

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A CENTURY OF WOMEN AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

A Century of Women's Progress? Yes and No

Ireland and Britain 1918

The Representation of the People Act 1918 made a huge change to the electoral system of the then United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The act was the first to allow all men aged over 21 to take part in the political system, but extended the franchise only to women over 30 who held £5 of property, or had husbands who did.

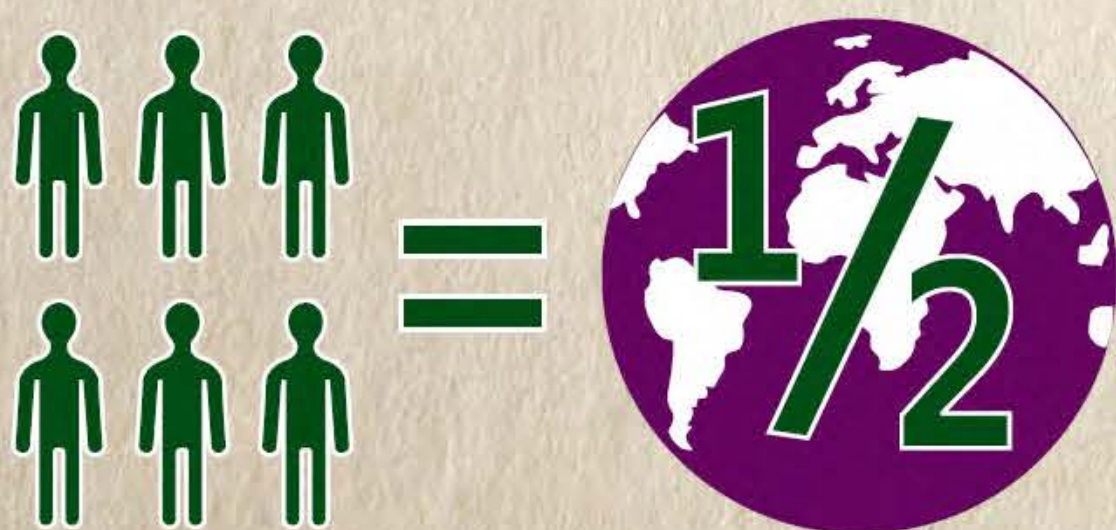
The act allowed 5.6 million additional men and 8.4 million women to vote for the first time. Also for the first time women in these islands could stand for election to Parliament. For the previous twenty years women had been allowed to vote and stand for election to Rural and Urban District Councils, and to what were known as Boards of Guardians, responsible for looking after the poorest in society. From 1911 women could vote and stand for election to county councils and Corporations. Many other countries had given the vote to women before 1918.



Planet Earth 2018

100 years on from the vote being given to women we still live in a world where a tiny group of incredibly wealthy people, mostly men, have a crucial say in the economic and political life of the peoples of the world. 100 years on from the ideals of the Proclamation of Easter 1916, that applies to Ireland too.

Some stats: the world's six richest people now own more wealth than the bottom half of the world's population, to put it another way:



The infamous 1% now have more money than the bottom 99% while one in seven people struggle to survive on less than one euro or \$1.25 a day.

A disproportionate amount of the struggling 99% are women and children; on average almost 29,000 children die every day from entirely preventable causes such as diarrhoea, malaria and pneumonia.

The Sultan of Brunei owns some 500 Rolls-Royces and lives in one of the world's largest palaces, a building with 1,788 rooms. We do not know how many cars his wife, the Sultana, owns. We can guess who cleans those 1,788 rooms.

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1918

The Irish Free State established on 6th December and grants equal voting rights to all men and women over 21.

The Juries Act declares that juries in criminal and civil cases be drawn from ratepayers causing an almost total exclusion of women from jury service.

1922

1927

Franchise granted to Irish women over 30. Countess Markievicz elected the first woman to the first Dáil.

BEFORE THE SUFFRAGETTES PIONEERS OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Anna Haslam

Anna Maria Haslam was born in Youghal in April 1829, the 16th of 17 children of Abraham Fisher and Jane Moore. The Fishers were Quaker merchants in Youghal noted for charitable works, particularly during the Great Famine.

She married Thomas Haslam, a Quaker from Mountmellick in 1854. Anna Haslam espoused multiple causes: anti-slavery, married women's property reform, equal rights for women in education and employment, the repeal of the discriminatory Contagious Diseases Acts, and women's franchise. She was one of 15 Irish signatories of John Stuart Mill's petition to Parliament on behalf of women's voting rights, out of 1,499 signatories.

Anna and Thomas Haslam were founding members of the Dublin Women's Suffrage Association (DWSA) in 1876. It was the first permanent suffrage society in Ireland, and only the third in the British Isles. Membership was open to men and women and included many members of Parliament, unionist and nationalist.

Haslam's capacity for hard work was legendary.

"To circularise every Irish member or to write 30 or 40 letters to prominent public men in her own hand was mere child's play."

In 1896, after women in Ireland won the right to be elected as Poor Law Guardians, Anna spearheaded a campaign to encourage qualified women to stand for election. In 1898 women won eligibility to vote in local government elections, and to stand for election as rural and urban district councillors. By 1898 there were 85 women Poor Law Guardians, 31 of whom were also rural district councillors. She died in November 1922 and is buried beside Thomas in Temple Hill, Dublin.

In 1914 Francis Sheehy Skeffington wrote that the achievements of Thomas and Anna Haslam were too often forgotten by those "who have entered into the harvest of their labours."



Hanna Sheehy Skeffington

Johanna Mary "Hanna" Sheehy was born in Kanturk on 24 May 1877, daughter of a Nationalist MP. She received a Master of Arts Degree in 1902 from the Royal University of Ireland. She was introduced to Francis Skeffington by James Joyce and the couple were married in June 1903, wearing their graduation gowns as wedding dress and suit. Both husband and wife took the surname Sheehy Skeffington.

The couple were founder members of the Irish Women's Franchise League. Hanna also founded *The Irish Citizen*, a feminist newspaper first published in 1912. The motto of the newspaper was, 'For Men and Women Equally the Rights of Citizenship; For Men and Women Equally The Duties of Citizenship'.

In June 1912, she was arrested along with seven other women for smashing the glass windows of Dublin Castle, a reaction to the exclusion of women from the franchise of the third Home Rule Bill, and sentenced to a spell in Mountjoy.

She was sent to Mountjoy the following year when trying to present leaflets to Bonar Law, and Edward Carson, Tory and Unionist politicians. She went on a hunger strike for five days until her release. She lost her job as a teacher for her continued involvement in feminist militancy.



"Until the women of Ireland are free, the men will not achieve emancipation."

Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, 1909

Francis Sheehy Skeffington was shot by British forces during the 1916 Rising. She travelled to the USA to give talks to raise awareness of the struggle for Irish freedom.

She co-founded the Women's Prisoners' Defence League, to campaign and fundraise for over 7,000 republicans who were imprisoned as a consequence of the Irish Civil War.

Elected to Dublin Corporation in 1920, in 1926 she joined Fianna Fáil as an executive, a position she kept for only a year. In 1935 she spoke out against the Conditions of Employment Bill which restricted employment opportunities for women.

She strongly opposed the provisions in De Valera's constitution which call on the state to "recognise that by her life within the home, a woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved" and to "endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home".

She died on 20 April 1946 and is buried alongside her husband in Glasnevin cemetery.

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▶ Censorship of Publications Act provides for a mandatory ban on books or periodicals advocating "the unnatural prevention of conception".

1929

1931

▶ The Irish government introduces a marriage ban requiring female primary school teachers to resign on marriage.

1932

▶ Louie Bennett becomes the first woman President of the Irish Trade Union Congress.

