

Heritage Ireland

Issue 3 SPRING 2016



Image: Kilmainham Gaol © OPW

in this issue...

KILMAINHAM GAOL

PRÍOSÚN CHILL MHAIGHNEANN | DUBLIN



1916 EASTER RISING

COMMEMORATION EVENTS



An Roinn
Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta
Department of
Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

ÉIRE
IRELAND

1916

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Welcome

Welcome to the Spring 2016 issue of **Heritage Ireland**, a collaboration between the Office of Public Works and the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht, bringing you news and features on Ireland's wonderful heritage sites and cultural institutions.

Spring is in the air and preparations are underway across all of our attractions as we ready ourselves for another exciting season. In this issue we focus mostly on those sites and events associated with 1916 but there's plenty more happening besides.

Don't forget to visit our websites at **www.heritageireland.ie** and **www.ahg.gov.ie** for information about events at our heritage sites and cultural institutions or follow us on Facebook. Keep an eye out for the Summer 2016 issue which will be available in early June and will be packed with ideas to keep you busy during our Irish summer.



► Top: Greening of GPO on O'Connell Street, Dublin, for St. Patrick's Festival
© Tourism Ireland

► Above: Main entrance door, Kilmainham Gaol
© Government of Ireland National Monuments Service Photographic Unit

Contributors



FRANK SHALVEY works in the OPW Heritage Services managing portfolio and visitor issues related to the National Monuments estate. Currently, he is responsible for the delivery of the Kilmainham Courthouse project and participates in a number of other Commemorations projects relating to the Independence era.



KARLOS BRADY has a national diploma from DKIT in Humanities in applied cultural studies. He has 16 years experience with the Office of Public Works. He has worked at the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site Monuments, Kilmainham Gaol, the Hill of Tara, the Loughcrew Cairns, the Pearse Museum and is currently based at Trim Castle.



PÁDRAIG Ó RUAIRC is the Supervisor of OPW Heritage Sites in the Shannon Region.

He was recently awarded a PhD in History by the University of Limerick and has published six books on the 1916 period.



CILLIAN DE GRÁS is the Supervisor Guide at Dún Aonghasa and Teach an Phiarsaigh. He studied History and Medieval & Celtic Studies at Maynooth University and Trinity College, Dublin and has published articles on medieval history and literature. Cillian is currently researching Patrick Pearse's links with Conamara, in preparation for a new visitors centre to be opened in 2016.



BRIAN CROWLEY is curator of the Pearse Museum and has worked on a number of exhibitions for the Office of Public Works. He is also the current chairman of the Irish Museums Association. He has contributed essays to 'The Life and After-Life of P.H. Pearse' and 'Making 1916' and is the author of 'Patrick Pearse, A Life in Pictures'.



MARGARET GORMLEY is Chief Park Superintendent with the OPW Heritage Services and is responsible for the conservation, management and presentation of a number of the significant historic parks, gardens and designed landscapes throughout the country including those associated with the Decade of Commemorations.

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NEWS *What's Happening*



During the year there will be several thousand events, in Ireland and overseas, relating to 1916.

What follows is just a flavour.

27.03.16

The Easter Sunday events begin at 11.30am on March 27th with the reading of the Proclamation under the GPO portico.

The parade, led by the Defence Forces in full military display, will begin at St Stephen's Green, pass the GPO and continue on to Parnell Square.



EASTER EVENTS AS PART OF IRELAND 2016

Later that day, 1,100 singers will join the National Symphony Orchestra for an open-air free concert at Collins Barracks featuring new work by composer Shaun Davey and poet-writer Paul Muldoon.

28.03.16

On Easter Monday, RTÉ will present the biggest public history event that has ever been staged in this country. Reflecting the Rising will offer hundreds of talks as well as debates, music, theatre, films, walking tours and multi-media displays that explore the events of Easter Week and its aftermath as well as 'life at the time and the ensuing one hundred years of our cultural tapestry.'



8.03.16

Some weeks before Easter, on March 8th, International Women's Day will see a ceremony to commemorate the role of women in the events of the 1916 Rising at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham. The programme includes a keynote address by President Higgins and a performance by the RTÉ Concert Orchestra of music and song on the theme of 'Women in 1916'.

10.04.16

On April 10th at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Dublin there will be a State event to mark the 18th anniversary of the 1998 Belfast Agreement, signifying that reconciliation of differing traditions on this island is a central ideal for 2016.

Commemorative and celebratory events will be held all over the country, not just in Easter week but throughout the year. All of the prominent figures and indeed many lesser-known figures of the Rising will be remembered. In Castlelyons, Co Cork, on 9th May, there will be a major community ceremonial event for Thomas Kent, one of the executed leaders of 1916. In Clare, the annual Peadar Clancy Cultural Festival will dedicate a plaque and garden area to his memory during the weekend of July 15th-17th, 2016.

10.11.16 – 12.11.16

All of our universities and many of our institutes of technology have developed extensive academic programmes for 2016. A highlight of the year will be a major national conference on 1916 and its impact on the life of the nation, hosted by NUI Galway from 10th to 12th November 2016.



2016 will see several cross-Border initiatives and commemorative events to remember members of the British army and the RIC who died in 1916. In Louth, Dundalk Library will host a lecture on The Life and Times of Donegal man, Constable Charles McGee, who was killed in the course of a Volunteer action at Castlebellingham on April 24th, 1916. At Foildarrig Cemetery, Castletownbere, a remembrance ceremony will be held for Constable John Hurley one of two R.I.C. members shot dead in Tipperary during Easter Week.



2016 will be a year of extraordinary activity in the arts, from our national cultural institutions to local arts festivals. Cork's Crawford Art Gallery will hold a number of exhibitions during the year including Diverging Loyalties (June 4th-August 27th) and 1916 in Contemporary Art (June 24th-August 24th). Imagining Home, is a series of seven concerts at the National Concert Hall between March 28th and April 3rd – one on each night of Easter Week.

Triskel Arts Centre in Cork will host a major visual arts installation over Easter Weekend – March 26th and 27th – by artist Aideen Barry, grandniece of Tom Barry, exploring the position of women in Ireland across the 100 years of independence.

15.03.16

On Proclamation Day, March 15th, all educational institutions, including pre-schools, schools, further and higher education institutions will participate in commemorative events, starting with the raising of the flag followed by a reading of the Proclamation.



2016 will truly be a year of remembering, reflecting and reimagining.

Further details of the above events and the full programme are available at:



www.ireland.ie



#ireland2016



@ireland2016

1916
2016



'1916 in Print'

1916

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Exhibition

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Commemorating The Easter Rising 1916

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2016

POBLAICHT NA
THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT
OF THE
IRISH REPUBLIC
TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND
BROKEN AND IRISH WOMEN
which she received her children to her dog and
Being executed



MAIN GUARD, CLONMEL

3rd March 2016 to 26th March



Comhairle Contae Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary County Council

ÉIRE
IRELAND

19
2016

Clár Comairle
Céad bliain
Centenary
Programme



For further information:

South Tipperary Arts Centre, Tel: 086 8581412. email info@southtipperartscentre.ie

BALLYCROY National Park



“Indeed the Nephinbeg range of mountains is I think the very loneliest place in this country, for the hills themselves are encircled by this vast area of trackless bog, I confess I find such a place not lonely or depressing but inspiring. You are thrown at the same time back upon yourself and forward against the mystery and majesty of nature.”

Robert Lloyd Praeger (1937) The Way That I Went

While for many people, the term National Park usually evokes images of Killarney or the Wicklow Mountains, the isolated and undeveloped terrain of Ballycroy National Park could not be more different. Located on the western seaboard in northwest Mayo, Ballycroy National Park is a unique and distinct landscape comprised of 11,000 hectares of Atlantic blanket bog and mountainous terrain, covering a vast uninhabited and unspoilt wilderness. Dominated by the Nephin Beg Mountain Range, the Park includes Owenduff bog, one of the last intact active blanket bog systems not only in Ireland but Western Europe.

The impressive Visitor Centre houses an interactive exhibition on the special landscape, habitats and species of the national park. There is a short nature trail (Tóchar Daithí Bán) with a viewing point which offers stunning panoramic views of Achill Island to the West and the Nephin Beg Mountain Range to the East.

Through its Education Centre, the Park aims to raise awareness of the natural world and of conservation. Programmes are free of charge to schools, and to the general public. Many are site specific, such as the bogs/peatlands workshop with special emphasis on the plants and animals found within the habitat.

The Park provides bog ecology and geography fieldwork to secondary schools and runs special programmes that can be tailored to suit necessary requirements. This could involve talks, walks and indoor and outdoor activities. Access to the National Park itself can be gained by walking along the Bangor Trail.

THE BANGOR TRAIL

The Bangor Trail is a centuries old right of way traversing one of the most isolated and undeveloped landscapes in Ireland. This completely off-road mountain trail extends for 25km through the heart of the Nephin Beg mountain range and Owenduff bog. This vast area (30km²) is itself part of the Owenduff/Nephin Complex Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA). These European designations protect rare and important habitats and species under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives. Much of the trail lies within Ballycroy National Park.

The route has been in existence for hundreds of years. It appears on the earliest surviving map of Mayo which was drawn in 1590 by John Browne of the Neale (McDermott, 1992). This was the droving route used in northwest Mayo to bring livestock to market.



HABITAT

There is a wide diversity of habitats within the National Park. On the highest peak, Slieve Carr, alpine heath is found. Other habitats include upland grassland, wet and dry heath, lakes and the two main rivers – the Owenduff and Tarsaghaun, which flow into the sea northwest of Ballycroy. However, with as much as 2000mm of rainfall per year, the predominant habitat is the active Atlantic blanket bog that covers much of the Park area.

FLORA

A variety of interesting plants are found within the bog habitat. You can find sphagnum mosses, black bog rush (a notable component of Atlantic blanket bog), purple-moor grass, bog cotton, orchids, lousewort, milkwort, lichens and many more. Sundew and butterwort are insectivorous plants that have adapted to the nutrient poor bog environment by trapping and digesting insects caught on their leaves. Rare plants found in the Park include the ivy-leaved bellflower which is found on wet grassland along the banks of the rivers, you can see it flowering during July and August.



