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1. CONTEXT

In 1924 a Cumann na nGaedhael government hosted the first official military ceremony commemorating the 1916 Rising. Although relatives of the executed 1916 leaders were invited, only one, the widow of Michael Mallin, attended (Ferriter 200). In the aftermath of the Civil War, division characterised the commemoration of this seminal event. This continued throughout the twentieth century as both the Irish government and Republicans sought to claim this inheritance.

In April 1966 the fiftieth anniversary witnessed an unprecedented amount of activity as parades, monuments, television and radio programming commemorated the Rising (Daly and O’Callaghan). A few years later the absence of the by then customary official military parade down O’Connell Street and past the General Post Office, which had acted as the rebels’ headquarters, reflected how the memory of the Rising, and that of those who led it, had been complicated by the outbreak of violence in Northern Ireland. In 1991, the official commemorations surrounding the 75th anniversary were decidedly muted, while the 90th anniversary in 2006 saw the reinstatement of the parade, an event made possible by the advent of peace in Northern Ireland. Once again, the 1916 Proclamation of the Republic was read aloud outside the General Post Office, a re-enactment of Patrick Pearse’s actions on Easter Monday, 1916.

The fact that the Republic of Ireland appeared to represent a dramatic economic success story in 2006 also made the reinstatement of the parade a more appealing prospect. Roisin Higgins describes how “the mythical Republic inaugurated by Pearse had always

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1 The UCD Irish Virtual Research Library and Archive (IVRLA) is a major digitisation project which was undertaken by University College Dublin from 2005 to 2009. Material selected from UCD’s extensive resources of archival and rare material was digitised and catalogued before being made available from a single virtual location (http://ivrla.ucd.ie). This digitised material covers a wide range of humanities and social science disciplines and is arranged in curated collections which can be browsed, searched, bookmarked, or downloaded. In addition to the digitisation of existing UCD collections, the IVRLA conducted a series of demonstrator projects. The remit of these projects was to develop additional digital research resources and to present these in the form of an exhibition collection. Some of these projects incorporated existing IVRLA material but many generated new content which was inspired by the potential of digital resources. Consequently, the IVRLA and its demonstrator projects show how digital repositories can provide access to diverse archival research materials as well as challenging the ways in which we consider digital content and generate research in a digital environment. The IVRLA is a component of the UCD Humanities Institute of Ireland and is funded under the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLI) Cycle 3, administered by the Higher Education Authority.
represented a challenge to the actual Republic fashioned by those who had lived on” (Higgins 137). In 1966 the 50th anniversary provided an opportunity to berate the state for its failings, as poverty and lack of educational opportunity indicated that the state, in the words of the Proclamation, was not “cherishing all the children of the nation equally.” Such criticisms were less evident in 2006.

It remains to be seen how the Rising will be commemorated in 2016. As commemoration tells us more about the present than the past we must wait and see. However, it is likely that there will be a significant amount of activity. In the lead up to the centenary of the 1916 Rising, this project represents an attempt to survey and digitise a selection of UCD’s holdings of related material. Both UCD Archives and Special Collections in the James Joyce Library house material relating to the 1916 Rising. Many of those who were active in the revolutionary period deposited their papers at UCD Archives. The scope of this project is defined by the overall IVRLA project of which it is a part and hence does not extend beyond UCD’s own holdings to consider material held elsewhere. However, as the extent of the UCD holdings is significant and the time available for this project was limited, this does not represent a major limitation in scope.

That public opinion with regards to the 1916 Rising transformed in its wake is one of the clichés of the history of the revolutionary period (1913-23). While initially widespread support for the Rising was not evident, the executions and arrests which followed, as well as the imposition of martial law, are considered decisive in turning public opinion against the British administration and in the favour of those who staged the rebellion. Because this transformation was relatively speedy it has also been suggested that sympathy for the leaders and their goals was latent within the population and just took time to emerge. In the new Irish Free State, and subsequently the Republic of Ireland, those who led the Rising were confirmed as national heroes and martyrs. The examination of UCD’s holdings of material relating to the Rising contributes to our understanding of the way in which this transformation transpired and developed over time.