Women's Suffrage in the UK

The campaign for women's rights in Britain was born out of two movements: the suffragists (19th century), and the suffragettes formed in 1903. The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies wanted votes for middle class property-owning women, and advocated peaceful, polite tactics.

In 1903, Emmeline Pankhurst impatient with respectable and middle class tactics set up a new society with her daughters Christabel and Sylvia – the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), believing that the women's campaign

needed an active organisation including young working class women. Their motto was 'deeds not words' - from 1912 onwards the WSPU became more militant in their methods of campaign, including chaining themselves to railings and hunger strikes.



Emmeline Pankhurst is arrested outside Buckingham Palace in May 1914 whilst trying to present a petition to King George V.

The rough treatment of many suffragettes arrested and jailed during the course of their protests gained increasing sympathy and support from the public. One particular suffragette, **Emily Wilding Davison**, was arrested 9 times, force-fed 49 times in prison. She died tragically under the King's horse, Anmer, at the 1913 Derby.



Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906)
Men, their rights, and nothing more;
women, their rights, and nothing less.

The women's rights movement in the United States gathered momentum the 1840s. In 1845 Margaret Fuller published *'Woman in the Nineteenth Century'*, a key document in American feminism. By 1869 the first national suffrage organisations were established, led by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and by Lucy Stone. In 1890 they merged into the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) with Anthony as its leader.

Born in Adams, Massachusetts, Susan grew up in a politically active Quaker family who worked to end slavery in the abolitionist movement. They were also part of the temperance movement. It was while campaigning against alcohol that she was inspired to fight for women's rights when she was denied speaking rights because she was a woman. She later realised that women would never be taken seriously until they had the right to vote.

Together with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, she was one of the most visible leaders of the women's suffrage movement in the late 19th century. Susan was arrested, tried and convicted for voting in 1872, a move which brought national attention to the suffrage cause.

Susan remained active in the movement until her death in 1906, 14 years before women received the right to vote. The 19th Amendment, which safeguards women's right to vote, was named in her honour, the Susan B. Anthony Amendment.

The women's movement in America focused on women's suffrage on a state-by-state basis. In 1920, the right of women to vote was achieved on a national basis when the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was passed. However, it would be many years before some States ratified it, including Virginia in 1952; Alabama in 1953; Florida and South Carolina in 1969; and Mississippi in 1984.



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The Widows and Orphans Pension Act is introduced. The Criminal Law (Amendment Act) prohibits the sale, advertising or importation of contraceptives.

1937 Constitution makes specific reference to a specific role for women in Irish society and prohibits divorce.

The Irish Housewives Association is founded.

1935

1937

1942

CORK WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVISTS



Geraldine Cummins (1890-1969) was the daughter of Edward Ashley Cummins, professor of medicine at UCC and his wife, Jane. She was a talented athlete and was a member of the Irish International Women's Hockey Team.

As a young woman she became involved with the suffrage movement and was a founding member of the Munster Women's Franchise League.

She campaigned closely with Susanne Day and with her co-authored three plays *Broken Faith*, *Toilers* and *Fox and Geese*. In 1919, her novel *The Land They Loved* was published.

She is best remembered as a medium who produced several books through 'automatic writing'. However, she continued to produce creative literature in her later life and in 1952 was Edith Somerville's first biographer.

She died in 1969.

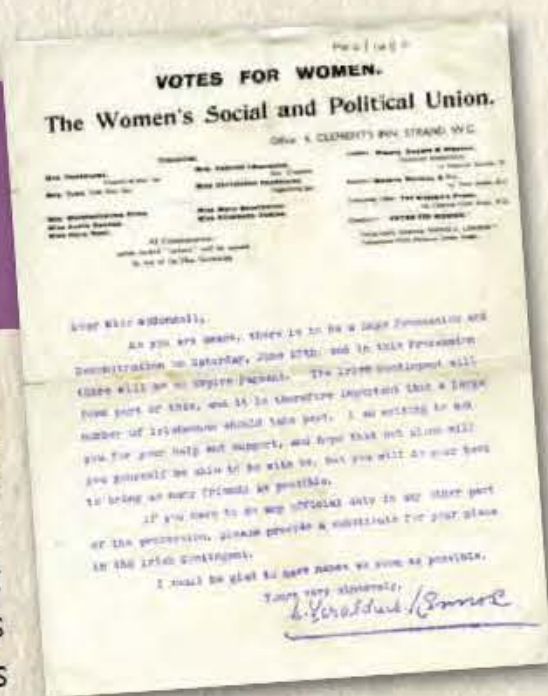
Geraldine Lennox (1883-1958) was born in Bantry and grew up in Cork city. She joined the militant Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in London in 1909.

By 1913, she was a sub-editor on the organisation's newspaper *The Suffragette*, at a time when statements in the paper were considered incitements to violence. She was an important link between British and Irish suffragists groups. The letter on right from her to Mabel McConnell (Fitzgerald), concerns the involvement of Irish women in suffragist protests in England.

Geraldine was arrested and charged with conspiring with the Pankhursts and Edwyn Godwin Clayton to cause malicious damage to property. Without any evidence, she was sentenced to six months in prison where she went on hunger strike, was released when her health deteriorated, recovered and was then rearrested. Members of the Munster Women's Franchise League organised a 'petition from the citizens of Cork' against her re-arrest and the conditions she was held in.

She served with a nursing unit in France during WW1 and worked in London after the war where she continued her involvement with the women's movement.

She died in Cork in 1958.



Mary (or Máire) MacSwiney (1872-1942) was born in London, the sister of Terence MacSwiney. The family returned to Cork when she was six and in 1891 her father emigrated to Australia where he died in 1895.

Mary taught in England until her mother's death in 1904 when she returned to Cork and began teaching at St. Angela's. In 1911 she was a founder member of the Munster Women's Franchise League.

In 1914 after the outbreak of WW1, she left the suffrage movement following a row over a field ambulance the group had fundraised for being presented to the military authorities. She accused the 'majority of the committee' of being 'Britons first, suffragists second and Irish women, perhaps, a bad third'.

Having co-founded the Cork Branch of Cumann na mBan in 1914, she clashed with Francis and Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington in the *Irish Citizen* over their criticism of the group for not demanding equality with the Irish Volunteers.

Following her arrest for republican activity in 1916, she lost her position at St. Angela's and went on to found, with her sister Annie, Scoil Ite.

Her election to Cumann na mBan's national executive in 1917 marked her first leadership role at national level but it was her brother Terence's death on hunger strike on 25 October 1920 that brought her to national prominence. She was first elected to the Dáil in June 1921 and remained an uncompromising republican, fiercely opposed to the Treaty. She died in Cork in 1942, aged 69.

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▶ Children's Allowance is introduced to families with 3 or more children, payable to the head of the household, regardless of income.

1944

▶ The Mother and Child Scheme is proposed by Minister for Health Noel Browne. The Bill is later withdrawn following pressure from the Catholic hierarchy.

1951

▶ Legal adoption is introduced.

1952

CORK WOMEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

Susanne Rouviere Day was born in Cork in 1876 to Robert and Rebecca Scott Day. She attended the IWFL meeting, Cork City Hall in October 1910 where Emmeline Pankhurst was speaker and claimed that event, 'put a match to the unlit beacon of suffrage opinion in the South'. In February 1911, the Cork women broke away from the national organisation, forming the non-militant Munster Women's Franchise League (MWFL).

Suzanne was an energetic suffrage campaigner and public speaker and in 1911 she and two other women were elected as Poor Law Guardians. This role gained her insights into class and welfare issues in Cork. Her ironic and humorous novel *The Amazing Philanthropists* describes her struggle to persuade fellow guardians to rebuild a children's ward so overcrowded that children slept two to a bed. She was the first woman to stand in a Cork municipal election in January 1914, missing a seat by six votes.