Browne's Map of Mayo

Prior to purchase by the State, the National Park lands were used for agriculture and recreation such as fishing, shooting, and hillwalking.

There is evidence of previous human habitation along the Bangor Trail, near the Owenduff and Tarsaghaun rivers, where the remains of stone buildings and traditional cultivation ridges can be seen. It is a tough but hugely rewarding hike for the seasoned hillwalker.



FAUNA

You can see many mammal species in the Park, including the fox, badger, mountain hare, otter, pygmy shrew and bat species. Non-native red deer, of farmed origin, were introduced into the wild in the area of Bellacorick in 2000. They can now be found on the



BALLYCROY

margins of the Park.

The Owenduff and Tarsaghaun rivers are renowned for Atlantic salmon and sea trout while the rivers and lakes contain brown trout. Otters feed in the rivers on eels and salmon and can occasionally be seen on the blanket bog among bog pools.

Of course, the bog pools are an important habitat for much of the invertebrate life in the Park. The predatory larval stages of dragonflies and damselflies feed on waterborne insects before metamorphosing into winged adult dragonflies and damselflies. These colourful and distinctive insects are good indicators of the diversity of the Park's ecosystem.

BIRDS

For the avid birdwatcher, you can find a huge variety of bird species in the Park, some of which include dippers, common sandpipers, woodcock, dunlin and skylarks. Birds of prey found include kestrels and sparrowhawks while rare species such as merlin and peregrine falcon are also resident.

Red grouse are resident in the Park and rely on a mix of different heights of heather. High heather provides cover from predators while young shoots are necessary for the chicks to feed on. Rarer species use the area either as winter feeding grounds or as summer breeding grounds. Greenland white-fronted geese are winter visitors from Greenland and are present in the Park from October until April. They feed on the roots of bog cotton and white-beaked sedge found on quaking bog.



Hen harriers are winter visitors as are Golden plover and interestingly, only a small population breed in the summer on upland areas of the west of Ireland including Ballycroy National Park.

The Visitor Centre is open daily from March to October.

The café offers lunch and snacks with a bird's-eye view to Achill Island, the majestic Nephin Beg Mountains and the magical Wild Atlantic Coast.



Visitor's Centre at Ballycroy National Park

For further information contact:

Ballycroy National Park Visitor Centre,

Tel: 098 49 888 **Fax:** 098 49 879

Email: ballycroyvisitorcentre@ahg.gov.ie

Web: www.ballycroynationalpark.ie

DESMOND HALL

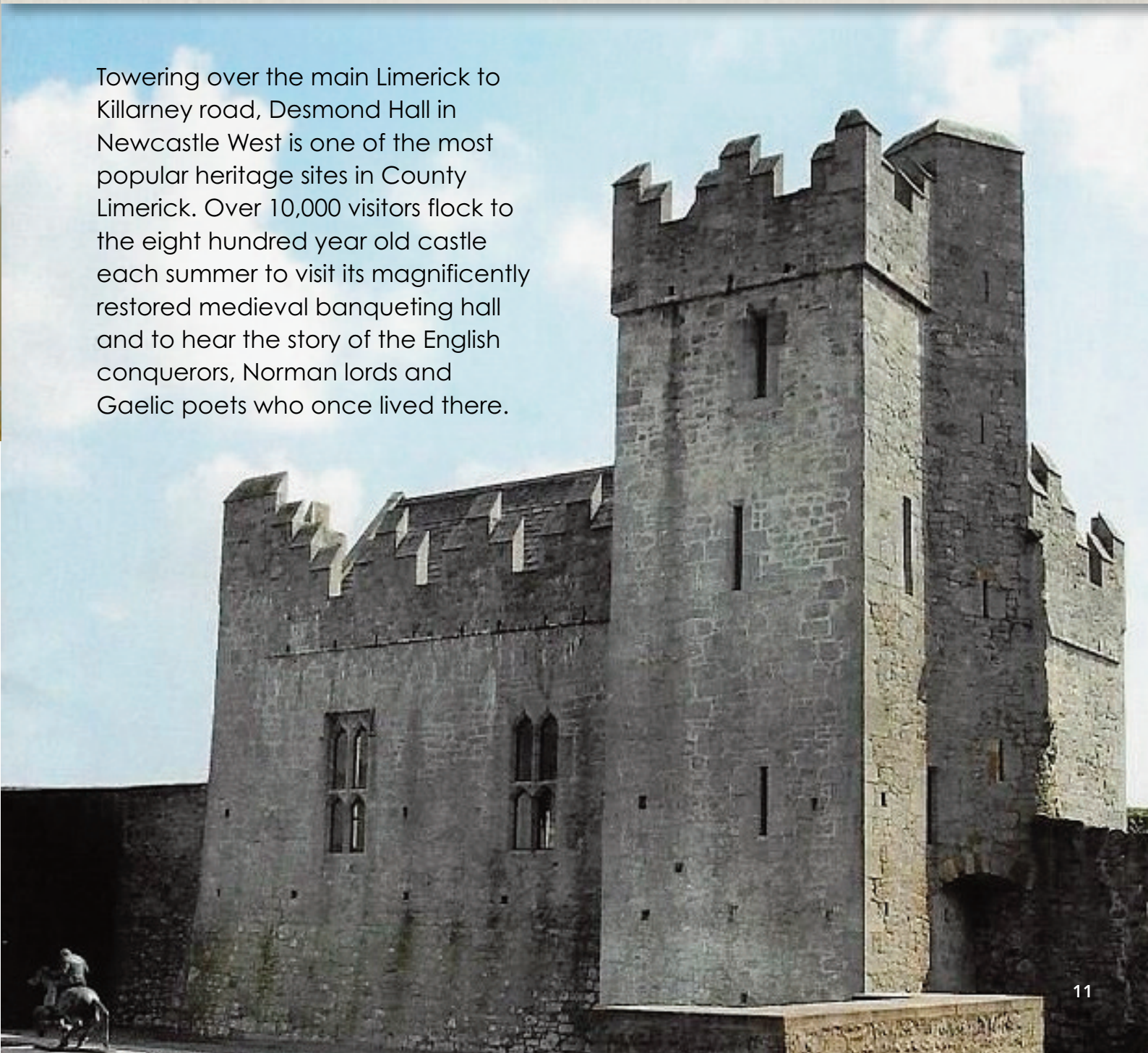
AND THE

IRISH REVOLUTION

1916 – 1923

TEXT BY PÁDRAIG Ó RUAIRC

Towering over the main Limerick to Killarney road, Desmond Hall in Newcastle West is one of the most popular heritage sites in County Limerick. Over 10,000 visitors flock to the eight hundred year old castle each summer to visit its magnificently restored medieval banqueting hall and to hear the story of the English conquerors, Norman lords and Gaelic poets who once lived there.



The castle is best known for its connection to the Fitzgerald 'Earls of Desmond' who once ruled nearly all of Munster but fell from grace after leading a series of rebellions against English Rule. But the site has an equally fascinating modern history linked to the struggle for independence after the 1916 Rising and major historical figures like Michael Collins.

After the failure of the Desmond Rebellions in the 1580's all of the Fitzgerald's property and lands were confiscated by Queen Elizabeth and re-granted to new English colonists. Desmond Hall was granted to the Courtenay family the Earls of Devon. In 1904 Charles Pepys Courtenay, the 14th Earl of Devon, inherited Desmond Hall and a significant property portfolio in the town of Newcastle West. The Earl managed his estate in Ireland from his family's stately home in Powderham Castle, England. He rarely visited Ireland, and in contrast to the stereotypical landlord was popular locally. One local, David Neligan, 'The Spy In The Castle' who worked closely with Michael Collins during the struggle for Irish independence recalled "We had a good landlord - Lord Devon, whom we neither saw nor knew ... even in the 'bad times' he never evicted anyone and his rents were always reasonable: in fact he was a paragon amongst landlords."

But the timing of the Earl's inheritance was rather unfortunate. In



The Duke of Devon who owned the Hall during the 1916 period

the early years of the twentieth century a political storm was brewing in Ireland. At that time all of Ireland was an integral part of the United Kingdom and was under direct rule by the British Government. There was growing political drive by Irish Nationalists for 'Home Rule' – a form of limited self government for Ireland. In response to this, Unionists throughout Ireland organised against Home Rule and threatened to use armed force to oppose any change to the political status quo.

The Earl of Devon realised that the hold the British establishment had on Ireland was slipping and decided to sell his stake in the country. In 1910 he sold at auction all of his estate in Newcastle West except the castle and grounds at Desmond Hall which he kept as a summer home.

Following the 1916 Rising against British rule the majority of Irish people were no longer satisfied with the prospect of Home Rule and limited self government and there was a huge swing in support for the republican rebels. By 1920 the conflict between those who supported Irish independence and those who wished to maintain British rule had spilled over into guerilla warfare between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the British Crown Forces and Desmond Hall became a hive of military activity. As the conflict intensified the



Members of the RIC Auxiliary Division which was stationed at Desmond Hall

Earl of Devon's estate agent and domestic staff were evicted from the castle at gunpoint, but it wasn't the rebels that forced them out - it was the British Crown forces.

On the 16th of September 1920 sections of 'B' and 'K' Companies of the Royal Irish Constabulary's Auxiliary Division took control of Desmond Hall. The Auxiliaries, more commonly known as 'the Auxies' were a British paramilitary police force similar to the infamous 'Black and Tans' raised to fight the Irish republicans. Like the 'Tans', the 'Auxies' quickly earned a well deserved notoriety for violence and indiscipline. Over one hundred members of the force under the command of Lieutenant

Colonel Owen William Latimer were stationed at Desmond Hall. Colonel Latimer and his troops were later transferred to Cork where they were responsible for the 'Burning of Cork' on the night of 11th December 1920 when they assassinated two republicans and mounted a series of arson attacks in Cork city causing £3 million worth of damage in revenge for the death of one of their comrades in a republican attack.

