

# Bonnets, BANDOLIERS

..... A N D .....

# Ballot Papers



TEACHER'S NOTES

**museum**

National Museum of Ireland  
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

Decorative Arts & History

## BONNETS, BANDOLIERS & BALLOT PAPERS

**These Teacher's Notes have been created in order to aid the teaching and interpretation of the *Bonnets, Bandoliers and Ballot Papers* virtual tour.**

### **The virtual tour aims to**

- Present an engaging and thought-provoking learning resource based around the changing roles of women in late 19th and early 20th century Ireland and the National Museum of Ireland's expansive collection of artefacts and images.
- Enable students to learn about what life was like for many women in Ireland in the late 1800s, and the efforts that were made, both peacefully and violently, to create a more equal society.
- Provoke discussion and reflection upon key themes and questions from this period.
- Help advance an understanding of the roles that women played during the Revolutionary period in Ireland – including the First World War, 1916 Easter Rising and the War of Independence.
- Develop students appreciation for material culture and its importance in our understanding and interpretation of history.



*Anti-suffragette postcard,  
copyright of a private collector*

### **In creating this guide, we aim to provide teachers with the following learning tools and aids:**

- Further information about the key artefacts on each stop of the virtual tour, as well as a brief historical context.
- Potential discussion points in order to aid classroom discussion, and to suggest possible solo and group activities for students to engage in, which will enhance their understanding of the material presented.
- Information about the relevant curriculum links, highlighting why each section of the tour was chosen and to explain what we hope to achieve for students at each location.

## Themes

Throughout the virtual tour, there will be various themes explored, which will create a clearer picture of this period in Irish history for students.

These include, but are not limited to:

1. The significance of clothing in society, both as expressions of conformity, respectability and activism.
2. The experiences of women in conflict, in particular World War One, the 1916 Easter Rising and the War of Independence.
3. The importance of voting and having the power to vote.
4. The campaign for suffrage and equality in Ireland at the beginning of the 20th Century.

## Curriculum Links

### Post-Primary History

#### Junior Cycle:

- ‘Development of Historical Consciousness’
- ‘Working with Evidence’
- ‘Acquiring the “big picture”’
- ‘The History of Ireland’

### Post-Primary History

#### Senior Cycle:

- ‘Working with Evidence’
- ‘Movements for political and social reform, 1870-1914’
- ‘The pursuit of sovereignty and the impact of partition, 1912-1949’

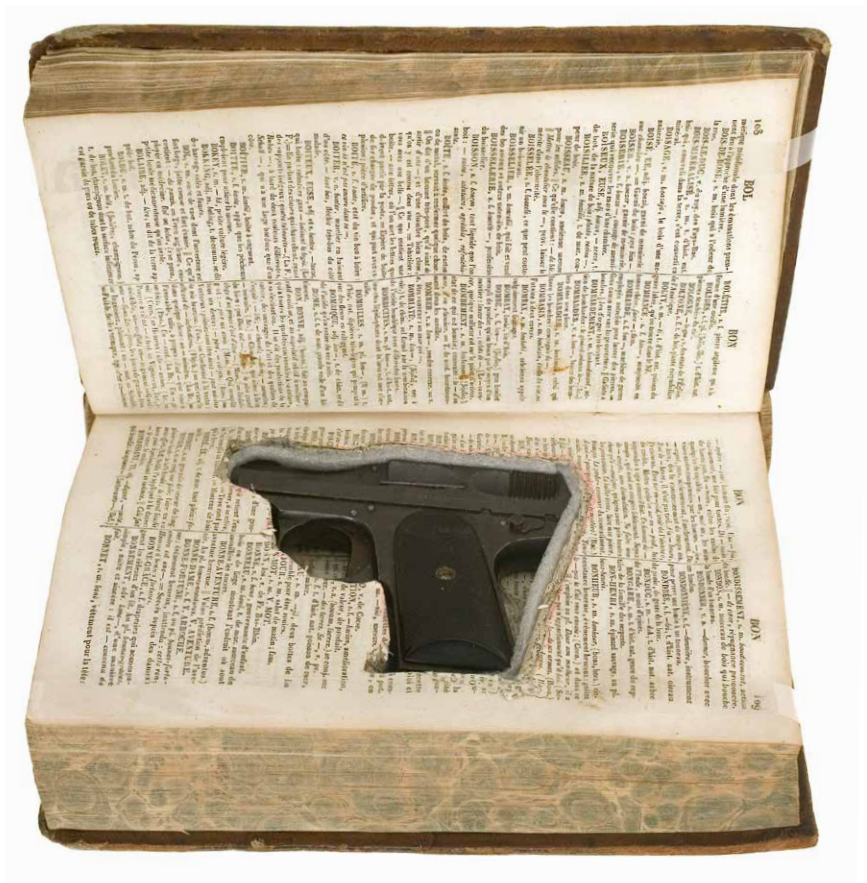
#### Other Curriculum links include:

- Visual Art (posters, banners, postcards)
- English (letters, letter writing)

## Artefacts

Central to the ‘Bonnets, Bandoliers and Ballot Papers’ virtual tour is the importance of artefacts, and the key role that they play in telling the history of the period, as well individual stories which can engage young people and bring history to life. The virtual tour presents the history of the changing roles of women through artefacts, offering students a different experience when it comes to learning about this formative period in Irish history.