2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project was undertaken in a six-month timeframe from July to December 2009. The first stage of the project involved the survey of large amounts of material housed in UCD Archives and Special Collections to identify material which was relevant to 1916 and its

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2 Kirsten Mulrennan was project researcher from July to September and Carole Holohan was project researcher from October to December.
subsequent resonance. UCD Archives holds the papers of many well-known figures such as Eamon de Valera, Ernie O’Malley (whose papers include 450 interviews with participants in or witnesses of the Rising), Ernest Blythe, Cathal Brugha, Michael Collins, Desmond and Mabel Fitzgerald, Seán Lemass, Sean MacEntee, Frank Aiken, Eoin MacNeill, Denis McCullough, The O’Rahilly, Desmond Ryan, Rory O’Connor, Kevin O’Higgins, Dr. James Ryan, Richard Mulcahy, Austin Stack, Terence MacSwiney, Mary MacSwiney, Seán MacEoin, Michael Hayes, George Gavan Duffy, Count Plunkett, James Lalor and Todd Andrews. UCD Archives also hold relevant papers from many figures not quite as well known to the general public such as J.R. Clark, Kathleen Barry Moloney, Hans Boehm, Elizabeth Bloxham, Fr. Tom and Margaret Burke, Máire Comerford, Walter Cole, Martin Conlon, Liam S. Gogán, Eithne Coyle O’Donnell, Séamus Hughes, Peter Galligan, Liam Gaynor, Seán Gaynor, Sighle Humphries, John McGalloghly, Peadar McNulty, Michael Moynihan, Michael McKeogh, Kathleen O’Connell, Elgin O’Rahilly, Séamus Ó Meallain, and Bernard O’Rourke. Special Collections in the James Joyce Library houses a significant amount of printed material, including early publications, pamphlets and handbills, which also contribute to our understanding of the Rising and its interpretation.

Appropriate material was selected from the above holdings for digitisation and cataloguing. Further material was digitised for preservation purposes but for reasons of copyright (discussed further in section 3) cannot yet be made available. The digitised material that has been made available online through the IVRLA entails 40 separate digital objects and a total of 470 individual scans. The material which has been digitised is of considerable historical and cultural significance and provides an insight into disseminated interpretations and narratives of the Rising that emerged in its wake. This project also provides five resource lists detailing UCD’s holdings of this type of material which will be of use to scholars, researchers, members of the public and those involved in future digitisation projects.

The resource created by this project provides a new way to look at the Rising which will be of use to scholars at all levels. It is of particular public interest as the one hundredth anniversary begins to loom.

3. DETAILED OUTPUT

This section outlines the various issues that had to be considered in selecting material for digitisation before providing additional background information on the historical significance of the digitised material.
Selecting Material for Digitisation

Following a review of material held in UCD Archives and in UCD Library Special Collections, an extensive list of material was compiled that the research team considered suitable for digitisation. Material was selected on the basis of its cultural significance and the contribution it makes to explaining and interpreting the Rising, immediately after the event and in later years. As well as personal papers and accounts, the material listed included ballads, posters, postcards and texts, all of which give an insight into the interpretations of the Rising received by the general populace.

This list was then discussed with the IVRLA team\(^3\) to establish its suitability for inclusion in the digitised collection for this project. The major issue in this regard was that of copyright and this provided the greatest challenge for this project. Because the comprehensive survey and documentation of UCD holdings had taken three months to complete, this meant that items which required copyright clearance raised potential time constraints.