In December 1920 the Royal Warwickshire Regiment of the British Army replaced the 'Auxies' as the British garrison at Desmond Hall. The republicans never had the military strength to launch a direct attack on the British soldiers in the castle but they operated in the countryside using hit and run guerilla tactics laying ambushes for the British soldiers whenever they left Desmond Hall. The IRA planned an

ambush for the Royal Warwickshire Regiment at Barnagh outside Newcastle West which was one of the most ambitious IRA operations of the war. Almost one hundred and fifty IRA Volunteers mobilized for the attack on the 8th July 1921. However the ambushers were to be disappointed. Whilst they were lying in ambush a

Truce between the IRA and the British-Crown Forces was agreed to start at noon on Monday 11th July 1921. The British soldiers did not enter the ambush position until a few minutes after the ceasefire began. The British soldiers stopped their convoy and approached their would be attackers. One of the IRA Volunteers present, Amos Reidy, who witnessed the event remembered: "The British officer in charge and his men had a look around. The officer walked over to one of our officers, shook hands after a word or two and drove off again."

Five months after the ceasefire began the Anglo-Irish Treaty was agreed between representatives of Dáil Éireann, the rebel Irish government and the



Michael Collins reviewing Free State soldiers in the town square in front of the castle

British Government. The Treaty partitioned Ireland into two states. The north of Ireland would remain part of the United Kingdom whilst the south of Ireland, renamed as 'The Irish Free State', would get limited independence. Although seceding from the United Kingdom, the 'Free State' would remain part of the British Empire with the King of England as head of state. As well as dividing the island of Ireland into two the Treaty also split those who had been fighting for Irish independence into two camps. The faction who supported the Treaty became known as the 'Free State Army' whilst those opposed retained the title IRA.

As the south of Ireland began drifting towards civil war in the spring of 1922 the British began withdrawing their troops under the terms of the Treaty. The Royal Warwickshire Regiment withdrew from Desmond Hall on the 2nd February 1922, but, before the Earl of Devon could reclaim his property, the Anti-Treaty IRA occupied the castle. At the beginning of the Civil War the Anti-Treaty IRA remained in control of the castle, but after a succession of military victories the Free State Army advanced from Limerick city and Adare towards Newcastle West.

On the 7th August 1921 the Free State Army mounted a sustained attack on the Anti-Treaty IRA's stronghold in Desmond Hall. Although the Free State Army were better equipped and used armoured vehicles and machine gunfire to press home their attacks, the republican defenders were well protected by the castle's medieval walls. Eventually, after a

day of fighting, the Free State Army used artillery to begin shelling the castle. The republicans were defenceless against the artillery fire and were forced to retreat.

However the republicans were not prepared to hand their opponents a military advantage by letting them capture the castle intact and before withdrawing they set fire to the Earl's mansion house which had been built in the grounds of the castle to prevent it being used as a barracks. Two Members of the Anti-Treaty IRA, brothers Denis and Edward O'Dwyer, were killed during the attack; the Free State Army did not suffer any casualties. A week after the capture of Desmond Hall, Michael Collins visited Newcastle West and reviewed the Free State soldiers in the town square in front of the castle. A week later Collins was killed during fighting in Cork.

The Earl of Devon received £8,000 compensation from the new Irish Government in compensation for the destruction of his mansion. He built a replacement house in the castle grounds but it was much smaller than the original. In the 1930's he sold his remaining property in Ireland including Desmond Hall. The castle grounds were later used as a lumber yard, for dances and even housed a cinema before being bought by the state. Thankfully very little of the surviving medieval structures were damaged during the Civil War and the OPW's Heritage Services were able to undertake an extensive restoration and renovation

project before the castle was opened to the public as a heritage and tourist attraction in 1998.

This year the OPW has planned a number of events including a photographic exhibition, a display of memorabilia from the period and a series of history lectures to mark the centenary of the 1916 Rising. All of these events, as well as admission to Desmond Hall and guided tours of the site will be completely free of charge throughout the year.



Devon Castle before and after the fire



For more information visit
www.heritageireland.ie
 or [facebook.com/desmondhall](https://www.facebook.com/desmondhall)

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2016

COMMEMORATIONS AT KILMAINHAM GAOL

TEXT BY FRANK SHALVEY

Kilmainham Gaol - basement of East Wing with view to holding cell and Parnell graffiti on wall

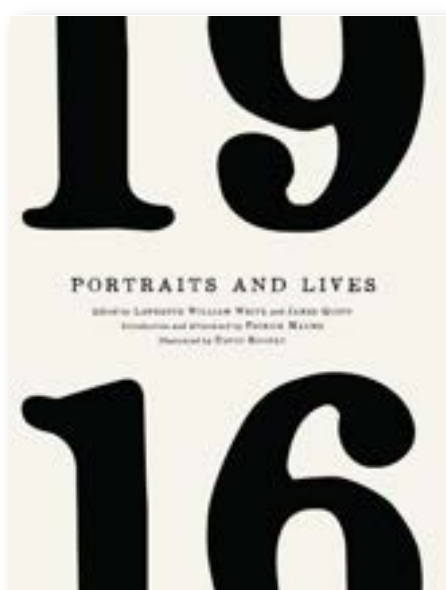
Photo © OPW / PM Photography



© Government of Ireland National Monuments Service Photographic Unit

As Easter draws near, the various events being organised to mark the 1916 Anniversary are starting to loom large in the calendar. The OPW manages a number of sites with strong connections to the Rising and the Independence era and St. Enda's Museum in Rathfarnham, the Mac Diarmada Cottage in Co. Leitrim and Kilmainham Gaol in Dublin are all expected to play a major part of the commemorations events.

Kilmainham Gaol in particular, as the place where the 1916 Rising Leaders were executed, is among the most iconic of the locations associated with the Rising and the OPW will hold a number of events there to mark the occasion. As well as hosting the official Government events, the OPW is also rolling out a number of artistic and historic projects centred on the anniversary. Two initiatives, in both traditional and new media will, we hope, excite a good deal of public interest in the months ahead: the 1916 Portraits Exhibition and the Kilmainham Gaol Autographs Website.



THE ROONEY PORTRAITS

"1916: Portraits and Lives" is a collaboration with the Royal Irish Academy that has already garnered a good deal of public interest since it was formally launched last November. The Academy has produced a book of 42 biographical essays centred on various individuals associated with the Rising outlining their personal histories and describing their involvement with the events of 1916. Some of the people concerned are relatively minor figures, not even associated in all cases with the fighting; their stories, however, provide a fascinating glimpse into the period and what was happening in Irish society at the time.

To accompany the essays, the OPW commissioned a series of portraits of the 42 individuals by David Rooney, a noted Irish artist, and these artworks, completed in stark black and white, convey a tremendous impact and add significantly to the power

of the volume. The original art pieces will form part of the State Art Collection managed by the OPW and they will be exhibited to the public for the first time in Kilmainham Gaol in 2016. An exhibition space is being created in the Gaol and the works will be installed and available to the public to view from May onwards as part of the celebrations.

The book associated with the Portraits continues to excite much critical and popular interest; an exhibition of original prints of the pictures will be shown by the Irish Embassy in New York and a further set of prints will be exhibited later this year by the Ulster Museum. Iarnród Éireann are also heavily involved and will be giving free downloads of the full book during Easter Week. In addition, they are also making the individual chapters of the book associated with 15 leaders available as a free download from each of the Railway Stations named after them (Pearse, Connolly, Heuston, Ceannt etc).

THE KILMAINHAM AUTOGRAPHS

The Kilmainham Autographs Collection is a trove of approx 60 personal notebooks owned by individuals associated with the 1916 Rising and containing the personal signatures and reminiscences of many people from the revolutionary movement. The origins of most of the books date from the 1916 period and its aftermath, when large numbers of the insurgents were held prisoner by the British authorities and held in jails throughout the United Kingdom. Scraps of verse, prayers, personal



mementoes or simply signatures appear on every page. Some of the signatures are of people who were hugely significant during the Rising and subsequently but most are simply from the regular men who formed the bulk of the ranks of the Irish Volunteers in 1916.

Working in collaboration with our historic consultant, Boston College, who are also responsible for the Century Ireland historic website, the OPW has created a new website, to be launched this year, which will display the full Autographs Collection to the public for the first time. Approx 7,000 pages and 800 historic photographs have been digitised and will be displayed on the website. About 250 particular pages which have a strong

connection with 1916 in particular, will be interpreted and explained in deeper detail, with additional content behind the scanned page describing the life and history of the individual and adding further details to his or her story from records available in the Gaol Collection, the National Archive, the Military Archive and other sources.

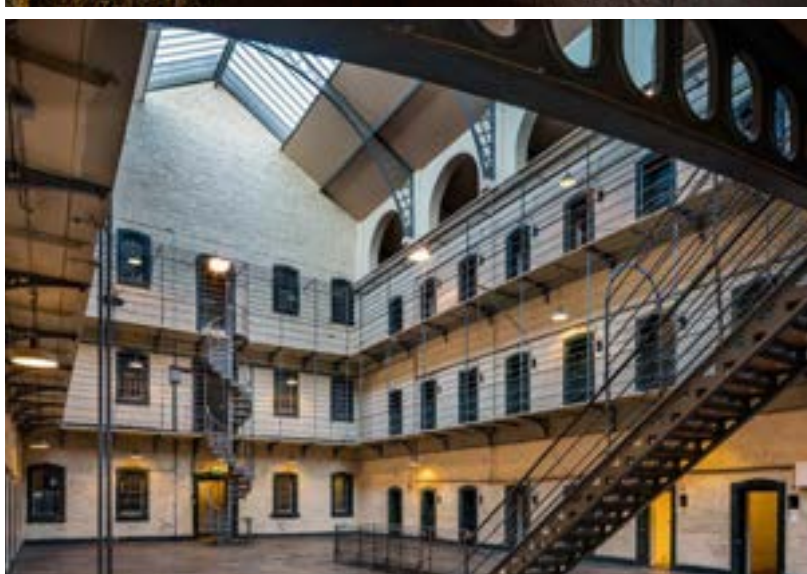
As well as displaying the pages of the books themselves, the Autographs website will also have the capacity to hold further material and we hope that the site will continue to develop in the years ahead as more material becomes available and new historic research comes to light.

There will be a facility on the site for members of the public to contact the OPW and - we hope - donate further documents relating to individuals whose signatures they see featured. There is, no doubt, a huge amount of further material, letters, photographs, official documents etc available within families of those associated with the Independence era and the Kilmainham Gaol Museum would love to engage with people who are in possession of this material as it provides a potentially huge and fascinating trove of rich historic material that can, we hope, be explored more deeply in the future.