*Automatic pistol, concealed in a book.  
HE:EW.4347*



## DRESS CODES IN 1800S IRELAND

At the end of the 19th Century, women's roles were narrow and defined by respectability and conformity; they were expected to be in the home and motherhood was their most important role in society.

Clothes give us a unique insight into the daily lives of individuals; it is possible to tell a lot about the roles of women through the clothing that they wore. For example, women were expected to cover their heads outside of the home. Servant women would have to wear a bonnet at all times.

For middle-class women, clothing could at times be literally restrictive. Arm movement was restricted by newly designed sleeves, rib-cages were compressed to the perceived 'required shape', and neatness was so important that one Irish newspaper reported that it would be better that men 'hang themselves' as opposed to marry a woman who wore loose shoes. For poorer women, clothes were often expected to last a lifetime and would be passed down through generations.

*Group of six women gathered at steps outside Clonbrock House, Co. Galway, 1860 – 1870.*

Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.



## DRESS CODES IN 1800S IRELAND

### ARTEFACTS



#### **Mrs Doyle's Day Dress**

The day dress presented in the film was made in 1873 and belonged to Mrs Doyle, who was the wife of Peter Doyle, the owner of Doyle's pub in Phibsborough, Dublin. She proudly wore this dress after each of her 10 children were born. This dress was worn as part of 'at home' visiting. This was a ritual of social calling that was seen as an essential duty of women in Ireland, even in smaller towns. There were regular formal 'at home' afternoon teas for their friends and acquaintances. The at Home was announced by leaving a calling card in the hall of a neighbour invited on the day.



#### **Mourning Gown**

This dress was made in Dublin, in about 1885. It is a two-piece satin gown (purchased with an extra bodice for evening wear). The dress belonged to a Mrs Freeman of Waterloo Rd. Dublin and she wore this after her husband's death. The death of a husband required the widow to either buy a new set of ready-made clothes or to have a set of old clothes dyed black.

## DRESS CODES IN 1800S IRELAND

### IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*You must act, speak, and live, and dress in society as a Christian woman...Do you go to God's house in the morning, dressed like a Christian woman, and to the opera in the evening, dressed like a shameless heathen?*

Source: *Women's Work in Modern Society* (London, 1874). Margaret Anna Cusack, known as the Nun of Kenmare, speaks about societal expectations for women and the importance of the guidance of religion.

*The true mother has no thought of self: all her life, all her love, are given to her husband and children, and after them, and because of them, to all and everything that have next most need of her....the Madonna and the Child, that should be the first and most sacred objects of every household, and about every hearthstone.*

Source: 'The mother', *The Irish Monthly*, 91 (1913). Nora Tynan O'Mahony criticises the emerging 'new woman' and suggests that this has led to the disappearance of traditional values.



*Two women looking on as Augusta Crofton plays with Ursula Mahon in her pram (1907)*

Image Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

## DRESS CODES IN 1800S IRELAND

### IN THE CLASSROOM



- What does the priest's reaction to Maria Sweeney's dress tell us about the power and influence of the Catholic Church at this time? How do you think the residents of Ballymote would have reacted to Maria in the days after the mass?
- How does 'At Home' visiting differ from social gatherings now? Think about how we communicate with each other nowadays; what would be some of the key differences?
- What differences were there in the mourning ritual between men and women?



- Write a diary entry from the perspective of Maria Sweeney the night after she attended mass. What do you think she might have been feeling about the dress, the priest and her community after this incident?
- 'Clothing can be used as a form of forced conformity'. Organize a classroom debate based around this topic

## THE CELTIC REVIVAL AND THE DUN EMER GUILD

The Gaelic League was founded on 31 July 1892 to promote and develop the Irish language, as well as customs, traditions and sports in Ireland. It aimed to include all Irish people, regardless of religion or political loyalties. It organised concerts, plays and céilís, held Irish classes for all ages, and created a weekly Irish-language newspaper called *An Claidheamh Soluis*.

The League became a location for women to engage in crafts and gave them a socially acceptable way of being outside their homes. They could now also express themselves politically and culturally, and women's rights soon found a common cause to unite behind.

In 1902, Evelyn Gleeson and Lily and Elizabeth Yeates founded the Dun Emer Guild; an arts and crafts co-operative, run by and employing women. It trained women in lace making, tapestry weaving and embroidery.

Using Irish materials only, their motto was 'Irish hands and Irish materials in the making of beautiful things'. These women created a variety of linens, carpets and banners, covered in Irish emblems, symbols and imagery, as a way of highlighting Irish identity.



*Dun Emer Industries embroidery room, Dundrum, Dublin, 1905.*

Courtesy of the National Gallery of Ireland.



