



**Maynooth University's Decade of Commemorations Committee
in association with the Department of History presents**

REMEMBERING 1919

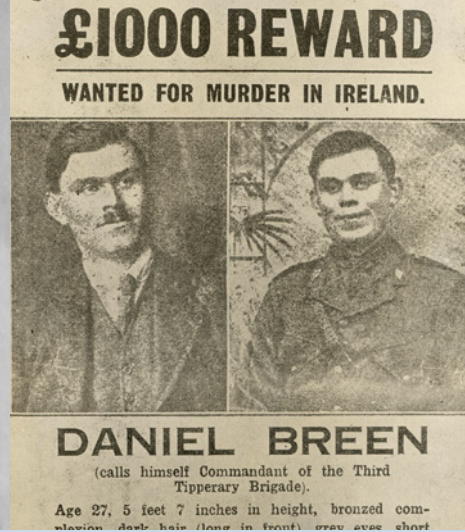
WAR, POLITICS & SPORT IN REVOLUTIONARY IRELAND

Saturday 28 September 2019

Renehan Hall, South Campus, Maynooth University

Conference convenors: Terence Dooley & Marian Lyons





CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

9.00 Registration (tea/coffee on arrival)

9.30 Welcome

Session 1 Chair: Prof R V Comerford

9.45 **Tom Nelson** *Class tensions and conflicted allegiances in Kildare in 1919*

10.15 **Terence Dooley** *'Sunday last will go down in history as the day of days for Kildare': The 1919 All-Ireland Final*

10.45 **Ciaran Reilly** *James 'Ginger' Moran (1889-1987): From full-back to IRA leader*

11.15 Coffee

Session 2 Chair: Prof Terence Dooley

11.45 **Aogán Ó Fearghail** *Gaelic Sunday, 1918 and its consequences*

12.15 **Dónal McAnallen** *Northern revolution: The GAA in Ulster in a radical year*

12.45 Q&A

1.00-2.00 Lunch in Pugin Hall

Session 3 Chair: Prof Marian Lyons

2.00 **Liz Gillis** *Soloheadbeg and the IRA Campaign against the RIC*

2.30 **Brian Hughes** *'I refused payment': Dáil Éireann local government and rate collection, 1919-22*

3.00 **Ailbhe Rogers** *'It was only women who could appreciate the small pin-pricks': Irish republican women in 1919*

3.30 Q&A

ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES OF CONTRIBUTORS

R V Comerford

Vincent Comerford is a native of Tipperary and a graduate of Maynooth (NUI) and Trinity College Dublin. He taught history at Maynooth for more than thirty years and was Professor of Modern History from 1989 to 2010.

Terence Dooley

'Sunday last will go down in history as the day of days for Kildare': The 1919 All-Ireland Final

This lecture is about a football match, the 1919 All-Ireland Final in which Kildare defeated Galway. While it is set in the wider historical context of great political and social change, it is primarily about a group of men who were more interested in the GAA as a sporting organisation than an organisation with revolutionary potential or intent.

Professor Terence Dooley is Director of the Centre for the Study of Historic Irish Houses and Estates, History Department, Maynooth University. His latest book is *The Irish Revolution 1912-23: Monaghan* (2017). He is a lifelong GAA enthusiast.

Liz Gillis

Soloheadbeg and the IRA Campaign against the RIC

On 21 January 1919, the First Dáil met in Dublin's Mansion House. That very same day Volunteers of the Third Tipperary Brigade ambushed an RIC patrol escorting a consignment of gelignite to a Soloheadbeg quarry. Two policemen were killed in an incident which later came to be regarded as marking the beginning of the War of Independence.

Who were the participants in the incident? What were the Volunteers' motivations for the attack? What was the public and political reaction to the Soloheadbeg ambush? These are some of the questions to be addressed by Liz Gillis who will also examine the subsequent conflict between the IRA and the RIC during the War of Independence.

Historian and author Liz Gillis works as a researcher for the History Show on RTE Radio. She is a lecturer at Champlain College, Dublin, and runs the 'Revolution in Dublin Walking Tours'. She is also the historical consultant for the new Hyatt Centric: The Liberties Hotel, scheduled to open in 2019. She was a curatorial assistant in RTE researching the Easter Rising, and was a tour guide for many years in Kilmainham Gaol. She is the author of six books about the Irish Revolution including, *Women of the Irish Revolution*, and *The Hales Brothers and the Irish Revolution*. In 2018 Liz was a recipient of the Lord Mayor's Award for her contribution to history.