Above: Kilmainham Gaol – Basement of East Wing with view to isolation cells on right.
 Below left: 1916 Corridor showing Thomas Clarke's cell on right.
 Centre: View of East Wing with food lift on left.
 Below right: Plaque to executed Leaders of 1916 Rising. Images © OPW





◀ Left: 'Kilmainham Crown'
2016 © Photograph by Simon Hill (Courtesy of OPW)



▲ Above: 'Royal Coat of Arms of the United Kingdom'

History in Objects...

TEXT BY FRANK SHALVEY

In a new series commencing with this article, we explore some of the more curious artefacts in the care of the OPW Heritage Services. Each of these objects holds its own unique history and, placed in the context of the sites where they are held, can often tell a rich story about the past....

The Crown at Kilmainham

Kilmainham Gaol is one of the most heavily-visited of OPW's Heritage sites and, although it has a varied history stretching back to the 1790's, it is perhaps best known for its connection with the 1916 Rising as the place where Pearse and the other rebel leaders were imprisoned and executed.

The Gaol Museum is a rich repository of material both from the 1916 period and other eras, much of it donated by families and individuals with connections to the Gaol's often very sad past. One of the objects in the Collection is particularly curious, however, representing perhaps the diametrically opposite end of the struggle for Independence story; the item in question is the Kilmainham Crown, a stone carving thought to have formed a part of the Royal Coat of Arms, the Imperial symbol of the British Empire which was likely displayed at the Kilmainham Sessions House, soon to be opened as a new Visitor Reception building for the Gaol. The Crown dates from the early 1820's and was donated to the Museum by the Courts Service in the mid 1980's.

Though we have some information on the Kilmainham Crown, there are still tantalising gaps where our knowledge

is incomplete and this illustrates perhaps one of the at once most interesting yet at the same time most frustrating aspects to the study of history; we can often suspect something is true but in the absence of hard historical facts and supporting documents, we may not be able to prove it absolutely.

The Kilmainham Crown is obviously meant to represent the British Crown and the symbol is well understood throughout history, combining most popularly with the Lion and the Unicorn to form the Royal Coat of Arms as a representation of the might and power of the British Empire and as a personal symbol of the Monarch. The Royal Arms is used by the British Monarch (and by the British Government on official documents, passports etc) but they also appear in British court rooms, since the Monarch is the fount of justice in the United Kingdom and the law Court is part of the Court of the Monarch (hence its name). British judges are officially representatives of the Crown, demonstrated by the Royal Coat of Arms which sits behind the judge on the wall of every court in the land. In much the same way, Irish judges sit under the Harp, the emblem of the Irish nation adopted by the Executive Council of the Irish Free State in 1922 and for

many Irish people, an important symbol of our nationhood and our identity. Interestingly, the Royal Coat of Arms also includes a harp on one of the quarters of the shield, representing Ireland; clearly then, symbols like this form a rich part of our heritage and still have the power to demonstrate a link to our past when the whole of Ireland formed a part of the British Empire.

The documentation we have on the Kilmainham Crown is, unfortunately, quite scant. In the brief accession documents that accompanied the donation from the Courts Service, there is a reference to it having sat above the Judges' head during the preliminary hearings of the Invincibles at Kilmainham Courthouse in 1883. Evocative though this particular picture might be, it is perhaps rather unlikely. The construction of the object suggests instead that it was mounted externally on the building and was probably meant to signify the importance of the building as a place where Justice was dispensed. It was common for official public buildings to display symbols in this way and it is possible that the Crown formed a part of that representation at Kilmainham; a part of the incomplete emblem that sits over the main entrance to the building to this day perhaps.

Another tantalising reference to the Crown was unearthed by Niall Bergin the Guide Manager at the Gaol in research of the records of Local Authority (now Fingal Co. Council). He found there a reference to a document dated 22nd December 1941:

"Estimates received from the County Surveyor 12th December regarding the removal of British symbol on the roof of Kilmainham Courthouse..."

It seems possible then that the Crown may still at that time have been mounted externally over the door to the Courthouse and, though it is curious that the symbol may have survived there for so many years after Independence, it is perhaps highly unlikely by comparison that it would have been allowed to remain on the wall of the building internally, sitting above a Judge of the Irish Free State. Given the politics of the nation at that time, it is impossible surely that it would have been allowed to remain there.

The truth of the Crown's history then remains to be fully discovered; perhaps future research may turn up another reference in long-forgotten records somewhere, contributing another fragment to what we know and establishing more of the facts of what we can at the moment only suspect. Whatever the truth of the Crown's history however, it remains as a part of the Kilmainham story, a potent emblem of a time when the British Empire was the effective superpower in the world and a symbol of its power in Ireland. ■

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Teach an Phiarsaigh

Téacs le Cillian de Grás

I mbliana, beidh comóradh á dhéanamh ar chéad bhliain ó Éirí Amach 1916, agus basú an cinire is cáiliúla Pádraic Mac Piarais. Seo é an ról ar a bhfuil an cáil is mó ar an bPiarsach; 'théis dó bheith ceapaidh mar Uachtarán na Poblacht, léigh sé Forógra na Poblachta ó póirse Ard Oifig an Phoist ar Shr. Uí Chonaill i mBaile Átha Cliath.

Céard a chuir an múinteoir scoile, 37 bliain d'aois, ar an bealach seo? Sin é an scéal a insítear ag Teach an Phiarsaigh, an teach trí-sheomra traidisiúnta ar thóg an Piarsach dó fhéin ar teach samhradh, i Ros Muc, Conamara, i 1909.

Tháinig Pádraic Mac Piarais chun siúil ar dtús mar gníomhaí teanga. Óna óige bhí dúil aige sa Ghaeilge. Chláraigh sé le Conradh na Gaeilge, a bhí ag obair ar son caomhnú na teanga sna háiteanna a bhí sé fós beo, agus a h-athbheochan in áiteanna eile. De réir a chéile fuair an Piarsach céim in airde san eagraíocht. Ceapadh é ar an Coiste Gnó in 1898, agus i 1903 agus é in aois a 23, ceapadh é ina eagarthóir ar phaipéir nuachta an Chonradh, An Claidheamh Soluis.

I 1900 ba é Conamara ceann de na Gaeltachtaí is láidre sa tír. Ar an dtaobh eile de, bhí se mar cheann de na ceantracha is boichte sa tír, agus chuir leithéidí an iris Punch stiogma ar muintir na háite mar phobail bocht, aineolach agus dáinséarach. Thug múinteoir scoile áitiúil cuireadh don Piarsach cuairt a thabhairt ar Ros Muc don chéad uair i 1903. Bhí craobh den Chonradh bunaithe aige sa cheantar agus bhí léamh



agus scríobh na Gaeilge á teagasc aige do dhaoine fásta na háite, rud nach raibh ar clár oifigiúil na scoile an t-am sin. Thit an Píarsach i ngrá leis an áit agus an pobail láithreach. D'fhill sé i Mí an Mheitheamh agus chonaic sé thinte cnámh Oíche Eoin, agus d'fhill se ar Ros Muc chuile shamhradh in a dhiadh sin.

Cheannaigh an Píarsach píosa talún dó féin ar bruach Loch Oiriúlach i 1905, agus críochnaíodh an teach faoi 1909. Bhí sé súntasach gur roghnaigh Bl'áth Cliathach mean-aicmeach cosúil leis an Píarsach a gcuid saoire a chaitheamh i teach ceann-tuí, teach na mboicht mar a dheartar ag an am. Ach bhí meas uafásach ag an bPíarsach ar mhuintir Ros Muc, agus theastaigh uaigh marachtáil in a measc a mó is a d'fhéadfá. Dúirt sé le cara leis: 'D'fhéadfadh bheith anseo againn ríocht beag Gaelach dár gcuid fhéin.' Is cuimhin le Colm Ó Gaora, a bhí ina gasúr an t-am sin, mar a chaith an Píarsach a gcuid ama: 'Ní ar chúl ar téarma a théadh an Píarsach i measc na ndaoine san áit. Ba é bothán an duine bhoicht a thaithíodh sé, ag caint is ag seanchas leis na seanfhundúirí ar leac an teallaigh, ach ní b'iondúla fós ag éisteacht agus ag cronú na saoihiúlachta a bhí ag baint leo.'

Chum an Píarsach roinnt drámaí agus gearrscéalta, an cuid is mó acu suite sa cheantar timpeall ar a theach i Ros Muc. D'úsáid sé na logainmneach macálach áitiúil lena scéalta a fréamhú go daingean i gcré Chonamara. Tá na daoine sna scéalta bocht, ach tá siad ionraic agus díograsach ina gcuid oibre. Is minic gurb iad na gasúr príomh-carachtairí na scéalta. Bíonn siad fointrach agus samhltach, ach ní bhíonn siad i bhfad riamh ó chosaint a muintire.

D'fhéadfá rá gur radharc idéalach a bhí aige ar mhuintir Gaeltacht Chonamara, agus is cinnte go raibh fíor-chionn aige orthu. Chuir a chaoi inár theip an córas oideachas galda ar pháistí Gaeltachta olc ar leith air: *'Is é an páiste Gaeltachta in nith beo is tábhachtaí inniu in Éireann....Tá an cumhacht aisteach aige ann fhéin an oidhreacht atá fós ag fás a chuir ar aghaidh ag glúinte gan áireamh... Gach lá agus gach uair-a-chloig, tagann muid idir é fhéin agus slánú a cinniúnt. Déanann muid é seo gach uair a labharann muid Béarla leis ina baile fhéin; nuair a múineann muid an caticeasma Béarla dó san eaglais agus seanmóir Bearla a fhógairt ón altór, nuair a chuireann muid ar scoil é ina léigheann sé, litríonn sé,*

saothraíonn sé, labharann sé agus labhartar leis - ní scríobhann muid múintear é - ó maidín go hoíche as Béarla. Le críoch a chuir leis maraíonn muid an splanc riachtanach Éireannachas atá ann.'