## THE CELTIC REVIVAL AND THE DUN EMER GUILD

### ARTEFACTS

#### Dun Emer Guild Celtic Revival Dress

Katherine (Kitty) McCormick of the Dun Emer Guild designed this dress. It is a full-length dress, with a sash belt and headdress of royal blue poplin. The veil is silk green and the brat (cloak) is made of green silk poplin and says 'Déanta in Éireann (Made in Ireland), which was a trademark introduced in 1906. It also contains a number of motifs which were inspired by the Book of Kells. The dress was worn by Mrs. Claire Kennedy, whose husband was the first Chief Justice of Ireland. She wore it to the pan-Celtic Congress in Bangor in Wales in 1927, which aimed to encourage co-operation in the study of Celtic languages, history, music, literature and other aspects of the common Celtic culture.



*Black and white photograph of Mrs. Clare Kennedy, wearing a Celtic Revival outfit made by the Dun Emer Guild, Dublin, c.1928.  
DT: 1986.31.*



*Top: Watercolour sketch of the Celtic Revival outfit.  
DT:2001.23*



*Headdress and wide sash belt of the Celtic Revival outfit.  
DT:1986.31*

## THE CELTIC REVIVAL AND THE DUN EMER GUILD

### IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*This getup was all right for the Abbey Theatre or Gaelic League dances, but once when myself and a friend, Siav Trench, in a similar getup and a more striking colour scheme, walked together down a street where the fisherwomen were selling their fish, we were openly derided.*

Source: Mary Colum speaks about her own experience wearing the Irish costume of the Celtic revival, *The Arts and Crafts Movements in Dublin and Edinburgh, 1885 – 1925*, Cumming and Bowe, (1998), p. 122.

*The Irish costume solves everything. It is beautiful; it is suitable for every occasion; it can be worn morning, afternoon, or evening. It is specially adapted for use as a working garb, and it is pretty enough to wear at any social function. The most conscientious Irish Irelander may now be blissfully happy.*

Source: An article in the Gaelic League newspaper discusses Irish costume for women, 'A Costume for Irish Ladies', *Sinn Féin*, 5 March, 1910.



*Three unidentified women wearing Irish costume.*

Image Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland

## THE CELTIC REVIVAL AND THE DUN EMER GUILD IN THE CLASSROOM



- Why do you think the Dun Emer Guild was so important to women during the Celtic Revival?
- After reading the quote from Mary Colum (above), why do you think this type of clothing may have got a negative reaction from some?
- Clothing like the dress made by the Dun Emer Guild is an example of using clothing as a way of highlighting a particular political point. Can you think of examples of how is clothing used today through activism to highlight issues in society?



- 
- Design a form of clothing that you feel represents a current political movement. How would you use the clothing to highlight your point?
  - Research other key aspects of the Celtic Revival. What other areas allowed women an opportunity to express themselves. Present back to your class on these areas.

## WORLD WAR ONE

---

When World War One began, there were approximately 58,000 Irishmen in the British Army, however over 2 million ended up fighting in the conflict. The war meant that there was a huge demand for the production of ammunition, such as bullets and bombs, so munitions factories were opened in Dublin, Waterford, Cork and Galway.

The factories employed large numbers of women as so many men were leaving to fight in the War. About 1,400 women worked in the munitions factories in Ireland, producing artillery shells. They earned good money, but the work was hard and dangerous. The workers, nicknamed 'munitionettes', had only limited protection against the toxic chemicals they had to use. These industrial workers were proud of their achievements, but at the end of the war, most went back to traditional female roles such as seamstresses.

Some women also chose to go directly over to the conflict and to work as nurses. There were two kinds of nurses in the First World War, professional nurses and Voluntary Aid Detachment nurses (VADs). The VADs only training was usually a three month long first aid course. It is believed that over 4,500 Irish women trained as VAD's. At least 43 Irish women died during the War, with a further 13 dying one year later.



*Photograph of Florence Lea in  
factory smock.*  
HA:1976.2

## WORLD WAR ONE ARTEFACTS

### On War Service Badge

This 'On War Service' brass and metal badge belonged to a young woman called Florence Lea from Irishtown while she was a worker with the Liffey Dockyard Munitions Factory in Dublin between 1917 and 1918. Badges like these were issued to civilians to indicate that they were engaged in important work for the war effort. While some badges were officially made and distributed, more were produced by employers to support their employees. Each badge would have a unique number on the back.

HA:1976.4



### Burrow Sisters Photo album

This Photograph album belonged to Rosamund and Eleanor Burrows, who both worked as nurses in France during the First World War. They were based at the Royal Herbert in Woolwich through the Voluntary Aid Detachment, and then later the British Military General Hospital No. 8 Rouen, which was also known as the Sick Sisters Hospital. The photographs taken show us their daily lives during the First World War, including images of the patients, staff, funerals and the cemetery.

HA:1976.4



WORLD WAR ONE  
IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*In the past women have always borne part of the weight of war...In more modern times women, in taxes and material loss and additional labour, have borne equally with men the cost of war; and I hardly need to refer to what women as nurses have done – since the days of Florence Nightingale until now – to alleviate suffering and pain, and to preserve, if possible, that mysterious force called life which, at times and seasons, men value so lightly.*

Source: Margaret T. McCoubrey, 'The Chivalry of War' (An address delivered to the Ulster Socialist Party, Belfast), reproduced in *The Irish Citizen*, 27 February 1915.