Brian Hughes

'I refused payment': Dáil Éireann local government and rate collection, 1919–22

One of the more ambitious experiments carried out by the underground Dáil Éireann after its formation in 1919 was its takeover of local government. In April of that year, W.T. Cosgrave was appointed Minister for Local Government, with Kevin O'Higgins later becoming his assistant. By 1920, their department was instructing local authorities to declare allegiance to Dáil Éireann and cease communication with the British Local Government Board.

This paper will focus firstly on the efforts of republican separatists to create their counter-state during 1919, before dealing specifically with local government and the thorny issue of poor rate collection. When the British decided to deal with the subversion of local bodies by withdrawing grants and advances, the rates – which already accounted for 80 per cent of county council revenue in 1918-19 – became the main source of funding for local services and schemes. It had, therefore, to be both collected and protected by the Dáil system (and the IRA). This created a series of dilemmas and difficulties for administrators, rate collectors, and ratepayers, dilemmas and difficulties that often transcended political allegiance.

Dr Brian Hughes, a graduate of Maynooth University and Trinity College Dublin, is a lecturer in the Department of History at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. His most recent publications include *Defying the IRA? Intimidation, Coercion, and Communities during the Irish Revolution* (Liverpool, 2016).

Marian Lyons

Marian Lyons is Professor of History at Maynooth University and Chair of the University's Decade of Commemorations Committee. She is joint-editor of The Irish Revolution series (Four Courts Press) and honorary editor of the *Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society*.

Dónal McAnallen

Northern revolution: The GAA in Ulster in a radical year

The revolution unfolding in Ireland in 1919 was played out on Gaelic games playing fields as well as in committee rooms. This talk will examine how the GAA administration tried to keep in step with the establishment of the First Dáil and the declaration of Irish independence, though not always with universal approval. In particular, it will outline how the decision of the Central Council to ban oath-taking civil servants from membership generated strong resistance and even rumours of a secession from Ulster. Attention will be paid to the roles of leading republicans such as Harry Boland, James Nowlan and Luke O'Toole in Dublin, and the advent of Owen O'Duffy and Seamus Dobbyn to leadership of the Ulster Council. The talk will also explore the rapid entanglement of Sinn Féin and the Irish Volunteers with the GAA at local level and its consequences for the association as the War of Independence intensified.

Dr Dónal McAnallen works as a Community Engagement Officer for National Museums NI. His published works include *The Cups That Cheered: A History of the Sigerson, Fitzgibbon and Higher Education Gaelic Games* (2012); *The Evolution of the GAA: Ulaidh, Éire agus Eile* (2009); *Reflections on the Revolution in Ulster* (2015);

and the memoir, *The Pursuit of Perfection* (2017). A History graduate of Queen's University and NUI Galway, he has worked as a magazine editor, teacher and lecturer, and on several development and outreach projects with the Cardinal Ó Fiaich Library and Archive, Armagh. He is currently the Irish-language editor of *Dúiche Néill*, a member of the GAA's National History Committee, and cultural officer for his local GAA club, An Eaglais.

Tom Nelson

Class tensions and conflicted allegiances in Kildare in 1919

1919 began with mixed feelings and challenges for the people of Kildare. There was joy that the Great War had ended, but sadness for those whose sons or husbands or fathers did not return from the conflict. The ones who made it home had unexpected realities to contend with. The influenza epidemic was still impacting the county and causing worry and grief. The welcome home was diluted somewhat by the Sinn Féin election victory in December 1918. The formation of the Dáil provoked both inspiration and apprehension depending on one's social position or political inclination.

This paper will look at the lived experience of the people of Kildare under the competing authorities of the revolutionary Dáil and the imperial government in Dublin Castle during 1919. Serious strikes and/or lockouts crippled agriculture during the summer as farm labourers sought to benefit from the profits made by farmers during the war. Likewise, local authority employees demanded, and got, increases to compensate for the steep rise in living costs.

People coped with these challenges in the usual way, by getting on with the daily struggle to make a living and diverting themselves with a combination of traditional dances, balls, sports and an emerging new source of entertainment, the cinema. In January 1919, Naas Town Hall was leased to a cinema company to show movies every Friday, Saturday and Sunday for the coming year. The first film shown was Charlie Chaplin's *It's a Dog's Life*. No doubt many of the patrons could relate to that title.

Dr Tom Nelson is a native of Maynooth and is a retired History and English teacher. In 1985, his BA History extended essay was published as *The land war in County Kildare* (1985). In 2007, he completed a PhD thesis on the history of Kildare County Council which was subsequently published as *Through Peace and War: Kildare County Council in the Years of Revolution 1899-1926* (2015, supported by Kildare County Council's decade of commemoration committee).