Copyright was not an issue for all items selected. Some organisations which produced material, such as The Irish National Aid and Volunteers’ Dependent Fund dissolved during the revolutionary period whilst others such as Sinn Féin and Cumann na mBan no longer exist in the form they took when these documents were produced. Some printers and publishers had officially dissolved as companies while other documents were considered “orphan documents.” This referred particularly to memorial cards, handbills, pamphlets and posters – items which were most likely mass produced and contain no printer or publisher details. In the event of copyright holders emerging for these items, the existing IVRLA policies (of take-down or acknowledgement)\(^4\) will be followed.

For some items the copyright holders were family members of the original creators and their permission was sought. Other items were published by companies still in existence and permission was also sought in these instances. The Ernie O’Malley interviews were less straightforward in terms of copyright. It was decided in this case that the appropriate policy to follow was that of the Bureau of Military History, housed in the Military Archives at Cathal Brugha Barracks in Dublin. Established in 1947, the Bureau took 1770 witness statements over a ten year period. Its aim was to compile the history of the national movement from the formation of the Irish Volunteers in 1913 to the end of the War of Independence in 1921. The statements were released to the public in 2003, only after the death of the last recipient of the

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\(^3\) The IVRLA core team carried out all of the digitising and entry of the metadata as well as advising on copyright and related issues.

\(^4\) Further details are available on the Terms and Conditions page of the IVRLA website [http://ivrla.ucd.ie](http://ivrla.ucd.ie).
military-service pension who had testified to the Bureau (Ryan 23). Ernie O’Malley’s interviews provide similar insight into the revolutionary period. Unlike the Bureau’s statements they include accounts of the Civil War and O’Malley interviewed 330 people who did not give statements to the Bureau. While this project is only making one original interview and one transcript available all the interviews have been digitised for preservation purposes and it is hoped that both these and more transcripts will be made available through the IVRLA in the future.

The material selected for digitisation was either that which was no longer within copyright or that for which permission was relatively easily obtained. It was decided to omit the material in the Desmond Ryan and O’Rahilly papers from the digitised sample in the hope that they could be digitised as individual collections in the future. The collection produced comprises three digitised collections and five resource lists. The digitised collections are:

(a) **Making Memory**: A sample of postcards, poetry, photographs, pamphlets, commemorative material, ephemera and accounts of the Rising, which are housed in UCD Archives and Special Collections in the James Joyce Library. This collection provides an online exhibition of UCD’s holdings of this type of material.

(b) **J.R. Clark Diary**: This diary contains a graphic account of events, sights and sounds of Easter Week in Dublin’s city centre. Clark was civil servant at the Office of Public Works.

(c) **Ernie O’Malley Interview**: Both the original interview with Liam Manahan, undertaken by Ernie O’Malley, and a transcription (courtesy of Ernie O’Malley’s son, Cormac), have been made available. Manahan was a senior figure in the Irish Volunteers in East Limerick.

The five resource lists compiled are based on the comprehensive survey done in the first three months of this project. They are:

(a) **Special Collections**: This file details ephemera and publications relating to the 1916 Rising held in Special Collections at the UCD James Joyce Library.

(b) **UCD Archives Stock List**: This file lists the collections in UCD Archives which hold material relating to the 1916 Rising.

(c) **UCD Archives**: This file gives more detailed information in relation to some of the items on the archives stock list (above).

(d) **The O’Rahilly and 1916**: The O’Rahilly papers contain material relating to all aspects of the O’Rahilly family. This file lists ephemera, poetry, diary and eyewitness accounts relating to the Rising that form part of the O’Rahilly papers.

(e) **Desmond Ryan and 1916**: This file details items from the Ryan Papers which give an insight into both Ryan’s research and his experience of the Rising itself.
Historical Background of the Collection

The “Making Memory” collection presents items that document personal details and memorabilia of the 1916 Rising and the way in which these personalised items and ephemera assumed significance in subsequent years. The collection contains only a small selection of the total holdings within UCD Archives and Special Collections; the excel resource files give an outline of the total resources available within UCD. The material includes accounts of the Rising written in its immediate aftermath; personal recollections; photographs; commemorative booklets; letters from those imprisoned in the aftermath of the rebellion; notebooks kept by prisoners; the last letters of those executed after the Rising; drawings; poetry; and periodicals and newspapers detailing the Rising in its aftermath. Significant amounts of ephemera are also included: a membership card of the Irish Citizen army; souvenir programmes of anniversary masses; a permit to access Dublin during Easter Week; an internment order; postcards; ballads; concert and sporting tickets; and posters.