In 1913, the Abbey Theatre staged her play *Broken Faith* co-authored with fellow MWFL member Geraldine Cummins. Their second play *Toilers* was staged in Dublin in 1913 and in Cork in 1914. A third play, *Fox and Geese*, the original manuscript of which is held by the Cork City and County Archives, was staged by the Abbey in 1917.



Susanne Rouviere Day
(1876 – 1964)

After the war she settled in London and played no further part in Irish politics. She wrote for the *Yorkshire Post* and *Daily Telegraph* and published two more books, *Round About Bar le Duc* in 1918 and *Where the Mistral Blows* in 1933. She died in Cromer, Norfolk, in 1964.

Day was clear on women's responsibility to speak out against war and in 1915 she joined a Quaker relief unit in France as an aid worker. Her 1930s, unpublished 'St. Martin's Cloak' manuscript (held here at Cork City Library) describes civilian experiences there.

Edith Somerville began her career as a painter and illustrator, but it is as the writers Somerville and Ross, co-authors of *The Irish RM* and *The Real Charlotte*, that she and her cousin Violet Martin are best remembered. In addition to their role as writers, they were, as Edith's biographer Gifford Lewis says, women who 'spent much of their lives trying to improve and alter the status of women'.



Edith Somerville
(1858-1949)

Edith was an enthusiastic supporter of the Suffrage Movement and attended a mass rally in London in 1908. She and Violet were on the organising committee of the suffrage meeting addressed by Mrs Pankhurst in Cork in 1910 and were stewards on the night. In 1911, she was invited to become president of the newly formed Munster Women's Franchise League.

Edith believed that both men and women should be involved in law-making and that equal status would have beneficial social and economic implications and broaden men's understanding of social issues.

By the time Violet died in 1915 they had published fourteen books together. Devastated by her death, Edith tried to contact her through seances, claiming Violet still influenced her writing. Following the 1916 Easter Rising she wrote a letter to *The Times*, blaming the British government for the situation in Ireland.

Between 1920 and 1938 she concentrated on her art and had exhibitions of her work in Dublin, London and New York and was a sought-after illustrator of children's picture books.

She died in Castletownshend in 1949, aged 92 and is buried beside Violet.

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The Health Act provides free medical, surgical, midwifery and hospital maternity services.

The Married Women's Status Act gives married women control over their own property.

Ban on married women national teachers is lifted and the Garda Síochána Act provides for the employment of ban Gardaí (female police).

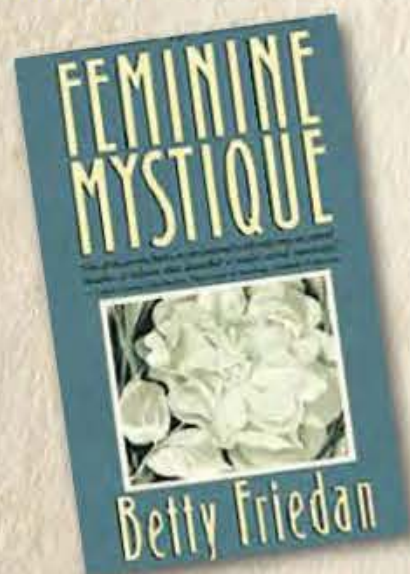
1953

1957

1958

1960s and 1970s: THE SECOND WAVE OF FEMINISM

The first wave of the feminist movement in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century was mostly concerned with women's civil rights. The second wave in the 1960s and 1970s witnessed the emergence of a new international Women's Liberation Movement that expanded feminist discussions to equality in marriage and the workplace, sex and sexuality, and violence against women.



Betty Friedan's 1963 bestseller *The Feminine Mystique* exposed a creeping fatigue amongst American housewives in the early 1960s. She writes about tranquilliser and alcohol abuse, and a general desperation to uphold an exaggerated femininity that had developed since the 1940s.

50 years ago, after the Paris uprising Simone de Beauvoir commented on what she noticed about the May 1968 *evenements*



*"The men made the speeches,
women typed
The men discussed politics,
the women prepared the coffee"*

A new National Organisation for Women (NOW) was formed in 1966, initially led by Friedan who was determined to make the organisation respectable.

However, the feminist movement in the U.S. was deeply divided between younger and older generations, upper-class and lower-class, conservative and radical, and there was strong reluctance on the part of younger members to form any leadership or hierarchy within the organisation. This more radical "bra-burning, anti-man, politics-of-orgasm" group of feminists, as Friedman described them, preferred to let the organisation operate collectively and experimentally.

Nonetheless, some key role models for the feminist movement emerged. These included **Gloria Steinem** (above) and Australia's **Germaine Greer** (below) who attracted media attention through both their popular writings and their appealing image.



In 1963 Steinem got a job working undercover at the New York Playboy Club and set out to expose the exploitative working conditions and sexual demands placed on women workers. Her subsequent article 'A Bunny's Tale' challenged prevailing attitudes to sex and she became one of the most influential figures in feminist history.

Another powerful influence on the women's rights movement was singer **Odette Holmes** (on right) who became a key voice of the Civil Rights Movement. She performed at political rallies and demonstrations, including the march on Washington with Martin Luther King in 1963, and inspired a generation of activists to work towards equal rights.



The ideals and arguments of the American movement also influenced a new feminist movement that was emerging in Britain in the 1960s, and notable achievements during these years included the introduction of the contraceptive pill for married women in 1961 – it became available to all women in 1974; the women's strike at the Ford plant in Dagenham in 1968 which led to the Equal Pay Act in 1970; and the Sex Discrimination Act in 1975.

The second wave of feminism flowed from the same currents as the civil rights movement in the USA.

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▶ The Children's Allowance extended to families with one or more children.

1964

▶ The Succession Act guarantees a minimum share of the deceased spouse's estate to the surviving spouse.

1963

▶ Guardianship of Infants Act gives men and women equal guardianship rights.

1965

1960'S AND 1970'S: THE ROOTS OF IRISH FEMINISM

The 'marriage bar'

Prior to 1973, women working in the public service had to resign from their jobs if they got married. In 1969, the first Commission on the Status of Women was set up. It received submissions of recommendations from 41 women's groups, including the Irish Women's Liberation Movement and AIM [Act, Inform, Motivate] - a law reform women's group. The Commission found that there was much inequality in the treatment of women in Irish society, and following the Commission's report in 1973, the marriage bar in the public service was removed in July of the same year. In 1977, the Employment Equality Act prohibited discrimination on the basis of gender or marital status in almost all areas of employment.

Prior to 1974, **deserted wives** had no financial protection. Under the law, a deserted wife had to prove that she had made every effort to reconcile with her husband, that he had left of his own free will, that six months had passed since he had left and that he had sent her no money during the past 6 months. She was also required to be under fifty years of age and to have at least one dependent child in order to qualify for the meagre state allowance. In July 1974, on foot of the recommendations of the Commission on the Status of Women, the qualifying period for a deserted wife to receive an allowance was reduced from six to three months, and what actually constituted 'desertion' was also eased.

Maureen Black A Voice for Widows

Maureen Curtis was born in Cork, the child of Patrick and Mary Curtis. She won a scholarship to University College, Cork in 1930, and graduated with a BA in languages and a Higher Diploma in Education. She moved to England to a teaching post in Westcliffe-on-Sea. There she met and married Jack Black. He died a young man and Maureen was left to rear her young son.