*Midst the laughter and the singing I often wonder why I am with others engaged in such an occupation. To see the row of shells, so innocent looking, yet made for a specific and terrible purpose – that of human destruction – makes one deeply conscious of their work. It is difficult to think of women in the 20th century engaged in such an occupation.*

Source: An anonymous article titled 'Thoughts in a munitions factory', *Mackie's magazine*, 4 December 1916.

Florence Lea's  
On War Service  
Certificate, Dublin.  
HA:1976.3



## WORLD WAR ONE IN THE CLASSROOM

---



- What would have been the incentives and deterrents for women signing up to work in the munition factories in Ireland?
- How important are artefacts like the Burrows sisters photograph album to our understanding of history? What do they offer us that other sources might not?
- How do you think the “munitionettes” would have felt when they were expected to return to their previous roles as housewives and domestics after the War? How do you think this impacted the suffragette movement?



- 
- Write a short letter from the perspective of a ‘munitionette’ during the First World War. In particular, imagine what the experience would have been like to have with something so dangerous, but also how liberating it would have felt to engage with such work.
  - Do you think the idea of a woman going to take part in the First World War as a nurse would have been a topic of debate in 1914? Have a classroom discussion looking at the different arguments that you think would have played a part in this.

## THE 1916 RISING

Cumann na mBan was founded on 2 April 1914 as a new nationalist organisation for women in Ireland. Cumann na mBan aimed to work alongside the Irish Volunteers to advance the cause of Irish independence; its constitution stated it would assist in arming the Irish Volunteers.

It is estimated that, during the Easter Rising, between 250 to 300 women were active during the rebellion, including members of Cumann na mBan, and the Irish Citizen's Army, which accepted both male and female members. Women played a variety of roles during Easter Week. Many worked as nurses administering first aid to the wounded while others cooked and carried messages between the various garrisons. At the end of the rebellion, approximately 79 women were arrested.

One key revolutionary figure in Ireland at this time was Countess Markievicz. She was involved in the planning and preparation of the Easter Rising, including the forming and training of the youth movement Fianna Éireann.

During Easter Week she was at St Stephens Green and Royal College of Surgeons as second in command to Michael Mallin. She was the only woman sentenced to be executed at the end of the rebellion, however this was later changed to a life sentence in prison.



*Commisariat of Cork Cumann na mBan.*  
© Cork Public Museum, Cork.



## THE 1916 RISING

### ARTEFACTS

#### **Cumann na mBan brooch and uniform**

The uniform of Cumann na mBan was designed to be similar to that of the all-male Irish Volunteers, with whom they were affiliated. Most Cumann members made their own outfit, often selecting textiles produced in Ireland to support the country's industry.

The uniform featured on the tour belonged to Helena Hoyne, who was imprisoned briefly in Kilmainham Gaol for her part in the Rising. The uniform was also designed to look very similar to the Irish Volunteers uniform, highlighting the connection between the two organisations.

This brooch shows the insignia for Cumann na mBan and included a gun as part of the design. This was there to highlight that this was a military, revolutionary organisation that was willing to use violence to achieve Irish independence.



*Cumann na mBan brooch, worn by Marcella Cosgrave at Marrowbone Lane during the 1916 Rising. HE:1998.39*



*Cumann na mBan jacket.  
HE:EW.270 (loan)*

## THE 1916 RISING

### IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*Women could throw hand grenades, they understood the use of bombs; in fact, they seemed to understand as much about the business of warfare as their men.*

Source: A Red Cross Nurse (anonymous), comments on the women of 1916, *The Dublin Forts*, p. 143.

*We had the same right to risk our lives as the men; that in the constitution of the Irish Republic, women were on an equality with men. For the first time in history, indeed a constitution had been written that incorporated the principle of equal suffrage.*

Source: Margaret Skinnider (member of Glasgow Cumann na mBan), on a response to Commandant Michael Mallin who did not want women to go on dangerous missions during the Rising. *Doing my bit for Ireland: A First-Hand Account of the Easter Rising* (1917).

*When flames ate through the houses, it was decided to evacuate O'Connell Street...The girls had refused to leave. They recited the proclamation of Easter Week...Why, if men remained, should women leave?*

Source: Ernie O'Malley, IRA Officer, on the refusal of IRA women to leave an occupied building set on fire by Free State soldiers in the early days of the Civil War, *The Singing Flame*, p. 131, (1978).



*Women of the Easter Rising, Summer 1916.*

Copyright: Kilmainham Gaol Museum/OPW

## THE 1916 RISING IN THE CLASSROOM

---



- We have seen in the virtual tour how important the symbolism around uniforms was to those involved in the rebellion. Why do you think having a uniform was so important?
- What does the fact that women were not allowed to physically carry weapons and engage in the fighting in 1916 highlight about the attitudes of some of the people involved in the rebellion?
- What were some of the alternative jobs that women were allowed to do during the rebellion?



- 
- During the tour, Sheila showed a Cumann na mBan pin she was wearing, which contained the imagery of a weapon to show that this was a military organisation. Design a pin or badge for a group that you are part of – your school, sports club, drama class etc., which includes symbols highlighting the key functions of the organisation.