Ar ais i mBaile Átha Cliath, bhí an Píarsach ag éirí níos radacaí. Bhí sé ag súil le Féin Riall,



agus bhí dóchas aige go tugfadh sé smacht ar an gcóras oideachas, ar a raibh an oiread gearán déanta aige faoi, ag pairlimint i mBaile Átha Cliath. Chuir teipeadh Féin Riall díomá uafásach air, agus cheap sé anois gurb é neamhspláchas iomlán an t-aon rud a chuirfeadh tús le hathbheochan cultúrtha. Sna blianta roimh an Chogadh Mhór, scaip cultas na ngunnaí ar fud na hEorpa, agus cosúil le na milliúin Eorpaigh eile, ghlac an Píarsach leis le díogras. I 1914 ghlac sé ballraíocht san Bráithreachas Éireannach Poblachta a bhí ag ullmhú éirí amach in aghaidh smacht na Breataine.

Chuaigh cara agus comhalta an Píarsach Desmond Ryan leis ar a cuairt deireanach ag a theach i Ros Muc i 1915. Ba chuimhin le Ryan saoire taitneamhach inar thug siad faoi turais rothaíochta fada, agus comhrá dlúth polaitíochta. Chuir nuacht as Meiriceá isteach ar an saoire; bhí an sean-Fhinín Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa tar éis bás. Bhí sé le cuir i mBaile Átha Cliath agus iarradh ar an Píarsach óráid a thabhairt. Chaith an Píarsach a sheachtain deireanach i Ros Muc ag cumadh na hóráide. Dhún sé doras an teach ina dhiadh agus d'fhill sé ar Baile Átha Cliath leis na focail fíochmhar a leag amach an stáitse don Éirí Amach a fhógairt: *'mo thrí thrua naoi n-uaire a mbaois - d'fhágadar seilbh againn ar mhairbh na bhFiann agus fad a bheidh taisí na bhfear sin in úir na hÉireann ní bheidh Éire, in uireasa na saoirse, go brách ar suaimehneas.'*



The Pearse Museum in 2016

TEXT BY BRIAN CROWLEY



Surrounded by fifty acres of landscaped parkland, the Pearse Museum is located in the former home and school of Patrick Pearse, the leader of the 1916 Rising.



Pearse in his headmaster's robes

Pearse founded Scoil Éanna, an Irish-speaking experimental school, in 1908 in Cullenswood House, Rathmines. After only two years, however, he felt the school needed a worthier and more impressive home. He also wanted to be nearer the countryside so his pupils could have direct contact with the natural world. In 1910 he discovered The Hermitage, an 18th century granite villa set in fifty acres of dramatic parkland at the foot of the Dublin Mountains. He came across the house while on a historical pilgrimage to Rathfarnham, a village just outside the city of Dublin where his great hero, the revolutionary Robert Emmet, had lived prior to his rebellion in 1803. It is said that Emmet arranged secret meetings with his sweetheart, Sarah Curran, in the grounds of The Hermitage. For Pearse, the memory of Emmet was still palpable as he walked in the park. He believed that this historical association would be an inspiration to his pupils and himself.

Pearse's initial interest in education stemmed from his involvement in the Gaelic League and the Irish language movement. He very quickly, however, became passionate about education and its possibilities. His ideas were progressive and radical, he had little time for the exam-focussed education system of the time. He felt that schools should nurture the talents of all their pupils, even if those talents lay outside the traditional school curriculum.

The house was also Patrick Pearse's family home. His mother, brother and sisters all assisted in the running of the school. On Easter Sunday 1916 he and his brother William left the house to fight in the 1916 Rising, never to return. Pearse was the commander-in chief and leader of the rebellion as well as the author of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic. While revolution was raging in Dublin, his mother and sisters waited for news in Rathfarnham. It was there that they heard that both



The Hermitage,
an 18th century
granite villa



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Pearse Museum





brothers were to be executed. His mother and eldest sister lived on in the house and the school continued to operate until 1935. Following the death of Pearse's last surviving sister in 1968, the house and grounds were handed over to the state. The Pearse Museum was then opened to the public in 1979.

This year, to mark the centenary of the Rising, the Pearse Museum will be hosting a wide variety of talks, lectures, concerts and theatrical productions. There is also a new and extensive permanent exhibition which tells the story of Patrick Pearse's life. It covers his childhood, his involvement in the Irish language movement, his work as a writer and educator and, finally, his role as leader of the 1916 Rising and his execution in Kilmainham Gaol. Among the original artefacts on display will be the manuscript of his unfinished autobiography, the school roll book written in Pearse's hand, the manuscript of his famous oration at the graveside of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa (pictured right) and, rather poignantly, the cups and saucers which he and his brother drank from at their last family meal before leaving to fight in the 1916 Rising.

In addition to the new exhibition visitors can also walk around the historic rooms where Pearse lived and worked, including his private study where he did much of his writing. There is also a dormitory where the pupils slept, a grand study hall, chapel and school art gallery. Pearse felt it was important to surround his pupils with beautiful and inspiring art. The gallery contains many paintings and sculptures which once hung in the school including works by artists like Beatrice Elvery, Patrick Tuohy, Jack B. Yeats and Count Casimir Markievicz. A separate gallery is devoted to the sculptural work of Pearse's brother, Willie, who taught art in the school and

Above: Parents and pupils at a St Enda's open day at the Hermitage, Rathfarnham. Pearse is amongst the group of smaller boys sitting on the grass to the right.

Top Left and below: Exhibits from the Pearse Museum and Patrick Pearse portrait. Centre vertically, pic 1. Pearse's Study. pic 2. Study Hall at St. Éanna's, pic 3. Dormitory.



fought alongside his brother in 1916. Visitors can also see what a Scoil Éanna classroom would have looked like in its original location in the courtyard at the rear of the Museum.

The Museum is open every day (Nov-Jan 9.30-16.00, Feb 9.30-17.00, Mar-Oct 9.30-17.30) and admission is free. For more information visit www.heritageireland.ie or facebook.com/PearseMuseumandStEndasPark

SEÁN MAC DIARMADA HOMESTEAD

TEXT BY FRANK SHALVEY

Situated in a rural location close to the village of Kiltyclogher, County Leitrim, the Mac Diarmada Homestead is one of the lesser known National Monuments in the care of the OPW Heritage Services.

As the birthplace of Seán Mac Diarmada, one of the central leaders of the 1916 Rising who was executed on 12 May at Kilmainham Gaol after the uprising was subdued, it is, however, likely to become much more well known to visitors who choose to seek it out during the Centenary Anniversary.

The Mac Diarmada Homestead is a collection of vernacular farm buildings and is typical of rural dwellings of the late 1800's/early 1900's. After the Famine, the rural population in Ireland declined significantly through a combination of death and emigration and, for the rural dwellers that survived, cottages such as this were commonplace.

The existence at Kiltyclogher in the latter part of the 19th century when Mac Diarmada lived there as a young boy would have been extremely basic. Holdings were small and people eked

out a living that was barely above subsistence level. It is clear that the evidence of poverty Mac Diarmada saw around him in Leitrim helped to form the young man politically and led ultimately to his radicalisation and the adoption of revolutionary means as the only way to achieve independence. Mac Diarmada was, by the time he left Leitrim to go to Dublin in 1908, already involved in a number of separatist and cultural organisations including Sinn Féin, the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Gaelic League. A close associate of the veteran Fenian Republican Tom Clarke, Mac Diarmada became ever more closely involved in the





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revolutionary movement after 1910 and was one of the original members of the Irish Volunteers and a national organiser for the IRB. During the Rising, he took little active part in the fighting due to his disability (he had suffered the effects of polio some years earlier) but was present in the GPO throughout as a member of the Provisional Government and as a signatory to the Proclamation.

Today, the Homestead is presented in exactly the way it would have appeared when Mac Diarmada lived there. Original furniture of the time and some replica items which are typical of the era are displayed in the Cottage and the farm buildings and visitors can experience how families in rural Ireland at this time would have lived and worked. Access can be obtained through a local keyholder who can be contacted on 071 985 4865 (Paul), email kiltyclogherheritagecentre@gmail.com



Kiltyclogher Community Council established a Heritage Centre in the village in June 2015. The aim of the Centre is to welcome visitors to Kiltyclogher, link in with the local tourism strategy and provide information about the history of the village, with a particular focus on the Seán Mac Diarmada legacy. Interpretive displays provide visitors with information about Mac Diarmada and the locality before they take the approx 3km trip to the Cottage to enjoy the free guided tour. Access is by pre-booking through the Heritage Centre, with 10 visitors being accommodated at any given time. The length of tour takes approx. 40 minutes and tours are available Thursday to Saturday weekly between 10.00am and 4.00pm.

The contact for the Visitor Centre is (Paul) on: 071 985 4865, email: kiltyclogherheritagecentre@gmail.com

The Community Council also host a Seán Mac Diarmada Summer School in Kiltyclogher which will be held this year from June 9 to 11. Details of the relevant speakers and participants will be announced in due course.

TRIM CASTLE

*reality more fantastic
than fiction*

Ambition, political scheming, treason, royal lovers and disputes — plot lines that one might associate with epic blockbusters like *Braveheart* but the castle and medieval remains in the county Meath town are far more than just Hollywood fiction. Even some of the best screen writers would struggle to imagine a storyline to match the real events that shaped the fortunes of the characters connected to Ireland's largest Anglo-Norman castle.

Our first protagonists in this real life screen play are the de Lacy family. Following the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland, Henry II granted the Irish Kingdom of Midhe to Hugh de Lacy II in 1172. This strategic move was to ensure that none of his barons, in particular Richard de Clare (Strongbow), could take full control of Ireland and threaten his kingship. De Lacy was very much favoured by the King. As well as his newly acquired lordship he was also made constable of Dublin and justiciar of Ireland which potentially could have made him one of most powerful and influential men in Ireland. Despite his initial prominent role in Anglo-Norman control of the eastern part of the country, Hugh de

Lacy spent less than ten years in Ireland. His descendants and their heirs fell in and out of favour with future English Monarchs and eventually lost control of the great stone castle at Trim.