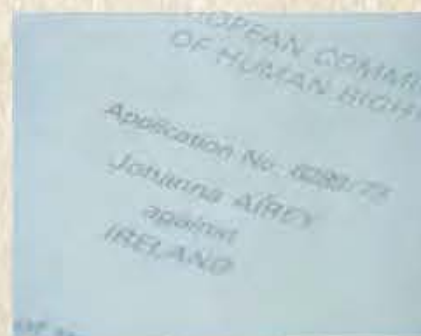
In the early 1960s she took early retirement and returned to Cork, and it was then that she began the work that made her so well-known and admired in the city and throughout Ireland, leading to her being conferred with the Freedom of Cork in 1993.

She saw with fresh eyes the difficulties and problems faced by many different groups and individuals. She worked with colleagues to provide an information system - the Cork Citizens' Advice Bureau - the first in Ireland, and a model for others to follow. She co-founded the Cork Widows' Association.

Maureen Black had vision, courage, leadership, a sense of justice, and above all, compassion. She died in 1999.

"I'm not a women's libber, I just want to be myself"

Josie Airey, courageous Corkwoman



Josie Airey (1932-2002) made legal history in 1979 when she won her case against the Irish government at the European Court of Human Rights, which upheld her complaint over the lack of free legal aid. Her successful case, in which she was represented by Mary Robinson, Ireland's future President, had two long-term results:

Firstly the principle of free legal aid for family law cases was established, not only in Ireland but throughout the EU.

Secondly her courage in fighting her own cause brought forward justice for all wives who were going through marital breakdown in Ireland.

She was born Johanna Lynch, and when her parents died when she was a young girl, she was reared by her grandmother near The Lough. When her marriage broke down in the early 1970s Josie received no support from the state for herself and her four young children. She received little support from public representatives, the legal profession, or civil society; with the exception of the late Eileen Desmond TD.

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▶ National Association of Widows founded.

▶ First meeting of the Irish Women's Liberation Movement. The first Commission on the Status of Women is set up by the Irish government with Dr Thekla Beere as chair.

1968

1967

1970

▶ An ad hoc committee representing several long-standing Women's groups presents a memorandum to the Taoiseach calling for the establishment of a National Commission on the Status of Women.



Margaret Gaj in Gaj's restaurant, early 1970s.

CHAINS OR CHANGE: THE IRISH WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT

Margaret Gaj owned the restaurant, Gaj's, on Baggot Street, where the IWLM would meet every Monday night. Margaret Gaj was passionate about women's rights. Her circle of friends included Sinn Féin official Máirín de Búrca, journalist Mary Maher, who was interested in socialist issues, Máirín Johnston, who was a member of the Communist Party and who was also active in the Labour Party and Dr. Moira Woods, who was in an organisation called Irish Voice on Vietnam, which protested against the war in Vietnam.

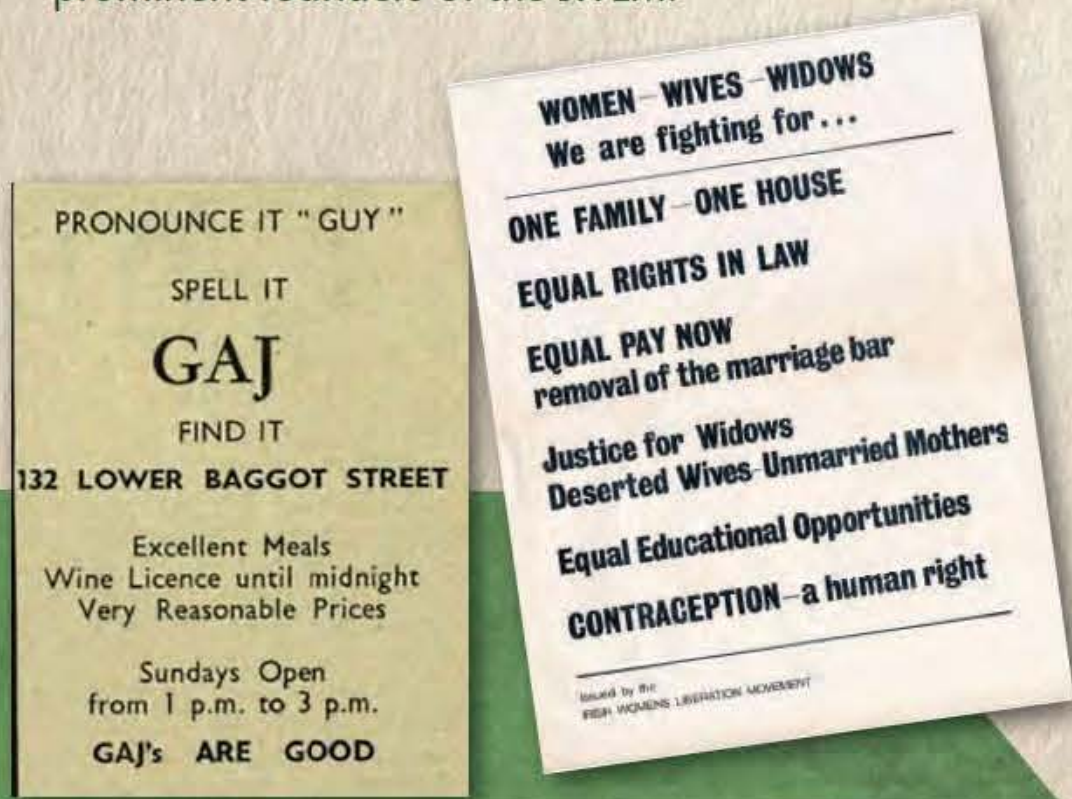
In the summer of 1970, these five women met in Bewley's café in Dublin and decided that it was time for some drastic changes in Irish women's lives; time to fight for equal rights. This was the first meeting of the Irish Women's Liberation Movement (IWLM). Although the group lasted little more than seven months, the legacy it left changed women's lives significantly and positively. Proof of the IWLM's impact can be seen when it is considered that the two injustices that this group fought hardest against – the marriage bar, which was abolished in 1973, and the illegality of contraception – are unimaginable in today's world.

There were around a dozen women active in the IWLM, the majority of them were journalists. Nell McCafferty and Mary Kenny, both journalists, were two other prominent founders of the IWLM.



IWLM Chains or Change charter.

Chains or Change was the title of the IWLM charter. It put together the goals and ideals that the IWLM strove for in the form of a booklet. There were 6 demands: equal pay; an end to the marriage bar that kept women from working after they got married; equal rights in law; justice for widows, deserted wives and "unmarried mothers"; equal education opportunities; and the legalisation of contraception. Neither abortion nor divorce were mentioned at all in *Chains or Change*. When the most basic civil rights for women were being fought for, abortion and divorce did not even arise because they were not a priority. The booklet was a milestone in the history of women's rights in Ireland, because it was the first time that anyone had published a comprehensive list of the injustices that church, state and social code perpetuated against women.



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WOMEN - WIVES - WIDOWS
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ONE FAMILY - ONE HOUSE
EQUAL RIGHTS IN LAW
EQUAL PAY NOW
removal of the marriage bar
Justice for Widows
Deserted Wives - Unmarried Mothers
Equal Educational Opportunities
CONTRACEPTION - a human right
Issued by the
IRISH WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT

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Report on the Commission on the Status of Women is published.

Council for the Status of Women established. Civil Service (Employment of Married Women) Act 1973 removes the Marriage Ban in the Civil Service, Local Authorities and Health Boards. Social Welfare Act provides for Deserted Wives and Unmarried Mother's Allowance.

Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act introduced. The Supreme Court overturns the ban on the importation of contraceptives for private use and recognised the existence of a constitutional right to marital privacy in the McGee case. The Social Welfare Act grants payment of Children's Allowance to mothers. Provision for payment of an allowance to single women over 58 and to the wives of prisoners. Women's Aid opens its first refuge. The Irish Gay Rights movement is established.