## THE IRISH WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

---

On 21 January 1919, a military operation at Soloheadbeg sparked off the War of Independence. Here, several IRA member shot two Royal Irish Constabulary officers who were escorting explosives by train. As the War of Independence escalated, guerrilla tactics became the most effective way for the IRA to intimidate and attack the RIC and British Authorities.

Women played a vital role in the use of guerrilla tactics in Ireland. While women may not have been actively involved in the fighting, they were able to smuggle weapons and ammunition into the country, as well as organise 'safe houses' for the IRA men who were trying to avoid arrest. Similarly, to 1916, women also provided medical treatment for the men, and were able to bring communication around the country. They were also involved in creation propaganda for the IRA and Dáil Éireann, and worked with the newly created Republican Courts.

This work naturally put women into a dangerous position and throughout the War of Independence there were multiple reports of women being attacked and punished – both by the British forces for working with the IRA, and by the IRA to punish and deter women from interacting with the enemy.



*Veréy light signal pistol, which was taken by the IRA at the capture of Drangan R.I.C. Barracks, Co. Tipperary, 1920, and given to Mrs Mary Delany, whose house was used as a safe house during the War of Independence.*

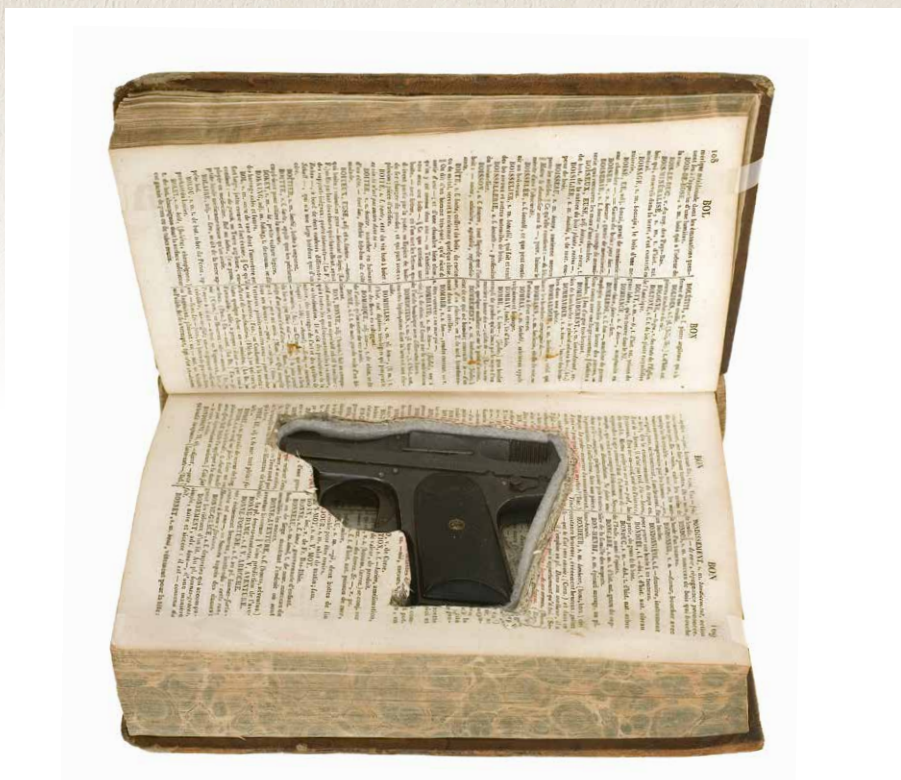
*HE:EW.424*

## THE IRISH WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

### ARTEFACTS

#### Book used for smuggling

This book is an 1828 edition of Noel and Chapsals Nouveau Dictionnaire De La Langue Francaise, however the pages were cut out so that a 6.35 Express gun could be hidden inside. The book was covered in wrapping paper and left at the Gresham hotel by Miss K. Mullen for a Mr. P. Kingsbury. This is an excellent example of the smuggling work that women would have performed during the War of Independence. 'Miss K. Mullen' was probably a false name – to be caught with such a package would have led to severe punishment and imprisonment.



*Automatic pistol, concealed in a book.  
HE:EW.4347*



*Imitation Glengarry cap and whistle  
used by several prisoners in escape from  
Mountjoy Prison, 12th November 1921.  
HE:EW.29a-b (loan)*

#### Glengarry cap

This cap was smuggled into Mountjoy Jail by Miss Merriman, whose fiancé Liam Troy was planning an escape of seven prisoners disguised as Auxiliaries on 12 November 1921. The whistle belonged to a prison guard, and was accidentally pulled from him as the prisoners took his keys. The prisoners disguised themselves as Auxiliary guards in Glengarry caps made inside the prison from blankets. Other items such as revolvers and ammunition were also smuggled in by Miss Merriman and Mrs Ryan.

**THE IRISH WAR OF INDEPENDENCE**  
IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*The going was tough on the female sex, they were unable to 'go on the run', so we were constantly subjected to having their homes raided and precious possessions destroyed.*

Source: Lil Conlon, founding member of Cumann na mBan in Cork, *Cumann na mBan and the Women of Ireland, 1913 – 25* (1969), p. 224.

