



# Irish Women Rise

## LAOH Irish History Newsletter

"Ancient Ireland bred warrior women, and women played a heroic part in those days....What distinguished Ireland chiefly of old was the number of fighting women who held their own against the world....who were super-women - the Maeves, the Machas, the warrior-queens."

Constance Markievicz *Irish Citizen* October 23, 1915

## Mna agus Gunna

### Women and Guns- Preparation for the Rising

On July 26, 1914, the Asgard owned by Erskine and Molly Childers sailed into Howth Harbor. Molly Spring Rice had suggested using private yachts to smuggle weapons into Ireland and also provided financial assistance for the weapons. The Childers made their yacht available for this important task. The Asgard crew consisted of Erskine and Molly Childers, Mary Spring Rice, Gordon Shepard and 2 Donegal Fishing men. The cargo consisted of 900 guns and 29,000 rounds of



ammunition. On arrival in the Harbor, Volunteers and some members of Na Fianna met the yacht to remove and store the guns and ammunition.

At this time, the Na Fianna and the Connolly sisters were camping with Countess Markievicz. Nora and Ina, the daughters of James Connolly were members of the only girls branch of the Na Fianna. On Sunday morning the boys left camp to help with the Howth Gun Running. The Connolly sisters were very disappointed that they were not included to help with the Howth Gun Running. Nora told her sister Ina not to show her feelings to the boys. Ina was told by Nora: "A good soldier takes disappointment and defeat with his chin up. Perhaps they wanted to leave somebody at the cottage in case they were all arrested." The next day the Connolly sisters were told that they would take small arms to Belfast. Countess Markievicz told them "You are the first women to run guns to the North. Show what you are made of. Deliver them safely is all I ask. I have every confidence in you" (From *In Their Own Voices*)



Some of the female relatives of prominent Volunteers were essential to the movement of guns especially Aine O'Rahily, who was one of the first women to drive a car in Ireland. Aine was the sister of Michael O'Rahily. In Senia Paseta's book *IRISH NATIONAL WOMEN 1900-1918* pages 161-162, Aine O'Rahily is quoted: "I was to help Michael at the office to work in connection with the purchase and distributions of guns. We always worked in his house, some of the guns were kept at our house. They mostly came from Birmingham as did the ammunition. On one occasion when a lot of guns arrived we were to expect men from the country to purchase some of them. That evening a knock came to the door and I saw 4 men and thought that they were the men from the country, so I welcomed them. But they were G men who searched the house and took away all the guns they found. Fortunately as the house 54 Northumberland Rd was very large they overlooked one room on the return containing a big portion of the guns. This was very fortunate as the same room contained a list of the quartermasters from the country who were to collect them. Our problem then was how to remove the guns. We decided we would form an orchestra. Various people including the

Plunketts and Diarmuid O'Laoghaire came brining their instrument cases into which we fitted the revolvers. They were got away safely. That was the first raid we ever had, it was also the first occasion of which we had a quantity of arms delivered to the house. Michael,Staines used to come to Michael's house regularly to arrange about getting guns. He would bring the money for them. He seemed to be a very earnest worker. I used to sign some of the receipts in Michael's name if he was busy. One day he told me as I had been working so well that he would give me a treat. He took me one Sunday to Howth and when we near our destination he said there were guns being brought in. The yacht was in the bay and it was a lovely sight. The Volunteers were all there before us. Michael filled the car with ammuniton so I came back by bus."

Many other women were involved in obtains guns for the Rising. These women placed their lives in jeopardy to prepare for the Rising. GO RAIBH MAITH AGAT to the following women and the many unknown women who help in arming the Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army:Grace O'Sullivan, Margaret Skinnider, Miss O'Neill, Marie Perolz, Brigid Lyons, Mary McGeehan and the women of Cumann na mBan.

### IRISH WOMEN RISE POSTERS

Regina Begley New York State LAOH Irish Historian designed 5 Posters on Cumann na mBan that were displayed at the New York Convention. I have asked Regina for permission to add her posters to the website. The posters will be on the website when Sandi Swift returns from Ireland. GO RAIBH MAITH AGAT Regina.

The LAOH and INA of Cleveland hosted the 3rd in a series of 1916 Events Honoring the Heroes using their own words on July 17. Pittsburg 1916 Easter Rising Committee Centenary Kickoff Event will be held on August 1 for more info please contact [info@pittsburghremembers1916.com](mailto:info@pittsburghremembers1916.com). Please share your events. This is a very important time in Irish History.

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