1972

WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT: LEADING VOICES



Nell McCafferty at a protest outside a children's reform school after her series on the Children's Court was published in the Irish Times.

Nell McCafferty was born in Derry. After gaining a degree in Queen's University in Belfast she trained as a teacher. Nell could not get a job in Derry: Protestant schools knew she was Catholic, and Catholic schools saw her as a communist. She moved to Dublin to work for the *Irish Times*. Early in her time in Dublin, wanting to buy a record player on hire purchase, she was told that no woman could sign an agreement without the co-signature of a male guarantor. A male stranger signed for her because she did not know any men in Dublin. This man was unemployed, and her own earnings were five times more than his welfare entitlements.

In her writings she did not have to give her opinion; her writing style and her description of what she observed in society were enough to expose hypocrisy and injustice. As well as being a feminist activist, Nell was also a civil rights activist on issues in Northern Ireland. When she started at *The Irish Times*, she joined the "women's page" staff. Initially, she was fearful that this would involve writing about fashion, cooking and babies, but it enabled her to write on women's liberation and women's rights.



Nell McCafferty in Derry during rioting which followed the shooting of Denis Heaney of the IRA by the British Army, 1978



recent photo of Nell McCafferty

1973



Nuala O'Faolain was a feminist writer, journalist, television producer and broadcaster. She wrote two memoirs, *Are You Somebody?* (1996) and *Almost There* (2003), as well as a historical biography, *The Story of Chicago May* (2005), and two novels, *My dream of you* (2001) and *Best Love, Rosie* (2009), the latter of which was published posthumously.

She was the first memoirist to accurately describe what life was like for women who grew up in the Ireland of the forties and fifties, and she blended the personal and the political in a way that had not been done before. Her writing generated a passionate response in women, because they felt she was writing about the "real" Ireland in which they grew up and that she allowed them to speak more truthfully about themselves. Nuala worked as part of an all-woman production team at Raidió Teilifís Éireann from 1977, creating programmes dealing specifically with women's issues. She also worked as an opinion columnist for *The Irish Times* from 1986, writing on sexual harassment, sexuality and punishment, divorce and abortion. She won the honour of journalist of the year for this column.

Nuala was in a relationship with Nell McCafferty for 15 years. She described this relationship as the single "most life-giving" relationship of her life.

She was awarded the Prix Femina for *The Story of Chicago May* in 2006.

Nuala died of cancer in May 2008.



Mary Kenny

Mary Kenny became women's editor of the Irish Press in 1969, having worked as a journalist at London's *Evening Standard* for 5 years. Kenny was outspoken on sexual discrimination and inequality, and used her women's page to guide her readers through the activities of the women's liberation movement, inviting them to get involved. When Kenny returned to Ireland in 1969, many political movements were gaining momentum, and she wanted to be a part of the change that was happening in the country. She met Nell McCafferty and some other founders of the Irish Women's Liberation Movement (IWLM) through journalism.

Although there was no official leader in the IWLM, a public relations representative was needed, and Mary Kenny took on this job. She was the link with RTÉ on the views of the IWLM on certain topics, and organised for members of the IWLM to appear on the Late Late Show, which was the most important night in the life of the movement. She was criticised for her flamboyance and arrogance, but was willing to push the boundaries of acceptable behaviour further than anyone else. Mary Kenny's *Am I a feminist? Are you?* published in 2017, explores what feminism has achieved over the last five decades, and discusses serious subjects such as female genital mutilation and abortion as well as lighter topics.



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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A CENTURY OF WOMEN AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

▶ UN International Women's Year and the UN Decade for Women is inaugurated at Mexico. Arlen House (publishing house) established in Galway. Banshee magazine is published by the IWLM.

1976

1975

WOMEN'S HEALTH AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

In May 1971, the IWLM founders organised what became known as the "contraceptive train", which was a protest against the fact that contraceptives were illegal in the Republic of Ireland. Nell McCafferty said that she had got the idea for the contraceptive train when she was in Northern Ireland at a civil rights march. The march went from North to South, and at the border, a student activist called Cyril Tallman held up a copy of Edna O'Brien's novel *Country Girls* in one hand and a Durex condom in the other, saying that both were banned in the South. Nell was initially indignant about the condom, but the following year when the IWLM was talking about contraceptives, Nell got the idea of reversing the journey from Dublin to the North.

There was a ban on contraception in the Republic of Ireland enshrined in the 1935 Criminal Law Act, making the importation, distribution, sale and even advertising of contraceptive devices a criminal offence.

47 members of the IWLM boarded the contraceptive train on 22 May 1971, filling two carriages. It turned out that the only contraceptives that were available in Belfast without prescription were condoms and spermicidal jelly. The group were not happy with the prospect of taking a stand at Dublin customs with just condoms and spermicidal jelly, so they bought packets of aspirins, since they were similar enough in appearance to contraceptive pills! When the women arrived at customs in Dublin, the customs officers told them they were breaking the law, but let them through. The contraceptive train accomplished what it set out to do; the state refused to lift the ban on contraceptives, but

- ▶ CAP (Contraceptive Action Programme) launched by Irishwomen United.
- ▶ European Commission rejects Irish Government's application for derogation from Commission's Directive on Equal Pay. Juries Act passed following deBurca/Anderson case, which deemed conditional exclusion of women from jury lists to be unconstitutional. IWU invade the 'male only' forty-foot bathing area in Sandycove. Family Law (Maintenance of Spouses and Children) Act passed. Family Home Protection Act passed, to prevent the family home being sold without family's consent or without the prior consent of the other spouse.

it also failed to enforce it. Thus the IWLM exposed this hypocrisy and proved that women would be free to import contraceptives from the North into the Republic from then on without any interference from law enforcement officials. Nell McCafferty made a statement at the train station, and two of the women went on the *Late Late Show* on TV to talk about the experience.

Mary Robinson failed in March and May of 1971 to get the Senate to discuss her Contraceptive Bill. It was not until 1979 that the government passed the Family Planning Act. This Act allowed only married couples to get access to contraceptive devices other than the pill with a prescription. Family planning clinics were already selling condoms, but the government was turning a blind eye to this. In 1990, the Irish Family Planning Association was fined £500 for selling condoms in the Virgin Megastore in Dublin. Finally, in 1992, the government extended legislation to allow supermarkets and retail stores to sell condoms. The contraceptive train literally set the wheels in motion regarding the legalisation of contraceptives, but it took a long time before the law was changed for the benefit of women.



UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A CENTURY OF WOMEN AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

1977

- The first Rape Crisis centre is opened in Dublin. Employment Equality Act resulted in establishment of the Employment Equality Agency.
- Unfair Dismissals Act passed.
- ▼ Wicca magazine's first publication.

- ▶ "Women Against Violence Against Women" march to protest against rape and sexual assault.
- a. Irish Feminist Information (IFI) is set up. The first Irish Conference on Lesbianism is held at Trinity College Dublin.

1979

1978

- Maire Geoghan Quinn appointed to the Cabinet, the first woman since Countess Markievicz in 1919. Health (Family Planning) Act passed restricting sales of contraceptives to bona fide couples only.
- ▼ Women's Right to Choose group formed.

BANNED! WRITING AGAINST THE GRAIN



Edna O'Brien (1930-)

"Edna O'Brien was the first woman to lambast my country's constraints on women and she flung the door wide open on what it means to be yourself". Yvonne Watterson, Irish Times 23/2/18.

Her first novel, *The Country Girls*, was banned in 1960 for "its explicit sexual content" – offending the Catholic Church and the political establishment.

She endured public condemnation (then minister, Charles Haughey, labelled it "a smear on Irish women") and book burning (copies of it were burned by a parish priest in the grounds of a church in Limerick). Other books by O'Brien were banned *Girls in their married bliss*, *August is a wicked month* and *Casualties of peace*.