*What hardships we went through in those times, of course it was not for money we fought, it was for Ireland and Ireland only.*

Source: Margaret Forde (Ballinhassig Cumann na mBan / Secretary of Dunderrow 'Squad')



*Mrs Whelan, the mother of 22 year old Thomas Whelan, with a crowd of supporters outside Mountjoy Prison on 13 March 1921.*  
HE:EW.2038

## THE IRISH WAR OF INDEPENDENCE IN THE CLASSROOM



- Smuggling weapons was a very dangerous job, and those attempting to do so faced consequences such as arrest or violence if caught. Why do you think some people were so willing to engage in this activity? (for example nationalism, family, community, social pressure).
- Many of those who were fighting in the conflict were also trying to hold down their jobs and feed their families. How do you think this would have affected how they conducted their activities during the war? Can you think of any jobs people had that were useful to the IRA during the war?
- Why do you think women might have been targeted during the War of Independence by both sides?



- Write a short diary entry from the perspective of Miss K. Mullen on the day she smuggled the pistol into the Gresham Hotel. Take time to think about the different emotions she might have experienced, and what her motivations might have been. Think about who might have been collecting the pistol, and the risks and consequences involved in an operation of this kind.

## WOMENS SUFFRAGE & THE SHEEHY SKEFFINGTONS

The Irish Women's Franchise League was a women's suffrage organisation set up in Dublin in November 1908, founded by Hanna and Francis Sheehy-Skeffington and Margaret and James H. Cousins. Its aim was to secure women's suffrage within Home Rule and had a weekly newspaper called *The Irish Citizen*. The motto of the newspaper was 'For Men and Women Equally the Rights of Citizenship, For Men and Women Equally the Duties of Citizenship'.

The Irish Parliamentary Party was opposed to votes for women, as was the British Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith. When the Third Home Rule Bill did not reference the suffrage movement in June 1912, Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, Margaret Cousins with six other members of the IWFL smashed government windows in the GPO and other government buildings.

Hanna Sheehy and Francis Skeffington had met in 1896, and married in 1903. As a pacifist, Francis was against the fighting in 1916, and attempted to organise a civilian defence force in Dublin in order to stop looting. However, on 25 April he was arrested and sent to Portobello Barracks. The following morning, along with two journalists, he was shot by firing squad.



Photograph of  
Hanna Sheehy Skeffington.  
HE:EW.613



## WOMENS SUFFRAGE & THE SHEEHY SKEFFINGTONS

### ARTEFACTS



#### Irish Women's Franchise League Banner

This banner was made in 1908 for the Irish Women's Franchise League and would have been seen at IWFL events and suffrage protests. The banner was designed with shamrocks and other Irish symbols in order to indicate that it was an Irish banner when taken on campaigning trips in England.

*Sheehy Skeffington Collection*



#### IWFL Lectern

This lectern was created by the Irish Women's Franchise League and was used as a platform to speak to large crowds during campaigning.

*HE:EW.Temp.360*

#### Votes for Women Badge

This Votes for Women badge belonged to Francis Sheehy-Skeffington. He was wearing it during the 1916 Easter Rising, when he was campaigning to stop the fighting. During Easter Week he was taken prisoner and was executed on the 26th of April.

*HE:EW.336.2 (loan)*



## WOMENS SUFFRAGE & THE SHEEHY SKEFFINGTONS

### IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*I was then an undergraduate, and was amazed and disgusted to learn that I was classed among criminals, infants, and lunatics – in fact that my status as a woman was worse than any of these.*

Source: IWFL founder and suffragette Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, speaking on her initiation to the suffrage campaign in 1902, *Reminiscences of an Irish Suffragette*, 1941

*We don't like smashing glass any more than men like smashing skulls, yet in both cases there is, I believe, a strong feeling that something must be broken before a wrong is changed into a right.*

Source: IWFL suffragette Marjorie Hasler quoted in *The Irish Citizen* newspaper (referencing smashing windows in public suffrage protests), April 1912.

### REBELLION THROUGH A MEGAPHONE: HOW A SUFFRAGETTE "MOUSE" WAS CHEERED IN HER PRISON CELL.



Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington addressing a protest meeting under the prison walls.

A message of encouragement to the prisoner.

A woman speaking against the imprisonment under the "Cat and Mouse" Act of Miss Kathleen Houston, who broke the Post Office windows on College Green, the suffragette held

*Hanna Sheehy Skeffington addressing crowd outside Mountjoy prison, 01 January 1914.*

RTE Archives, Ref: 0504/002

## WOMENS SUFFRAGE & THE SHEEHY SKEFFINGTONS

### IN THE CLASSROOM



- Hanna and Frances took each other's names when they got married. What does this tell us about their relationship?
- Why do you think there would have been tensions between the women of the suffragette movement and the women of the nationalist movement?
- What risks were members of the IWFL taking by holding political rallies in Ireland? Would their message have been well-received by everyone?



- 
- Based on some of the examples you have been shown by Donna Gilligan in the film, design a poster either in support of or against the suffrage movement in Ireland. What key messages do you think would be important to convey in this poster?

## 1918 ELECTION

The 1918 elections saw a huge increase in those allowed to vote in Britain and Ireland. The passing of the Representation of the People Act meant that now all men over 21 years old and, significantly, women over the age of 30 could vote. However, even this had strict restrictions on it. A woman could only vote if she either held property worth £5, or had a husband who did. Regardless, the electorate across Britain and Ireland expanded by 5.6 million men and 8.4 million women.

