduate Thomas Johnson Westropp in the aftermath of the Easter Rising of the streets of Dublin. Or the bullet which pierced the roof of the Library during 1916. Or diaries from the time that included those by the daughter of Provost Mahaffy, Elsie Mahaffy that have since been digitised by the Library. Her unique perspective was a lesser heard view of the rebels and the Rising itself.

## Trinity's public engagement and media interest

Broadcast, online and print media were delighted with the material. And I felt, as I often feel, doing the job of promoting Trinity – the embarrassment of riches that we have to offer – to media and the public in general. In terms of our great academics and experts, coupled with our historic environs and collections that provide such relevant context.

We have worked closely with RTÉ over the years in programmes and ongoing media engagement. For the 1916 centenary, the College campus of course featured in the RTÉ series, *Rebellion* and there were other documentaries that included aspects of Trinity. We also worked with them previously on the World War I Road Show in 2014 which drew more than 10,000 people on campus. In the case of RTÉ *Reflecting the Rising*, the national broadcaster surpassed itself in its coordination of this massive public history event. It was the largest cultural event since the Pope's visit. And as our colleagues in College Security succinctly put it, it was a couple of Trinity Balls rolled into one, such was the effort that it involved. Within Trinity it took a community to organise it. Led by Eunan O'Halpin on the academic side, the event was made possible with the support of College Security, Health and Safety, Estates and Facilities and Catering as well as our own Public Affairs and Communications office.

On Easter Monday 2016, Front Square a hundred years on, saw history in the making once again. This time of a more inclusive variety involving the people of Ireland having one big day out together.

**Caoimhe Ní Lochlainn** is Head of Media Relations, responsible for media strategy for the University, corporate communications for the media, and issues management. She also specialises in social sciences, working with academics to promote research and education initiatives to the media. She has worked in communications for Trinity for the past ten years. As well as leading media engagement around the 1916 centenary celebrations, other highlights have included Queen Elizabeth II's state visit, the late Ian Paisley and former President, Mary McAleese's joint launch of the 1641 Depositions digitisation history project and more recently the former US Vice-President, Joe Biden's visit among many others.

## Vision for the future – appeal to the past

**Patrick Geoghegan sets us straight on some common misunderstandings of the Proclamation and outlines how Trinity commemorated the Rising internationally.**

The 1916 Proclamation was a vision for the future, based on an appeal to the past. It discussed how ‘six times during the past three hundred years’ the Irish had asserted their right to sovereignty and, although each one had ended in failure, much like 1916 itself, they all inspired subsequent action. Over the past one hundred years the 1916 Proclamation has become an iconic document, Ireland’s Declaration of Independence, but it remains a much misunderstood and misquoted document. Many people still quote the phrase ‘our gallant allies’, even though the ‘our’ never appears in the text. Similarly the reference to cherishing the children of the nation equally is clearly a reference to all the people on the island, unionists as well as nationalists, Protestants as well as Catholics, and not to little children. And few people, I suspect, would be able to list the ‘six times’ the Irish had asserted their rights, or appreciate why those times were chosen over others.

To contextualise the Proclamation in its national and international context the School of Histories and Humanities, together with the Trinity Long Room Hub, organised a symposium on ‘Proclamation Day’, 15 March 2016. The event took place in the Robert Emmet Theatre in the Arts Building, an appropriate venue given that Patrick Pearse had rejoiced in the GPO that the Irish people had erased the guilt of not rising in 1803. In the first part we looked at the seven rebellions – 1641, 1690, 1798, 1803, 1848, 1867 and of course, 1916 itself - teasing out both what happened and how they influenced Irish history.

Perhaps uniquely on this island, Trinity has a Department of History with expertise in all of these areas, ranging from Micheál Ó Siochrú on 1641 to Anne Dolan on 1916.

In the second part we looked at the 1916 Proclamation in its global context, examining similar documents in American, French, and Chinese history, and here we were able to draw on some of our finest historians and teachers, such as Ciaran Brady, and newer members of staff like Isabella Jackson. In the final part we moved on to interpreting 1916, with a contribution from the School of English’s Chris Morash on the theatre of 1916, and the irrepresible Eunan O’Halpin on 1916 in 2016.

The packed event brought home one thing very clearly. Alumni have a very strong connection with Trinity, and appreciate events which help contextualise and interpret key issues of the day. In 2016 so much attention was given over to the centenary of 1916, what it represented and how it should be commemorated. By bringing together our staff around a single theme, it was possible to showcase the best of our research in Irish and international history.



## Vision for the future – appeal to the past

### Commemorating 1916 in Liverpool

The challenge, then, was to see if we could replicate this outside of Ireland. Given all of Trinity's international connections, and its extended alumni network, we wanted to hold an event outside of Ireland to showcase Trinity's broader engagement with the subject. We approached our friends and colleagues in The Institute of Irish Studies, at the University of Liverpool, and together we held a major debate on 1916 in London on 31 March 2016. In doing so, we became the first Irish university to host a major 1916 event outside of Ireland. The event took place at the Institute's London campus, on Finsbury Square, and it brought together academics from Ireland, the UK, and the USA, to debate and discuss the events of the 1916 Rising, and how it has been commemorated, in both a national and an international context. Over 100 Trinity alumni and invited guests attended the event, which was packed to capacity, and they heard a range of views and interpretations about 1916 in a lively and entertaining evening of debate.

The Irish Ambassador to Britain, His Excellency Dan Mulhall, opened the debate, and it was chaired by the Provost, Dr Patrick Prendergast. Opening the debate, the Provost noted that 'In Trinity we acknowledge our responsibility – as a centre of scholarship and learning - to contribute to national commemoration', and he praised the 'rich, diverse programme of academic, public and creative events initiated by staff and students. These range from an Irish language play to a film inspired by Casement; from translations of the Proclamation into seventeen languages, to a blog hosted by our Library.'

The panel of historians included academics working in Ireland, the UK and the USA, who presented their own interpretation of the 1916 Rising and its relevance in contemporary Ireland. One of the most exciting elements was that we were able to hear some of our own graduates – from the recent and not so recent past - speak on the subject, such as Roy Foster (University of Oxford) and Heather Jones (LSE). Other speakers included the wonderful Joe Lee (NYU), and Kevin Bean from The Institute of Irish Studies, at the University of Liverpool. In the questions and answers session people engaged with the complex idea about how 1916 is remembered, and the challenges of commemoration. It was passionate, humourous, complex and at times controversial. In other words, it was history as it is meant to be.

**Professor Patrick Geoghegan**, is an expert on the Anglo-Irish relationship in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as on the competing themes of constitutional nationalism and republicanism between 1782 and 1848. His acclaimed two-volume study of Daniel O'Connell completed his examination of the tensions and conflicts which emerged following the abolition of the Irish parliament. He is Head of the Department and Professor of Modern Irish History at Trinity.



**POBLACH H EIREANN**  
**THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT**  
**OF THE**  
**IRISH REPUBLIC**  
**TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.**

**IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN:** In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in America, and by gallant allies in Europe but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In



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