Some of the male literary establishment of the time were far from complimentary of her achievements – not least her husband who said (of the novel "You can write it and I will never forgive you!").

Eimear MacBride wrote– "Frank O'Connor and LP Hartley particularly embarrassed themselves with dismissive comments about her characters being "nymphomaniacs" and the author simply displaying "a poor taste in men". Ironically, O'Brien won the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Prize in 2011.

Thomas McCarthy, one of the judges of the Prize in 2011 said: "There is a fierceness about her talent, a bravery which is kind of the opposite of cool. It is extremely emotional, but an emotion that is held back with various handcuffs and shackles".

In 2018 O'Brien was the recipient of the PEN/Nabokov Award for the "absolute perfection of her prose which broke down social and sexual barriers for women in Ireland and beyond". However she did have an interesting comment to make about Nabokov – "Nabokov, genius that he was, was quite scathing of women"!



Above picture: Kate O'Brien and her cat, early 1970s.

Kate O'Brien

Kate O'Brien was born in Limerick in 1897 and died in Canterbury, England in 1974. She wrote 12 novels as well as plays. Her second and fourth novels, *Mary Lavelle* (1936) and *The Land of Spices* (1941) were banned by the Irish Free State.

Mary Lavelle recounts the story of a young woman who is engaged to be married, and who decides to travel to Spain before becoming a wife. While in Spain, she pursues a sexual affair with a married man named Juanito.

Mary Lavelle also features lesbian love; one of the characters, Agatha Conlon, is Kate O'Brien's first depiction of a lesbian in her fiction. Agatha confesses to Mary Lavelle that she is in love with her:

"You asked me if I'd ever had a crush.... And I said that I'd never had a crush on a living creature. That would have been true up to the first day I saw you. It's not true anymore....I like you that way a man would, you see."



Kate O'Brien in the 1950s

The banning of *Mary Lavelle* was never reversed. The censors did not give reasons for banning the book, so the exact nature of the supposed "obscenity" or "indecent" was not identified. The banning of her novel caused Kate O'Brien considerable loss in readership and income. Kate moved in the same literary circles as Hannah Sheehy Skeffington, who deplored the censoring of her novel in 1937.

This sentence alone led to the banning of her novel *The Land of Spices* in 1941, the same year it was published:

"She saw her father and Etienne in the embrace of love."

As the novel denounces homosexuality rather than promoting it, when Kate O'Brien lodged an appeal against the ban in 1946, she won and the book was released.



UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A CENTURY OF WOMEN AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

First Irish Pregnancy Counselling Centre established. Opening of Dublin Women's Centre.

1981

Nuala Fennell becomes the first Minister of State for Women's Affairs.

1980

1982

Maternity protection for pregnant employees, entitling them to 14 weeks leave and the right to return to work. Beginning of the Pro-Life Amendment campaign.

BANNED! WRITING AGAINST THE GRAIN



Maura Laverty (1907-1966)

Maura Laverty was a cookery writer, broadcaster, journalist, scriptwriter (*Tolka Row*), playwright, children's writer and agony aunt.

She worked as a governess and private secretary to an aristocratic family in Spain in the 1920s and her novel *No more than human* is based on her experiences there. She subsequently became a foreign correspondent in Madrid.

As well as being a broadcaster for Radio Eireann she wrote for such diverse publications as *The Bell*, *Woman's life* and the *Catholic Truth Society of Ireland* as well as the national and provincial newspapers. Her most famous play *Tolka Row* evolved to become Ireland's first soap opera which she scripted singlehandedly. After a performance of *Tolka Row* (the play) in the Gate Theatre in 1951 she responded to a protesting Catholic mob outside by singing the Red Flag from an upstairs window of the theatre.

Her best known novels *Never no more*, *Alone we embark*, *No more than human*, *Lift up your gates* were all written between 1942 and 1946. *Never no more* was not banned in this country but was publicly burned in her home town of Rathangan, the town on which it was based. Brendan Behan wrote to her about it from Arbour Hill prison. *No more than human* wasn't banned either but it did come to the attention of the censor because of its candour about the female body.

Lift up your gates portrayed the appalling living conditions in the Dublin tenements at the time and Laverty believed that it was her exposure of these dreadful conditions that was the cause of its banning. In a letter to an American newspaper in 1947 Laverty claimed –

"..... I can only conclude that that the ban is due to the fact that I tried to show the slum conditions which have become intensified during 15 years of misrule".



Norah Hoult (1898-1984)

Described by Donal Ó Drisceoil as "the hardest hit Irish resident writer" Hoult is one of Ireland's most censored writers. Of the twenty five novels and four short story collections she wrote, eight were banned under the Censorship of Publications Act of 1929. Hoult was always the outsider. She led a peripatetic life, living and working in London, Dublin and New York, mostly as a journalist but finally concentrating on short story and fiction writing. In 1929 she married writer Oliver Stoner but she found the marriage stifling and left him after four years.

Among her works that were banned were - *Selected stories* (1946), *Coming from the fair* (1937), *Augusta steps out* (1942), *Four women grow up* (1940), *Cocktail bar* (1950), *Nine years is a long time* (1938) and *House under Mars* (1969).

According to Heather Ingman in *Irish women's fiction: from Edgeworth to Enright*, Hoult "employed the popular novel for feminist protest". Her themes included working women's lives, women's role in society (she railed against De Valera's ideas of a woman's place in the home), emigration, patriarchy and class. Largely overlooked - most of her work is out of print - in the literary canon for a variety of reasons – snobbery, her non-conformism and eccentricity, not really belonging to either the elite literary world of the time or to mid-century rural and provincial Ireland, not seen as being really Irish or English. *Nine years is a long time* deals with prostitution; in *The rich man gossip*, begrudgery and envy are common themes; *Time gentlemen, time* is a study of alcoholism and marriage. *Coming from the fair* and *Holy Ireland* deal very critically with the prevailing oppressive atmosphere of the Ireland of that time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A CENTURY OF WOMEN AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

1983

The 8th Amendment to the Constitution recognises the equal right to life of both the mother and the unborn child. Open Door Counselling is established in Dublin. Irish Feminist Information (IFI) is established.

Attic Press feminist publishing house is established in Dublin.

UN Global Women's Conference at Copenhagen

1984

1985

MÁIRE BRADSHAW

the box under the bed

*i have taken my box
from under the bed
and placed it
in the middle of
the kitchen floor*

*a monument
to burnt potatoes
and overcooked
beef*

*my emancipation
my secret laid bare
for all to
see*

*go man
wash your own
socks*

*i am busy
sorting out
my ten year old
rubbish of words*

Limerick woman Maire Bradshaw is best known for being one of the founders of the Cork Women's Poetry Circle and director of Tigh Fíli in Cork's MacCurtain St. The setting up of the publishing house,



Bradshaw Books, of which she was managing director and editor, followed in 1985 and was based in Tigh Fíli. *The Box under the bed*, a collection of poetry and prose by women writers in Cork, was its first publication. Bradshaw herself wrote the titular poem.

Her other collections include *Instinct*, *high time for all the marys* as well as editing *Wise women: a portrait*.

In 1991 she was commissioned to write a poem for the inauguration of Mary Robinson, Ireland's first female president.

As publisher of Bradshaw Books she spearheaded innovative writing and promoted emerging Irish writers in its publications. A particularly important initiative of hers was the annual publication of the anthologies *Eurochild: artwork and poetry by kids for kids* where children from all over the world contributed drawing and poems in their native languages.