In the 1918 election, two women stood for office in Ireland. Constance Markievicz was the candidate for Dublin's St. Patricks Division, and was the first woman elected to the British parliament. However, she refused to take her seat in line with the Sinn Féin policy to abstain from Westminster. Markievicz was in Holloway prison for the first meeting of the First Dáil Éireann, the Parliament of the revolutionary Irish Republic. She was Minister for Labour from 1919-1922.



The second candidate was Winifred Carney. She had been a member of Cumann na mBan and the Irish Citizen's Army, and had taken part in the Easter Rising in 1916, where she was arrested in the aftermath. She stood as a candidate in Belfast and was heavily defeated due to the area being dominated by the Unionist tradition.

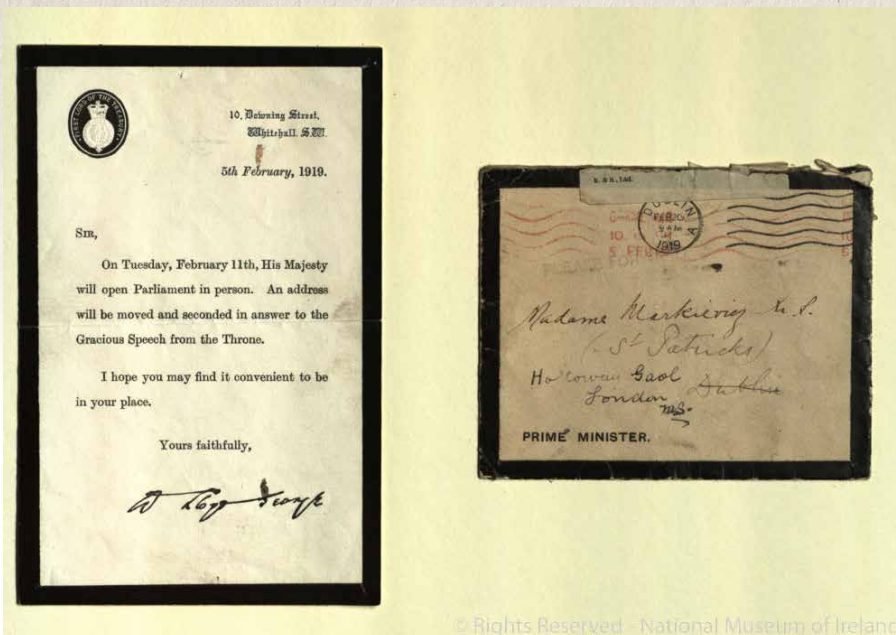
*Constance Markievicz driving to a meeting.  
HE:EW.35 (purch.)*

## 1918 ELECTION ARTEFACTS

### Letter from David Lloyd George to Countess Markievicz

This letter was sent to Countess Markevicz by the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George on 5 February 1919 while she was in Holloway Jail, inviting her to take her seat in Westminster after she had been elected in 1918. As she was the first woman to be elected to the British Government, the letter was actually addressed 'Sir' at the beginning as an alternative had never been needed before.

HE:EW.875g

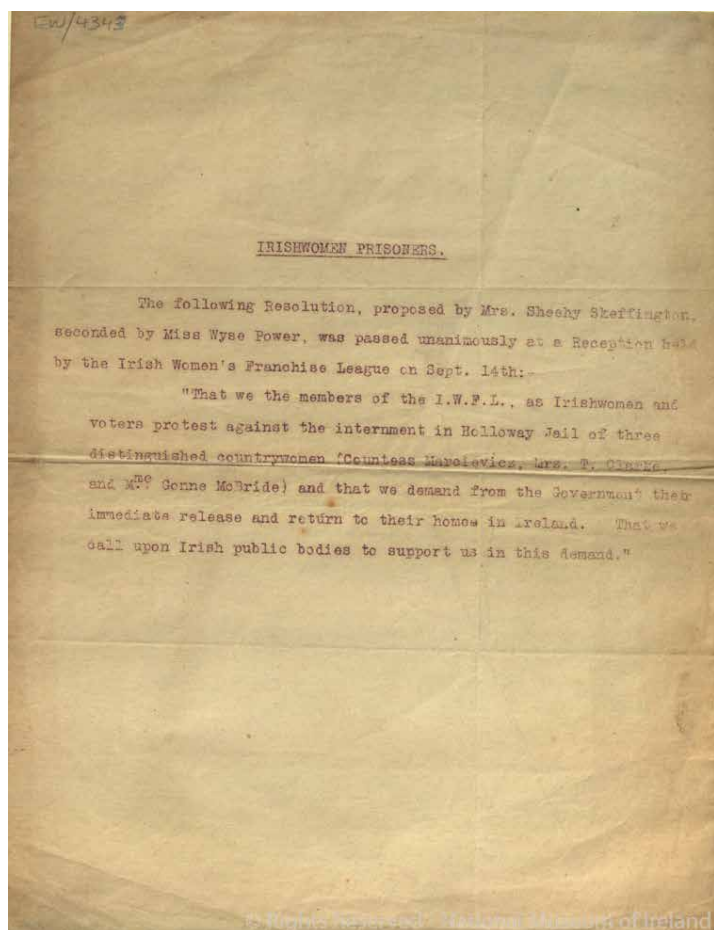


© Rights Reserved - National Museum of Ireland

### Protest letter from Irish Womens Franchise League

This letter was a protest letter, written by members of the IWFL, about the imprisonment of Irish women in Holloway Jail, including Countess Markievicz, Maude Gonne-MacBride and Kathleen Clarke.