The important "Ford of the elder tree" (Átha Troim) on the river Boyne was an ideal base for de Lacy. He was described by Giraldus Cambrensis as "a reliable sober Frenchman, well versed in the business of war". His estates now needed to be protected as control of the river Boyne was vital to the success of the project. Fortifications and garrisons were established at strategic locations to consolidate these lands. The initial attempt to fortify the south bank of the river can no longer be seen. It was a ringwork castle protected by a moat and ditch with a stockade and consisted of a central residence with essential buildings including a granary. All of this would eventually be replaced by the stone sentinel which still dominates the town's modern skyline.

Before complete control of the kingdom was ensured de Lacy was summoned to Henry II's war in France in 1173. This gave the king of Connacht, Ruardhi O'Connor, opportunity to make his claim on the





TEXT BY KARLOS BRADY



Trim Castle at night
© Tourism Ireland.

Far left: OPW guides Karlos Brady and Brenda Kelly during Heritage Week

Left: River Boyne at Trim Castle © Tourism Ireland.

ancient kingdom and he attacked and burned many of de Lacy's castles including Trim. Only the timely intervention of Strongbow's lieutenant, Raymond le Gros, forced O'Connor's army to retreat.

De Lacy's return in 1175 marked his push toward complete dominance not just in Meath but also Leinster. Construction began on a new castle at Trim. The building, on a grand scale and with a unique design, heralded de Lacy's status and ambition. With Trim as its epicentre, de Lacy's new feudal system controlled all aspects of life. New agricultural practices for tillage and stock were introduced as Meath's fertile lands were exploited. Tolls and rents provided revenue for castle building.

De Lacy's lust for his own advancement did not go unnoticed by Henry II especially when it was reported that Hugh had married "in the manner of that country" the daughter of Ruadhí O'Connor, now High King of Ireland. To curb de Lacy's ambition Henry appointed his son, Prince John, to be Lord of Ireland. In 1186 Hugh de Lacy's assassination in Durrow by Gilla-gain-inathair na Midhe marked the end of the first act of Trim Castle's screenplay.

In 1189, Hugh's oldest son Walter de Lacy III claimed his father's lands in Ireland and England. He was not always in favour with the ruling English Monarchs either. Walter reinforced many of the castle's defensive features and added two floors to the central Keep. With its white washed walls, glazed windows and distinctive imported red roof tiles Trim Castle was now ranked as the largest castle on this island. Such an impressive and oppressive structure was a suitable residence for a man of Walter's title and status.

Political alliances, however, were key to remaining in such high powered positions. Prince John was in rebellion against his brother King Richard the Lionheart and Walter supported the King, a decision which was likely not forgotten when John ascended to the throne. In 1210, when King John visited Ireland and camped two nights at Trim, Walter fled to France. Walter's conflict with the king's chief governor, his marriage to William de Briouze's daughter (against whom the king had a vendetta), his attempt to "conquer the English in Leinster and Munster" and his unpaid fines put him firmly out of

favour. On one occasion, after Trim Castle was restored to Walter in 1224, he arrived to find it occupied by rebels. A seven week siege ensued for Walter to reclaim his own castle. Disputes like these would continue for much of his tenure. Walter died in 1241 and with no surviving male heir, his estates were divided between his granddaughters. The important caput of Trim Castle was held by the crown until 1254 when it was restored to Matilda de Lacy and her new husband Geoffery de Geneville.

By no means were the next characters a supporting cast to the de Lacy's. They also played significant roles although they were not in permanent residence at Trim Castle. Matilda's marriage was presumably politically arranged due to her husband's connections in the court of King Henry III. Before de Geneville's appointment Trim Castle had been without a resident Lord for around 13 years and was in need of considerable investment. De Geneville remodelled the tower overlooking the ford in the river into his new private apartments and constructed a new great hall next to it. For the next 30 years, for various





reasons including being on crusade, de Geneville spent little time in Ireland. He was also sent on important diplomatic duties to England, France and Rome. As he was Lord of Trim by right of marriage, once Matilda died in 1304 the estates were passed on to the next heir, their granddaughter Joan and her husband Roger Mortimer, 1st Earl of March.

Trim Castle remained in this wealthy, powerful and influential family's hands for the next 120 years. Roger, like previous owners of Trim Castle, fell out of favour with the English King. Edward II confiscated his lands, imprisoned him in the Tower of London and tried him for treason. Roger escaped and fled to France but returned to assist his mistress, Queen Isabella (Edward II's wife), overthrow her husband and reclaim his lands. He was eventually executed in 1330 by Edward III and it's not until 1347 that Trim was fully restored to Joan. The Mortimers were still significant players in English aristocracy. In 1368, Joan's great grandson Edmund (3rd Earl of March) married Philippa, King Edward III's grand-daughter. Their son Roger (4th Earl of March), due to his noble lineage, became Heir Presumptive to King Richard II's throne and resided at Trim from 1395. Once the Mortimer line ceased in 1425, the lordship of Trim passed to Richard Duke of York



and on his death in 1460 was absorbed into the Royal estates.

Of course this is not the castle's full script, just a quick edit of some of the scenes!

Visiting Trim Castle today it is difficult to imagine these real stories, now hushed by its stony grey silence. Within its walls, there is peace and calm and outside there is still a lively town. Its mark is left in both fact and fiction. Its significance on the physical and political landscape of Ireland can never be disputed, a reminder of how Trim Castle and its owners were once at the forefront of European medieval politics.

Trim Castle. Images © Tourism Ireland.

Nearly 90,000 people came to Trim Castle in 2015 to marvel at its size, to speculate how and why it was constructed and to wonder who were the characters involved. Their stories may not be immortalised on celluloid but they are retold each day by the dedicated team of OPW guides.

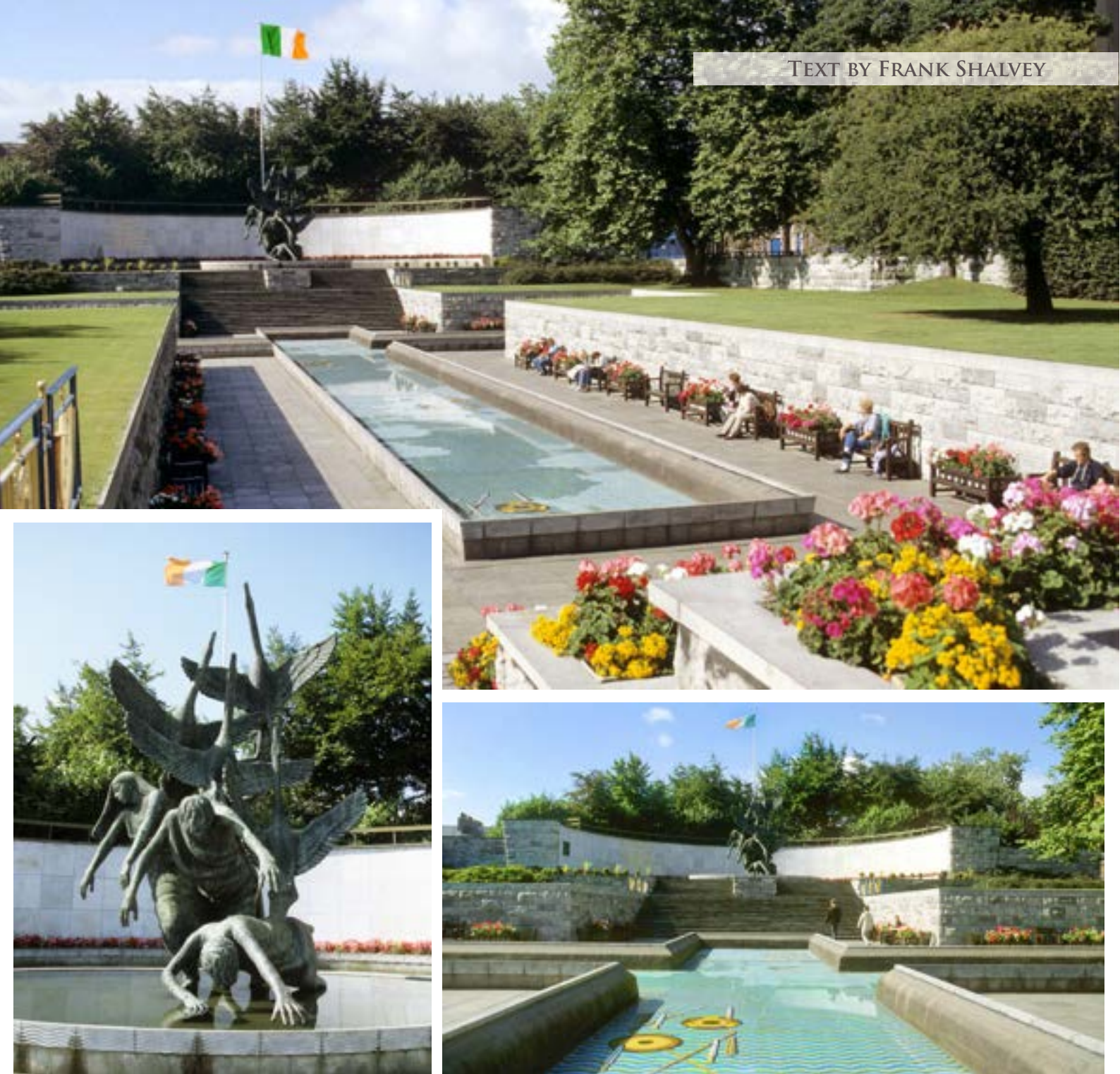
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GARDEN OF REMEMBRANCE

On its 50th anniversary, the Garden of Remembrance in Dublin has just undergone a major facelift carried out by the OPW's Property Maintenance Service to make it ready for the special Commemorations events which will take place there this year.

The Garden of Remembrance / An Gairdín
***Cuimhneacháin* is a special memorial garden located at Parnell Square in Dublin and dedicated to the memory of all those who gave their lives in the cause of Irish Freedom.**

Located in the heart of the City Centre, the Garden provides an oasis of calm and a place for peaceful reflection for the many people who step in from the busy streets that surround it. It has been the place where many generations of Irish people come to think about their past history and remember the patriot dead. It is also an extremely popular venue for foreigners coming to Ireland; one of its most famous visitors was Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II who laid a wreath at the site during her historic official visit to Ireland in May 2011.