J.R. Clark’s diary of Easter Week 1916 has been digitised in its entirety, providing a valuable record of the day-to-day events. Clark was a civil servant in the Office of Public works who had moved from England to Ireland to take up the position. His diary contains some of his own biographical details as well as significant events in his life such as the deaths of certain family members. Although the majority of the pages in Clark’s diary are blank, it does, however, contain a graphic account of his experiences in Dublin during Easter Week. Clark provides an impression of the sights and sounds of the city centre and depicts the disruption to civilian life. He details the cessation of tram and rail services in the city on Monday 24 April 1916 as well as the sounds of volleys of shots coming from Jacobs Biscuit factory on Aungier Street and from Stephen’s Green. He and his companion, Jean, came across unmanned barricades on Earlfort Terrace and they found much of the city eerily quiet (24 April). On the Tuesday he describes how fire broke out in the city and how he and a companion, Quail, walked into the city centre “without any hindrance of any sort” (26 April). They walked up Talbot Street and heard rifle shots coming from the roofs above them. Clark saw the tricolour flying over the General Post Office and the dead horse laid out on Sackville Street. He recounts how a woman was shot just in front of them on Sackville Street. In his diary entry for 3 May 1916 he describes how in the city “the pavement was still hot to the feet and there was a terrible small of burning.”

The Ernie O’Malley interview with Liam Manahan is just one of 450 interviews contained in notebooks which form part of the Ernie O’Malley papers housed at UCD Archives. These interviews were undertaken in a methodical manner primarily during the
period 1948-1953, although some were undertaken as early as 1939. Of the 450 interviewees, 330 did not give witness statements to the Bureau of Military History. The project has digitised all of these interviews for preservation purposes. Cormac O’Malley (the son of Ernie O’Malley) has been working, with a team, on transcribing these interviews as they are quite difficult to decipher. Courtesy of Cormac O’Malley we are providing one such transcription – the interview with Liam Manahan\(^5\) – along with the digitised interview. As already explained, the remit of the project was to digitise UCD holdings only; although these transcriptions are not held in or produced by UCD an exception has been made in this case in order to assist scholars who may otherwise be unable to decipher Ernie O’Malley’s writing. It is hoped that more transcriptions will be digitised in the future and that they and the originals may be made available through the IVRLA.

Liam Manahan was a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and a senior member of the Irish Volunteers in East Limerick. He attended Irish Volunteer executive meetings and perceived the division amongst the leadership of this body. In the interview he discusses the conversations he had with Thomas MacDonagh, Patrick Pearse and Eoin MacNeil with regards to this division. He reveals what happened in Limerick during Easter Week as well as the aftermath, including his own court martial by the IRB. The interview also gives details of the Irish Volunteers and Sinn Féin activities in 1917 and 1918 and Manahan’s experience of the Civil War, including his prison experiences. Manahan mentions numerous individuals throughout the interview and the transcript includes a very helpful index detailing other interviews where more details of these individuals can be found.