Even though Bradshaw Books and Tigh Fíli closed its doors in 2016 Maire Bradshaw continues to play a vital role in the cultural and literary life of Cork.

high time for all the marys for mary robinson



*chaperoned by quays
locked by bridges
north to south
poverty and class
out for a night -
for certain
women are up
off their knees*

*anna lee
is dressed
in black
to-night
wearing a
halter neckline
rucked in
velvet and gold
a swan
pinned
here and there
for decoration*

*a sailor's fancy
she'll dance
'til the sun rises
on dawn square
and better value
mr. dunne
cuts his disco lights
to off -*

*all at once
being a housewife -
a housekeeper
or pushing a throlly
i dawn square*

*has a certain
air about it
a moment
when mrs. nobody
becomes mrs. somebody
head and tail
at high doh
stepping lightly*

*anna lee and
anna livia plurabelle
the kissing cousins
at high tide
and high time
for all the marys...*

[extracts]



UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A CENTURY OF WOMEN AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

An amendment to remove the constitutional ban on divorce fails.

Supreme Court ruling on abortion information.

Mary Robison is elected the first woman President of Ireland. The Second Commission on the Status of Women is held.

1986

1988

1990



Máirín Quill, TD, Senator, and Cllr



Kathy Sinnott, MEP



Eileen Desmond, TD



Chrissie Ahern, Lord Mayor, 1989-90



Máire MacSwiney, TD and Cllr



Sheila Galvin, Cllr



Jo Conti, Cllr



Kathleen Lynch, TD and Cllr

A selection of women elected to represent the people of Cork



Deirdre Clune, Lord Mayor 2005-6, TD, Senator, and MEP



Colette Kelleher, Senator



Catherine Clancy, Lord Mayor 2013-4



Jane Dowdall, Cork's first woman Lord Mayor, 1959-60



Mary Shields, Lord Mayor 2014-5



Josephine Joyce, Cllr

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A CENTURY OF WOMEN AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

▶ A new Child Care Act is introduced, bringing considerable change to childcare in Ireland.

▶ The Irish government sets a target of achieving 40% representation of women on State boards. Visit to Áras an Uachtaráin by a delegation from the Irish lesbian and gay communities.

1992

1991

HIGH TIME FOR ALL THE MARYS

▶ The X Case. Abortion Information and Rights to Travel referenda. Second Report on the Status of Women is published. Decriminalisation of Homosexuality. First legal case to award custody of her children to a lesbian mother.

1993

Mary McAleese, née Mary Leneghan, was the eighth president of Ireland, and the second female president of Ireland. The first Irish president from Northern Ireland, she served two terms, from 1997 to 2004 and from 2004 to 2011. She was re-elected unopposed for her second term in office. She is a member of the Council of Women World Leaders, whose mission it is to mobilise the highest-level women leaders globally for collective action on issues of critical importance to women and equitable development.

Mary McAleese shares many similarities with Mary Robinson. She graduated with a degree in law from Queen's University in Belfast in 1973. She was called to the Northern Irish Bar in 1974. In 1975, she was appointed Reid Professor of Criminal Law, Criminology and Penology in Trinity College, Dublin. She was the first female Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University. She worked as a barrister and also as a journalist for RTÉ. Despite being a practising Catholic, she held liberal views on homosexuality, women priests and abortion. She spoke out before the marriage equality referendum in 2015, describing same-sex marriage as a "human rights issue" and stating that the referendum would help to dismantle the "architecture of homophobia". At a meeting she chaired at Liberty Hall in 1975 on women's right to choose, she was quoted as saying that "I would see the failure to provide abortion as a human rights issue".

Mary McAleese described the theme of her presidency as "building bridges". She was a regular visitor to Northern Ireland throughout her presidency, and used her time as president to address issues concerning justice, social equality,

social inclusion, anti-sectarianism and reconciliation. When she took Holy Communion in an Anglican cathedral in Dublin 78% of Irish people approved of her action in an opinion poll. In March 1998, she announced she would officially celebrate the Twelfth of July as well as St. Patrick's Day, recognising the day's importance among Ulster Protestants. In March 2011, she invited Queen Elizabeth II to make a state visit to Ireland. The Queen accepted, and the visit took place

in May 2011, the first state visit by a British monarch since Ireland had gained independence.



Mary Robinson, née Mary Bourke, was born in Ballina, Co. Mayo in 1944. In 1963, she won a scholarship to Trinity College, Dublin, and then won a scholarship to the university's Law School. She was called to the Bar in 1967, and did her postgraduate studies in Harvard Law School. In 1969, she was appointed Reid Professor of Criminal Law in Trinity College, Dublin, and was elected as one of Trinity College's three members of Seanad Éireann, the first female and the first Catholic to sit for the constituency.

Mary Robinson had liberal views and worked hard to improve the lives of minorities.

As a barrister, she fought two critical cases before the European Court of Human Rights. The first concerned the rights of children born outside wedlock, which were infringed by Irish law on illegitimacy. This was changed by the introduction of the Status of Children Act in 1987. The second concerned homosexuality, with David Norris as the complainant. Like Robinson he was a Senator for TCD. Mary Robinson took the case to the Supreme Court, and then to the Court of Human Rights. Norris won his case there in 1988, and, five years later, the Irish Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1993, which decriminalised homosexual behaviour between consenting adults, was enacted.

As a senator, Mary Robinson fought for women's rights; she endeavoured to bring about changes in law with regard to women's rights to sit on juries, the legal availability of contraception, and the right of women to continue working after they married. She also campaigned to preserve the Viking site of Woodquay.



Mary Robinson made Irish history in November 1990 by being elected as the first female President of Ireland. In her acceptance speech, she alluded to "mná na hÉireann" – the women of Ireland – who "instead of rocking the cradle rocked the system". As president, Mary Robinson made history in being the first president of Ireland to visit Queen Elizabeth II in Buckingham Palace. She met with and shook the hand of Gerry

Adams during a visit to Belfast, and with Prince Charles during his visit to Ireland in 1995. She was awarded the Freedom of Cork on 23 February 1991, pictured above.



Mary McAleese was awarded the Freedom of Cork on 30 May 2006

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A CENTURY OF WOMEN AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Divorce referendum passed.
Fourth UN World Conference
on Women is held in Beijing.

Mary McAleese is elected the President of
Ireland. Four of the five candidates for the
a. presidency were women on this occasion.

On 25 May Irish people vote, by large
majority, to repeal 8th Amendment to
the Constitution and give Oireachtas
power to legislate for abortion.

1995

1997

2018

WOMEN ACTIVISTS 21ST CENTURY



A contemporary female feminist author: **Louise O'Neill**

Louise O'Neill is from Clonakilty in West Cork, a feminist author who has written three novels. Her novels discuss controversial issues regarding women, challenging rape culture and patriarchal views. Louise O'Neill writes mainly young adult fiction, and she is also a columnist for the *The Irish Examiner*.

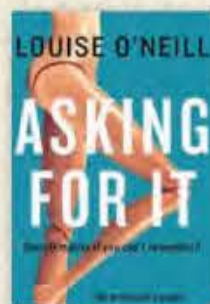
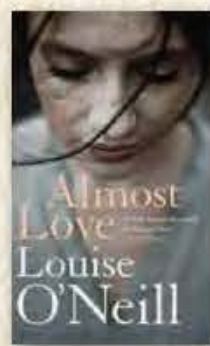
Louise O'Neill's first novel, *Only ever Yours* (2014) explores a world in which a woman's sole purpose is to serve men and produce sons. Girls are sent to school to learn how to be beautiful and to please men. If they are successful, they become "companions" for men, if unsuccessful they become concubines.

Louise O'Neill's second novel, *Asking for it* (2015) tells the story of Emma, who is raped at a party by a group of boys who are on the school football team. Emma is an unlikeable character who was drunk at the time of the rape and who is promiscuous. The boys who raped her are popular, so no-one wants to believe her side of the story. The fact that people want to know if she was "asking for it" poses difficult questions about the type of society we live in.