Aogán Ó Fearghail

Gaelic Sunday, 1918 and its consequences

On Sunday, 4 August 1918, an estimated 100,000 people attended Gaelic games all over Ireland, in protest by the GAA against a British government edict under the Defence of the Realm Act that demanded permits had to be sought for all public events. The protest had its roots in an earlier incident when on Sunday 8 July 1918, the Royal Irish Constabulary, backed up by a party of British soldiers occupied the venue for





the Ulster semi-final between Cavan and Armagh at Cootehill. The Ulster GAA secretary, Eoin O'Duffy, refused to seek a permit and the police inspector refused to allow the game to proceed. O'Duffy and the match referee, Dan Hogan, brother of Michael Hogan, who was to be killed in Croke Park on Bloody Sunday, November 1920, decided to abandon the match.

This presentation will focus on the background to the events at Cootehill in July 1918, the actions of O'Duffy and Hogan, and why the GAA Central Council embraced the idea to organise a national demonstration. It will examine the consequences as Ireland headed into a general election in November 1918 that would lead to the establishment of the First Dáil Éireann in January 1919, the same month that the War of Independence began.

Aogán Ó Fearghail is former President of the GAA, having served from 2015 to 2018. Prior to this, he served at every level of GAA administration. He is a native of Maudabawn, Cootehill, Co. Cavan. A former primary school principal, he is currently a school placement tutor with Dublin City University. Aogán has researched and published extensively on the local history of his native area and county. For ten years, he was director of an innovative heritage and educational cultural centre in Maudabawn. He is a regular contributor at conferences and seminars on historical and heritage topics.

Ciaran Reilly

James 'Ginger' Moran (1889-1987): From full-back to IRA leader

Standing at five feet six inches tall, James 'Ginger' Moran was considered one of the smallest full-backs in GAA history, but despite his diminutive stature he played a crucial role in Kildare's All Ireland success of 1919. In the same year, his arrival in Edenderry, County Offaly (then King's County) revitalised a flagging Volunteer battalion. As part of a 'Council of Elders', Moran played an important role in the War of Independence on the Offaly/Kildare border and was seriously wounded in one engagement with the military in November 1920. In the aftermath of the war, Moran became chairman of the local branch of the Old IRA, helping to heal many of the bitter Civil War wounds. James 'Ginger' Moran remained in Edenderry, where he owned a successful bicycle shop, until his death in 1987. He was the second last surviving member of the Kildare 1919 All-Ireland winning team.

Dr Ciarán Reilly is an historian of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ireland based at Maynooth University. He is author of a number of books including *Capard: an Irish country house and estate* (forthcoming, Dublin, 2019); *Strokestown and the Great Irish Famine* (Dublin, 2014); *The Irish Land Agent, 1830-1860: The Case of King's County* (Dublin, 2014); *John Plunket Joly and the Great Famine in King's County* (Dublin, 2012) and *Edenderry, County Offaly and the Downshire estate 1790-1800* (Dublin, 2007).

Ailbhe Rogers

'It was only women who could appreciate the small pin-pricks': Irish republican women in 1919

This paper will seek to address the role of women in the major events of 1919 and the Irish War of Independence through the lens of female veterans' military service pensions and witness statements

to the Bureau of Military History. The majority of women who participated in the struggle were members of Cumann na mBan but a minority, who were key to the republican intelligence network, were frequently asked by local IRA officers not to officially join the organisation. In comparison to the Easter Rising, women took a more auxiliary but no less important role in the 1919-1921 conflict. However, the relationship between the IRA and female combatants was not always harmonious. In terms of IRA military operations, women excelled in the planning and aftermath stages and in 1919 were connected to activities such as scouting, first-aid, fund-raising, the acquisition of arms and intelligence and the transport and safeguarding of arms, despatches and men on the run.

Ailbhe Rogers is a PhD candidate at Maynooth University working under the supervision of Prof Terence Dooley. Her thesis is entitled 'Nationalist women in County Louth, 1900-1924'. Her writing credits include a chapter in Donal Hall and Martin Maguire (eds.) *County Louth and the Irish revolution* (Dublin, 2017). She has also contributed to *An Cosantóir*, *Archaeology Ireland* and *Reveille*. She has worked as a tour guide at Kilmainham Gaol Museum and as a researcher for Louth and Monaghan County Councils, the Centre for the Study of Historic Irish Houses and Estates at MU, and the Expert Advisory Group on Commemorations.

CONTACT AND BOOKING INFORMATION FOR THE CONFERENCE

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/news-events/remembering-1919-war-politics-sport>

<https://www.eventbrite.ie/o/maynooth-university-24334200315?s=103366786>

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