The resource lists for the Desmond Ryan and O’Rahilly papers detail the material from these collections which relates to the Rising. Desmond Ryan was one of the first pupils at St. Enda’s, the school for boys established by Patrick Pearse. While an undergraduate at UCD he acted as Pearse’s secretary. He took part in the Rising and afterwards was interned in Stafford Jail, Wormwood Scrubs and Frongoch, where he wrote of his experiences. The resource list relating to the Desmond Ryan papers details the following items: drafts of his manuscripts of books later published; his notes regarding his personal memories of Patrick Pearse mainly but also of James Connolly; statements made by participants of the Rising collected by Ryan and including his own; Ryan’s article on the Rising; speeches he delivered at commemorative events; scripts he wrote for radio and television programmes; the diary he kept whilst imprisoned in Strafford and Frongoch; his statement to the Bureau of Military

\(^5\) The Liam Manahan interview has been transcribed and edited by Dr. John O’Callaghan, a lecturer at University of Limerick, and Cormac O’Malley.
History and documents explaining the reason for the Bureau’s establishment; and correspondence from the late 1940s of those active in the Rising confirming and correcting Ryan’s previous work.

Michael Joseph Rahilly, who used the name “The O’Rahilly” from 1909, was an active member of the Gaelic League and the Irish Volunteers. He was part of the battalion at the General Post Office during Easter Week and was killed in the fighting. The resource list relating to the O’Rahilly’s papers provide detail on the following items: songs and ballads; collections of poetry; memorial cards; a souvenir booklet of an anniversary mass held in Paris 1916; private and undated written memories of Aodogán O’Rahilly who was only eleven or twelve years old in 1916; an anonymous eyewitness account of the Rising; a letter from Willie Pearse to the O’Rahilly; a copy of Eoin MacNeill’s countermanding order; notes written by the O’Rahilly during the rebellion; a circular letter from Connolly dated 28 April 1916; and a letter from Nell Humphreys describing how she comforted O’Rahilly’s wife Nannie after his death. This collection helps to give a personal account not just of the Rising itself but of the O’Rahilly family bereavement.

These collections and resource files are of significant value to scholars and members of the public seeking to explore both subsequent understanding and cultural responses to this important event in Ireland’s history.

4: FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This project has identified a significant amount of 1916-related resources held in UCD, which it is hoped will prove to be a major resource for scholars and the public. There are a number of ways in which this project could be further developed.

Firstly, subject to copyright clearance, much more of the material identified in this project’s resource lists could be digitised, catalogued, and made available online. It is hoped that in the future more of the material detailed in the resource lists for UCD Archives and UCD Library Special Collections will be digitised, broadening the collection “The 1916 Rising: Making Memory.” It is also hoped that the Ernie O’Malley notebooks, along with more transcriptions overseen by Cormac O’Malley, could be made available on line. Finally, the resource lists for “The O’Rahilly and 1916” and “Desmond Ryan and 1916” provide the basis for further digitisation projects.

Secondly, the scope of this project could be extended so that material held elsewhere could also be added to or linked with this resource. Other Irish institutions with significant
holdings of material relating to the Rising include: The National Archives of Ireland, Military Archives (Cathal Brugha Barracks) including the Bureau of Military History, and the National Library of Ireland. There are also significant holdings in institutions in England and Northern Ireland. The Colonial Office, Home Office and War Office Records are held in the Public Record Office/ National Archives in London while significant information is also housed in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) in Belfast.

Finally, existing and emerging scholarly material could be digitised and available online so that the Towards 2016 resource becomes a repository not only for archival material but for academic interpretations of this material. One particularly fruitful field for researchers lies in the integration of print and visual material, and in the greater use of ephemeral material. Any of these various extensions to the project would require significant funding to undertake the level of digitisation and cataloguing work involved as well as to deal with the complex area of copyright clearance.

Such future developments would undoubtedly benefit scholars and should be pursued. However, this project already constitutes a major resource in itself. While the Ernie O’Malley interview with Liam Manahan will be most useful to scholars, the “Making Memory” collection and the J.R. Clark Diary will be of particular interest to a wide public audience and to history students and teachers at all levels. These latter items, available online through the IVRLA, provide an exhibition collection of UCD’s holdings of this type of material. As we approach the centenary of 1916, the research team hopes to see this collection becoming a resource of both public and scholarly interest.

WORKS CITED