HE:EW.4343



© Rights Reserved - National Museum of Ireland

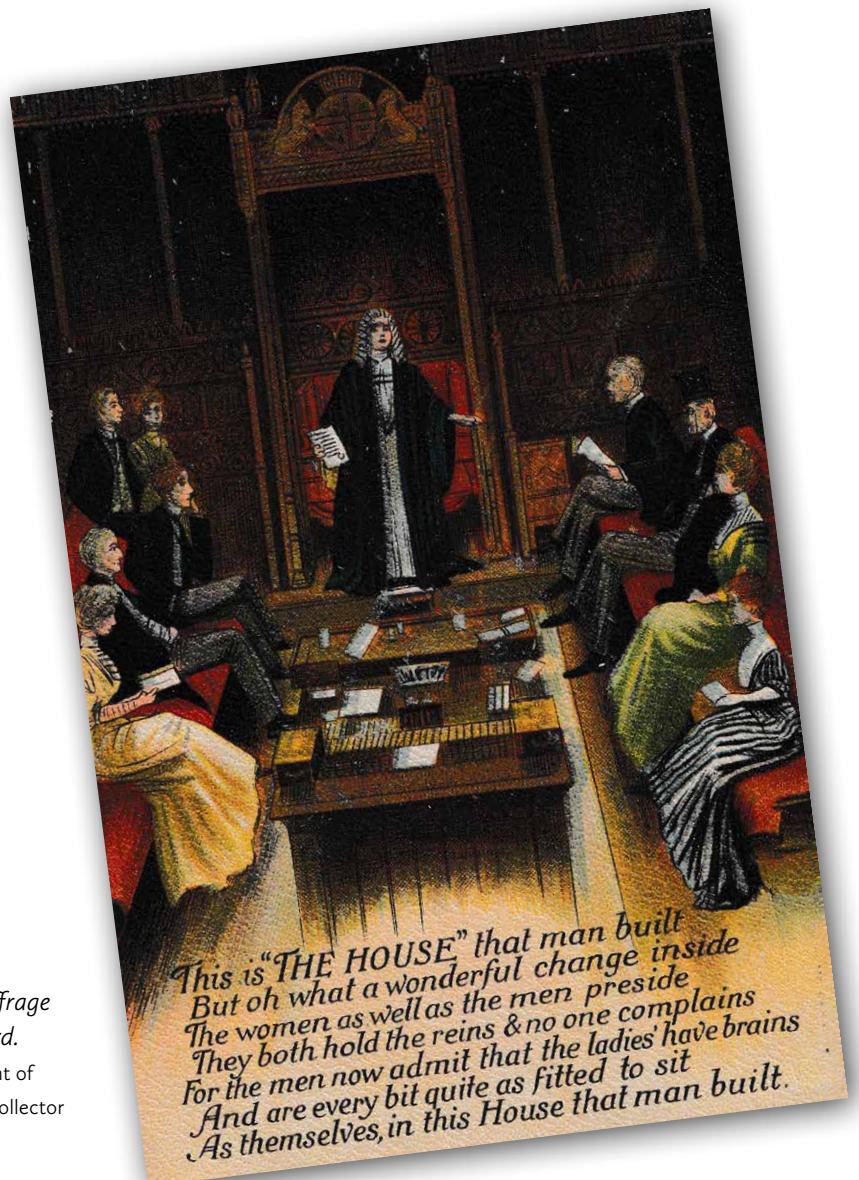
1918 ELECTION  
IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*From the booths opened there was a steady stream of electors, in practically every instance women being the first to record the vote.*

Source: *Donegal News* (reporting on voting turnout in Derry), Saturday, December 21, 1918.

*Women were enabled for the first time to take their part in Parliamentary elections, and they alone added about 60 per cent to the total polling strength.*

Source: *The Nationalist* (Tipperary), Saturday, December 28, 1918.



Pro-suffrage  
postcard.  
Copyright of  
private collector

## 1918 ELECTION IN THE CLASSROOM

---



- Despite the vote being granted to women in 1918, there were still restrictions and limitations to this. Why do you think this was?
- What was Sinn Fein's policy of abstention from Westminster and what did it hope to achieve?
- What do you think the reaction in Britain, and in particular Westminster, would have been to the first woman elected to the Parliament being an Irish nationalist?



- 
- Imagine you are Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington and you are going to vote in the 1918 election. Using persuasive language, write a speech outlining why women should get the vote.
  - As we have learned, the 1918 election was a huge moment in the suffrage movement in Ireland. However, after the birth of the Irish State in 1922, women would see their place in Irish society confined to the home. In your class, research how women's roles in Irish society developed, both positively and negatively, after independence.