The boys who raped her are popular, so no-one wants to believe her side of the story. The fact that people want to know if she was "asking for it" poses difficult questions about the type of society we live in.

Louise O'Neill's third novel was published in March 2018, her first adult novel. Once more, the main female character in it, Sarah, is unlikeable. The book examines the toxic and obsessive relationship Sarah had with a man, Matthew, who is twenty years older than her and who used and controlled her. Louise O'Neill's fourth novel, *The Surface Breaks*, has just been published, a feminist re-imagining of the story of *The Little Mermaid*.



Noha Al Balawi

Noha Al Balawi is a college student from Saudi Arabia and active in supporting civil and political rights for women. She was arrested and detained in Tabuk general prison. Her crime – believed to be her on-line campaign "No taxes without political representation". Her twitter account has since been deleted.



Nawal El Saadawi

In September 1981 feminist, writer, physician Nawal El Saadawi was imprisoned in Egypt. Her crime – regarded as controversial and dangerous because of her campaign against FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) and involvement in the publication of the feminist magazine *Confrontation*. Threats from Islamists continued during the 1980s and she was forced to flee Egypt, eventually returning in 1996. Now in her 80s she continues her activism and writing. She was awarded the Sean MacBride Peace Prize in 2012.



Malala Yousufzai

Born in Mingora, Swat, Pakistan, 1997.

Loved books and reading as a child.

2007 - Taliban militants take control of Swat.

Owning a TV and playing music are banned.

Girls are banned from going to school.

2009 - Malala starts a blog for the BBC campaigning for the right for girls to go to school.

2011 - she wins Pakistan's National Youth Peace Prize.

The Taliban target Malala.

2012 - Taliban shoot Malala in the head, neck and shoulder, also injuring two of her friends.

She is fifteen years of age.

Flown to the UK for treatment she is discharged from hospital after months of treatment.

She returns to schools in Birmingham, where her family now lives. She addresses the UN on 12th July 2013 (her 16th birthday).

July 12 is declared Malala Day by the UN, dedicated to help the world's most vulnerable girls.

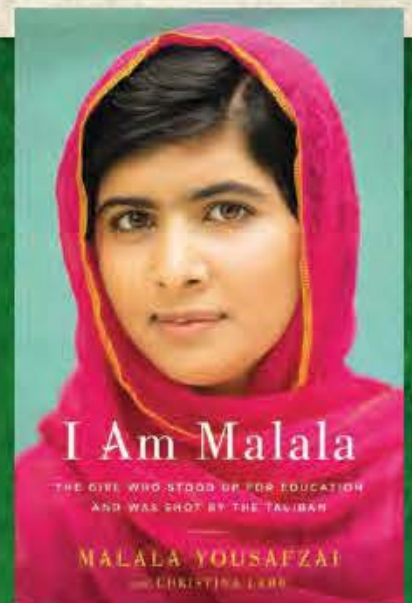
July 12 2014 - she visits Nigeria to meet with the families of the schoolgirls kidnapped by the terrorist group Boko Haram.

December 2014 – she wins the Nobel Peace Prize with Indian activist Kailash Satyarthi.

July 12 2015 – she opens a secondary school for Syrian refugee girls in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.

July 12 2016 – she meets with refugee girls living in camps in Kenya and Rwanda.

2017-2018 – currently a student at Oxford, reading politics, philosophy and economics.



Pussy Riot

In March 2012 three members of the feminist punk rock group Pussy Riot were arrested and charged with hooliganism. Their

crime - a performance in a Moscow cathedral deemed to be sacrilegious. All three served prison sentences, two of them for almost two years. During a performance at the Winter Olympics in Sochi in 2014 the group was attacked with whips and pepper spray by security guards. March 2018 two of its members went missing in Crimea – they were interrogated by authorities – have since reappeared.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A CENTURY OF WOMEN AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

A Century of Women's Progress? Yes and No Unfinished Business

What are the most important issues for women, in Ireland and around the world, in 2018, 100 years on from the act which brought Irish and British women into the electoral system?

In Sudan in early May 2018, a woman was jailed and given forty lashes because she married a man against her family's wishes. Also in Sudan, a woman is currently awaiting death by stoning because of adultery.

The #MeToo movement and movements like it are having an impact throughout the western world. The fact that such movements are needed, however, show how much needs to be done to bring in a world where women and men are truly equal.

Politics

There are now 35 women out of 158 TDs in the Dáil (22%) and 19 women Senators (32%).

The percentage of women TDs increased from 16 per cent in the 2016 election

Ireland's ranking has worsened over the last two decades. In 1990, when Mary Robinson became Ireland's first woman President, Ireland was at 37th position in the world rankings

Ireland in 76th place in the world tables of women's representation in the lower or single house of national parliaments

Ireland is placed 25th out of 28 in the EU.

(Above <https://www.ipu.org/>)

Candidates elected to the national parliament by sex, unit, time and reporting country



	Denmark	Faroe Islands	Greenland	Finland	Åland	Iceland	Norway	Sweden
Women Per cent 2016	37	30	45	42	27	40	40	45

Data refers to the latest national election as per 1 September 2015

(Above <http://www.norden.org/>)

Women 2016	Board president	Member of board
Denmark	0	27
Finland	4	30
Iceland	44	44
Norway	11	41
Sweden	8	36
EU28	7	23

LABO08: Board members of larger publicly listed companies by sex, time, reporting country and type of position

2013 and onwards: Data from October. The companies covered are the largest publicly listed companies in each country. Publicly listed means that the shares of the company are traded on the stock exchange.

(Above <http://www.norden.org/>)

As of
January
2017:

- Women held just 29, or 5.8 per cent, of CEO positions at S&P 500 companies;
- Fortune 500, 27 women hold the top jobs – and this is a new record!
- FTSE 100, just seven per cent of the top jobs are held by women.
- Of the Top 10 largest financial institutions in Ireland just one – Depfa Bank – is led by a woman, Fiona Flannery.
- Top 1000: Women lead just 10% of Ireland's largest companies

(<https://www.irishtimes.com/business/top-1000-women-lead-just-10-of-ireland-s-largest-companies-1.3127826>)

Regional Averages

	Single House or lower House	Upper House or Senate	Both Houses combined
Nordic countries	41.4%	-	-
Americas	28.8%	29.5%	28.9%
Europe - OSCE member countries including Nordic countries	27.6%	27.0%	27.5%
Europe - OSCE member countries excluding Nordic countries	26.3%	27.0%	26.4%
Sub-Saharan Africa	23.9%	23.1%	23.8%
Asia	19.7%	17.5%	19.5%
Arab States	18.5%	12.6%	17.7%
Pacific	15.5%	37.1%	17.9%

Women in Business:

% in senior positions (in thousands)

Broad occupational group	2016			% women
	Men	Women	Total	
Managers, directors and senior officials	111.6	56.9	168.5	33.8

(Above <http://www.cso.ie/>)

Media – Newspaper Editors/Media Executives

There are scant figures available to quantify women's participation in the Irish film and television industry. What we do know:

- Directors UK report that only 8% of all working drama directors are female.
- In the US, of the top 250 grossing American feature films, only 7% were directed by women, marking a drop of two percentage points in twenty years.
- 1993-2013, only 13% of Irish-produced screenplays were penned by female writers (Liddy, 2015). Comparable figures across Europe suggest that the percentage of women in directing remains in single figures.

(<https://wft.ie/>)

Women account for less than a third of media professionals, with radio being the least inclusive of women media professionals. (<https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/una-mullally-gender-balance-is-lacking-throughout-media-1.3224047>)