The Garden was built in 1966 and opened that year as part of the celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the 1916 Rising by the then President deValera. It was intended to commemorate not just the patriots of the 1916 Rising and the subsequent War of Independence, but also all those who fought for Irish freedom in various Rebellions going back to the United Irishmen uprising in 1798. The Garden was designed by Dáithí Hanly, (who started his career in architecture in the OPW and who later became the Dublin City Architect) in the form of a sunken cruciform water-feature. The site for the Garden at Parnell Square is where the Irish Volunteers were founded in 1913, and the location where several leaders of the 1916 Rising were held overnight before being taken to Kilmainham Gaol, later to be executed.

The design of the Garden contains a number of striking features; the bed of the water pool - known as the Reflecting Pool - features a number of intricate mosaic designs, including representations of broken spears, swords and other instruments of battle; this reflects the pagan Celtic custom, at the end of conflict, to break all weapons and cast them into the river to signify the end of hostilities. The main focal point in the Garden and which draws every eye however is a dramatic statue of the Children of Lir by Sculptor Oisín Kelly, symbolising rebirth and resurrection, which was added at the western end of the Garden in 1971.

Other features were also added after the initial 50th anniversary opening; in 1976, a contest was held to find a poem which could capture some of the inspiration of the struggle for national freedom and sacrifice it entailed. The eventual winner was author Liam Mac Uistín, whose poem "We Saw a Vision", is now written in Irish, French, and English on the stone wall of the monument.

Though the Garden was always maintained to the best possible standard, in more recent times it reflected its constant use throughout its 50 years of history and a series of projects was undertaken in the last few years to give it a major facelift and provide some new facilities in time for the centenary commemorations.



Facing page: **Garden of Remembrance, Parnell Square, Dublin and Children of Lir Statue.**

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Above: **Mosaic feature in the Reflecting Pool at the Garden of Remembrance.** Source:- en.wikipedia.org/creativecommons

A new entrance at the northern side of the Garden had already been provided in 2007 and this was added to by the provision of a special Universal Access lift, allowing visitors of limited mobility to enter the sunken Garden site more easily. Universally-accessible toilets were also provided located at the eastern end. Major renovation work was also carried out to the asphalt tanking of the Reflecting Pool and the mosaic tiling was restored and conserved to enhance its

vibrancy and colour. Granite paving around the Pool was repointed and rebedded, and coping stones were renewed, ensuring that the presentation of the site is to the best possible standard.

The single most dramatic and eye-catching feature in the Garden is the Children of Lir statue which is located on a plinth at the western end. This statue, cast in bronze, was cleaned and restored and was fully sealed in a glaze to provide it with protection against weathering and to ensure that it continues to look its best for years to come.

The Garden of Remembrance will host a special wreath-laying event, attended by the President, Michael D. Higgins, on Easter Saturday, 26th March. The ceremony will open with a cultural piece, which will include readings, music and poetry, and a plaque will be unveiled inscribed with a specially commissioned poem to commemorate the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising.

The second half of the ceremony will comprise the formal State Commemoration of the Irish Volunteers who gave their lives during the Rising. It will include the wreath-laying ceremony followed by a minute of silent reflection, a piper's lament and the raising of the National Flag to full mast.

Thanks to the work carried out by the OPW, the restored and rejuvenated Garden will continue to provide a very fitting place this year for all the various tributes, both public and personal, to the 1916 dead. However, every visitor will, should they choose, surely find added inspiration in the beautiful lines of the Mac Uistín poem inscribed on the walls all around:

"We Saw A Vision"

IN THE DARKNESS OF DESPAIR, WE SAW A VISION,
WE LIT THE LIGHT OF HOPE AND IT WAS NOT EXTINGUISHED.
IN THE DESERT OF DISCOURAGEMENT, WE SAW A VISION.
WE PLANTED A TREE OF VALOUR AND IT BLOSSOMED.

IN THE WINTER OF BONDAGE WE SAW A VISION.
WE MELTED THE SNOW OF LETHARGY AND THE RIVER OF
RESURRECTION FLOWED FROM IT.
WE SENT OUR VISION ASWIM LIKE A SWAN ON THE RIVER.
THE VISION BECAME A REALITY.

WINTER BECAME SUMMER.
BONDAGE BECAME FREEDOM AND THIS WE LEFT TO YOU
AS YOUR INHERITANCE.
O GENERATIONS OF FREEDOM REMEMBER US,
THE GENERATIONS OF THE VISION.

"An Aisling"

I NDORCHACHT AN ÉADÓCHAIS RINNEADH AISLING DÚINN.
LASAMAR SOLAS AN DÓCHAIS AGUS NÍOR MÚCHADH É.
I BHFÁSACH AN LAGMHISNIGH RINNEADH AISLING DÚINN.
CHUIREAMAR CRANN NA CRÓGACHTA AGUS THÁINIG BLÁTH AIR.

I NGEIMHREADH NA DAOIRSE RINNEADH AISLING DÚINN.
MHEILEAMAR SNEACHTA NA TÁIMHE
AGUS RICH ABHAINN NA HATHBHEOCHANA AS.
CHUIREAMAR ÁR N-AISLING AG SNÁMH MAR EALA AR AN ABHAINN.
RINNEADH FÍRINNE DEN AISLING.

RINNEADH SAMHRADH DEN GHEIMHREADH.
RINNEADH SAOIRSE DEN DAOIRSE AGUS D'FHÁGAMAR
AGAIBHSE MAR OIDHREACHT Í.
A GHLÁNTA NA SAOIRSE CUIMHNÍGÍ ORAINNE,
GLÁNTA NA HAISLINGE.

EXHIBITION

The 1916 Rising in St. Stephen's Green Park

Significant figures in Irish History including Commandant Michael Mallin, Countess Markievicz and members of the Irish Citizen Army and Cumann na mBan took over St. Stephen's Green on the 24th April 1916, for a number of days, as part of the Rising in Dublin. Trenches were dug, barricades were set-up, a field hospital established in the bandstand for the wounded volunteers, prisoners secured in the potting sheds and the Green thus became a battlefield in the centre of Dublin, 100 years ago.

Next month over twenty beautifully illustrated exhibition panels tell the story of these significant events that helped change the course of Irish history.

An interesting aspect of this exhibition is the key role women played in the rising including Dr Kathleen Lynn, Sergeant Madeleine ffrench Mullen and Nora O Daly among others.

A number of civilians were injured or killed around St. Stephen's Green, many of whom had come out to watch events as they unfolded. Nearby, Mercers Hospital recorded 16 dead and 278 wounded civilians.

On a lighter note, a ceasefire took place daily, to allow Park Superintendent, James Kearney to feed the ducks on the lake in the Green.

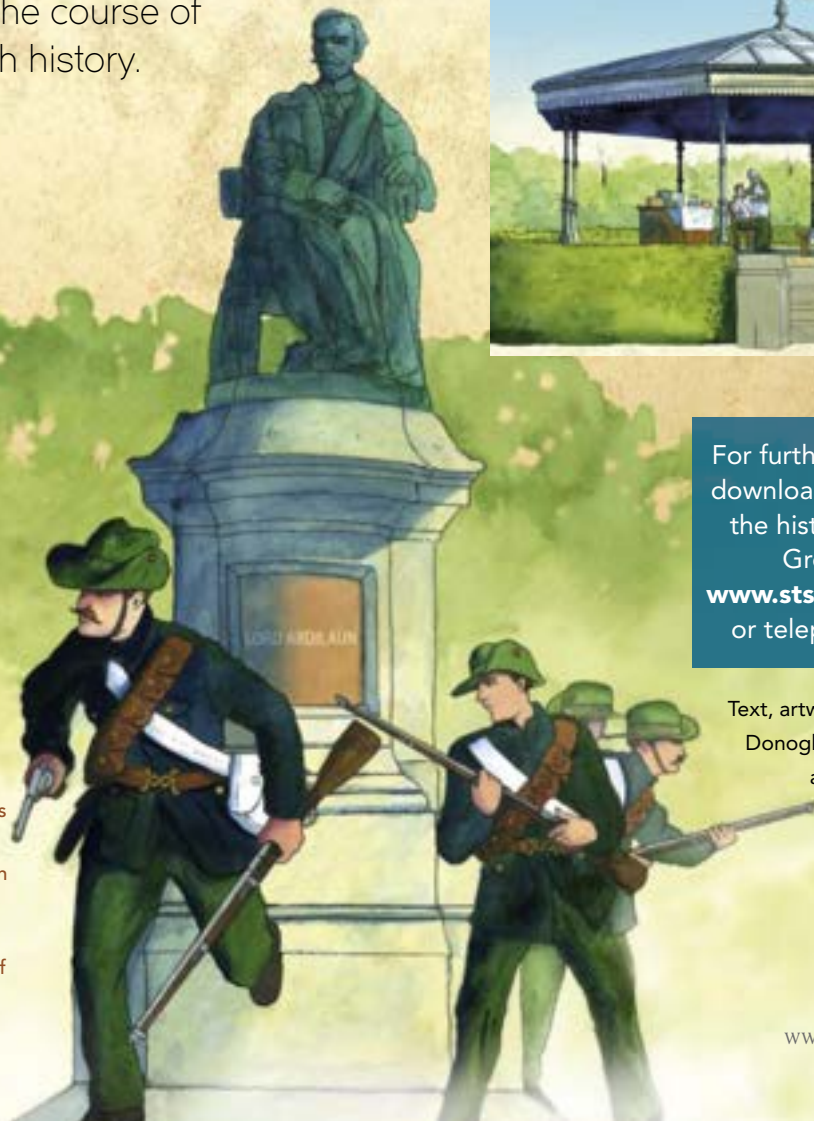


For further information and to download a free audio app on the history of St. Stephen's Green Park, check www.ststephensgreenpark.ie or telephone 01-4757816.

Text, artwork and design by Gerry Donoghue, Margaret Gormley and Paul Francis.

▶ *Inset image:* A Field Hospital was established, at the Bandstand, as part of the St Stephen's Green garrison during the 1916 Rising.

▶ *Right:* Volunteers at the statue of Lord Ardilaun in St. Stephen's Green Park, 24th April 1916





Opening of Magazine Fort Phoenix Park, Dublin

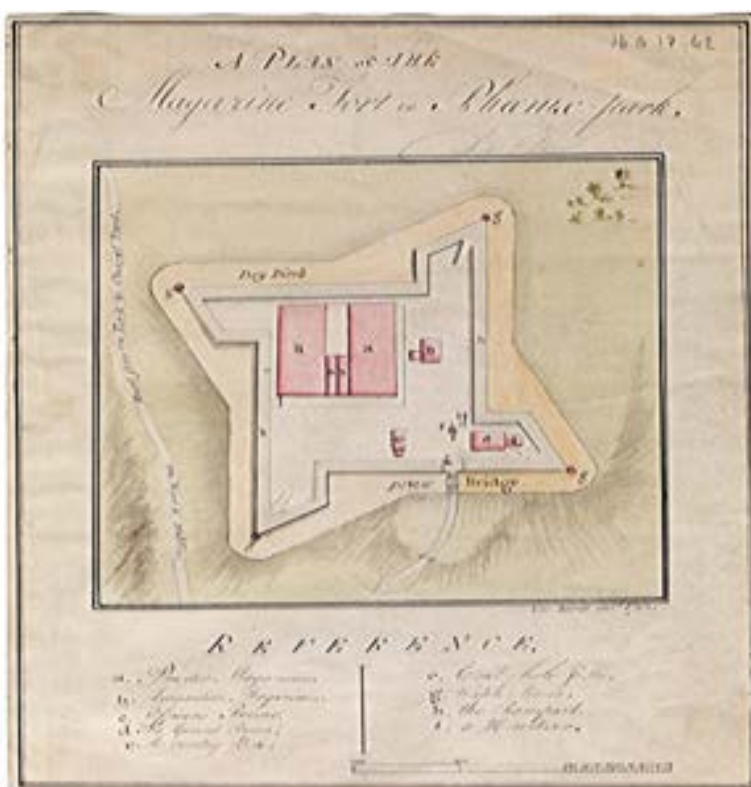
TEXT BY MARGARET GORMLEY

The attack on the Royal Magazine Fort was intended by the IRB Military Council (which planned the Easter Rising) to act as a dramatic prelude to the wider rebellion in Dublin. It was intended that the destruction of the Magazine Fort, which was timed to coincide with the opening attack on Dublin Castle and the occupation of other targets in the city centre, would be heard throughout the city. The final arrangements for the attack were confirmed on Easter Sunday by James Connolly, in his capacity as 'Commandant General' in overall command of the 'Army of the Irish Republic' in Dublin.

The Magazine Fort is located on the site of the 'House of the Phoenix', which was the principal residence of the rulers of Ireland from c1618 onwards. Henry Cromwell, brother of Oliver once lived here. The present Fort was built in 1734/35 and extended in 1801 by the renowned architect, Francis Johnston.

One of the first casualties of the Rising was the shooting in the back of George Playfair, the twenty three year old son of the Commandant of the Fort by Gar Holohan. The attack on the Magazine Fort was not a success as the rebels could not access the 'high-explosives' store and thus the spectacular explosion did not transpire as was hoped by the leaders of the Rising.

For the first time in its history, the OPW will be opening the Magazine Fort on a limited basis, to the public by guided tour, this summer. Full details of dates and times will be on www.phoenixpark.ie from late May onwards.





COMMEMORATIVE TREE AVENUE: *Phoenix Park, Dublin*

TEXT BY MARGARET GORMLEY

A Commemorative avenue of 146 Plane trees was planted in late 2015 and early 2016 on the Furze Road within the Phoenix Park, by the OPW, as a living Memorial in honour of those who lost their lives during the early period of the twentieth century.





The one kilometre long Avenue of specimen trees on the western section of the park, with its distant views of the Dublin mountains, has two dedicated picnic areas and access for all is an integral part of the scheme.

The Avenue commemorates the significant events in Irish history that took place between 1912 and 1922. This period was one of the most eventful in Ireland's history, from the campaign for Home Rule, through World War One and the Easter Rising of 1916, to the foundation of the Free State. Commissioner John McMahon supported the concept of the Avenue, "The avenue will be a permanent living memorial to the seismic events of the period 1912-1922 in Ireland and elsewhere".



Check www.phoenixpark.ie for further information on the Phoenix Park and Visitor Centre.



◀ Facing page: Commemorative Avenue showing Phoenix Park Staff and OPW Commissioner John McMahon planting one of the 146 trees on the Avenue in Phoenix Park.

▶ Top: Estimated growth pattern of trees over 100 years.

Centre: Tree planting event for children.

Right: Phoenix Park Visitors Centre with Ashtown Castle in background, situated in the centre part of the Phoenix Park.



Exhibitions

AT THE NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDENS GLASNEVIN

March to May 2016

**Saturday 27th February – Sunday
17th April**

BONSAI AT THE BOTANIC GARDENS

An extensive exhibition of Bonsai from Andrew J. Murray's collection will be on display in the Teak House throughout March and into April. Watch the Bonsai burst back into life, displaying the splendid spring foliage of maples, flowering quince, cherries, as well as many other interesting bonsai.

Daily in the Teak House



**Sunday 28th February – Sunday
13th March**

TREE WEEK EXHIBITION: POST COLONY

Post Colony is a comprehensive exhibition by artist Gareth Kennedy showing large format charcoal drawings, a series of photographs by the project photographer Brian Cregan, and wood turned objects made from the wood of the invasive species, *Rhododendron x superponticum*. First introduced to Ireland in the 1700s as an ornamental plant, this plant has become deeply problematic throughout Ireland and within Killarney National Park. With its prolific purple flowers, this 'terrible beauty' has become iconic in the Park and when it is in full bloom, it is much admired by thousands of visitors annually. However, there is a darker side to this plant with its insidious effects on native biodiversity, and it is particularly a significant threat on the ancient native oak woodlands. For the past thirty years, there has been an ongoing constant battle to eradicate this plant from the National Park.

Daily in the Gallery, Education and Visitor Centre

**Thursday 17th March – Sunday
3rd April**

EXHIBITION: - VISIONS OF SKELLIG – LIFE ON THE ATLANTIC EDGE



An exhibition of photographs by Mark O'Callaghan offering new perspectives on the unique World Heritage site of Skellig Michael, 12km off the Kerry coast.

For centuries, the Skellig rocks have represented the ends of the earth and the extremes of human settlement and endurance. Though today the monastic cells and lighthouses stand empty, the rocks are teeming with bird and plant life amidst the ruins and isolation, and remain a magnetic presence on the horizon. While living and working as a guide on Skellig during the summer of 2014, Mark availed of the opportunity to capture many rarely seen sights, magnificent sunsets, and early morning shots in this amazing site.

Daily in the Gallery Space, Education and Visitor Centre

Friday 8th April – Sunday 24th April

1916 SACKVILLE STREET: REMEMBERING 262 CIVILIANS THROUGH ART

There were more civilians killed in the 1916 Easter Rising than Irish Volunteers or British soldiers. Of the 485 people who died, 262 were civilians. These men, women and children have no memorial and lie in graves, some forgotten, until now..

The objective of the 1916 Sackville Street Art Project (now known as O'Connell Street, Dublin) is to hold an exhibition to commemorate the lives of these ordinary civilians that were killed in the 1916 Easter Rising. The aim of the Art Project is to tell their story. Schools, educational groups, youth groups and individuals were invited to create a 3D house from any art form to represent a civilian that was killed during the 1916 Rising and where possible to provide a brief historical profile of that civilian and/or the art project.

The response was overwhelming and led to this unique exhibition honouring the lives of those who were lost in 1916. This initiative is the brain child of ceramic Artist Ciara O'Keefe.



Further information on the project:
<http://www.1916sackvillestreet.com/>

Daily in the Gallery Space, Education and Visitor Centre

Friday 29th April – Wednesday 1st June IRISH CERAMICS AT THE GARDENS

The largest most comprehensive exhibition of Irish ceramics will be held at the National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin from Friday 29th April to Wednesday 1st June.

The exhibition will include some 60 ceramic artists from Ireland both north and south. Eight artists have specially selected to create exclusive works inspired by the Gardens to be made available on the opening night of the exhibition.

There will be over 190 works in the exhibition by award winning ceramicists including Jim Turner, Pat Connor, Etain Hickey, Ana Duncan, Eileen Singleton, Grainne Watts, Brigit Beemster, Michael Moore and Mandy Parslow.

This exhibition will be unique in the history of the State in showcasing the creative talents of the very best of Irish Ceramic sculptors who have received multiple national and international awards. further information: irishceramics.org

Daily in the Gallery Space, Education and Visitor Centre



Further Details : 01 8570909 or email botanicgardens@opw.ie

In the Shadow of the Castle

Dublin Castle in 1916

Exhibition: Apr to Aug '16

Dublin Castle was the heart of British Rule in Ireland for over 700 years, and in 1916 it too played its part in the events that were to shape a country's future.

From the first deaths in the Easter Rising to the Castle's attempts to curb public assembly in its aftermath, this exhibition focuses on a building that was for many a symbol of an unwanted Empire in the heart of their city.'

The exhibition will run from April to August 2016.



'Rising'

Rising is a major photographic exhibition which showcases the National Library's rich imagery of the events and locations of 1916.

Rising draws on some of the most important collections of photographs at the National Library. It includes images from the Keogh Collection, the Independent Newspapers (Ireland) Collection and newly digitised photographs from the De Valera Collection, and various 1916 albums. It consists of 60 photographs, including a number of large scale photographs which emphasise the Rising's impact on Dublin's city centre. These images are enhanced by audio recordings of actors reading from selected letters and diaries detailing first-hand accounts of the Rising.

Who were the men and women affected by the Rising? How did Dublin look during Easter Week 1916, as fighting raged and buildings fell? What kind of landscape was left after the surrender?

See it all at the National Photographic Archive, Meeting House Square, Temple Bar, Dublin 2.

Rising is free to visit, and is open seven days weekly: Monday to Saturday 10am to 5pm and 12noon to 5pm on Sundays.

The exhibition runs in the National Photographic Archive until the end of October 2016.



EXPLORE IRELAND'S HERITAGE

BUY A HERITAGE CARD



Main pic: Evening sun at Newgrange (©Tourism Ireland).

L-R: Aughnacree Castle, Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre, Glendalough Visitor Centre, Kilkenny Castle.

€25.00

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Stonebreakers Yard at Kilmainham Gaol

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