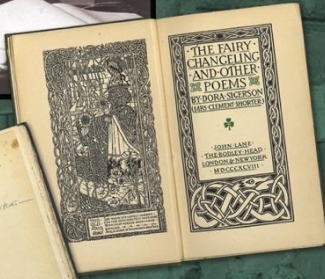
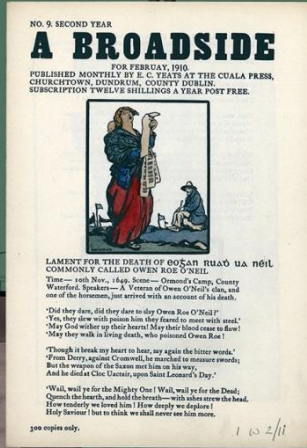
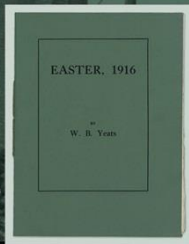


*But his songs new souls shall thrill,
The loud harps dumb,
And his deed the echoes fill
When dawn is come.*

THOMAS MACDONAGH
'To a Wise Man'



Revolution in Print

The early twentieth century was a time of extraordinary cultural change in Ireland, especially in the literary arts. The Irish Revival, which began in earnest in the 1890s, transformed the literary and artistic landscape; its conjunction of creative achievement and intense cultural debate was the crucible for work by W. B. Yeats and J. M. Synge, as well for a host of other texts in Irish and English. These writings helped to sustain a vibrant culture of newspapers, pamphlets and books – publications that played an important role in disseminating ideas of cultural and political independence before the Easter Rising, and in shaping public understanding of those events both at the time and in subsequent decades. This exhibition explores the circulation of printed texts in this period, tracing links between memoirs and poems, personal accounts and political reflections, reportage and commemorative printing. Seen together, these materials reveal the important role played by the printed word in this time of cultural and political revolution.

Main image: Abbey Street Corner and the remains of the DBC Building after the Rising (COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND).

1. Eoin MacNeill; 2. W.B. Yeats, *Easter, 1916*; W.B. Yeats; 3. Cuala Broadside, February 1916; 4. Dora Sigerson, *The Fairy Changeling*, 1898; 5. J. M. Synge, *The Aran Islands*, 1907.

Reading 1916

O wise men, riddle me this: what if the dream come true?

What if the dream come true? and if millions unborn shall dwell

In the house that I shaped in my heart, the noble house of my thought?

PATRICK PEARSE
'The Fool'

Towards the Rising: Ireland 1900-1916

The militarisation of Europe at the outbreak of the First World War had a significant impact on Irish attitudes towards the idea of armed revolution. Patrick Pearse – barrister, teacher and poet – was at first a committed member of the Gaelic League and was, for a time, editor of its newspaper *An Claidheamh Soluis*. By 1913 he had become convinced of the necessity for armed resistance, however, and his writings, in Irish and English, chart this evolution. The newspapers and periodicals of the time reflected the variety of creative responses and ideological positions that writers occupied. *The Irish Review*, in which Pearse's work appeared, was edited by his friend Thomas MacDonagh, a lecturer in English at University College Dublin. The journal became a key part of the larger cultural revival, which by this time had a strong presence in performance and print. W. B. Yeats, who had helped to found the Abbey Theatre in 1904, also supported his sisters' Cuala Press, and published important work with them during this period. As well as providing a forum for literary production, these publishing enterprises emphasised the important role of journalism as a medium for the dissemination of political ideas.

Main image: O'Connell Bridge and Street, 1916 (COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND).

1. Thomas MacDonagh; 2. *The Irish Review*, March 1911; 3. Abbey Theatre Programme; 4. *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 29 April-27 May 1916.

Reading: 1916



Because we share our sorrows and our joys
 And all your dear and intimate thoughts are mine,
 We shall not fear the trumpets and the noise
 Of battle, for we know our dreams divine...

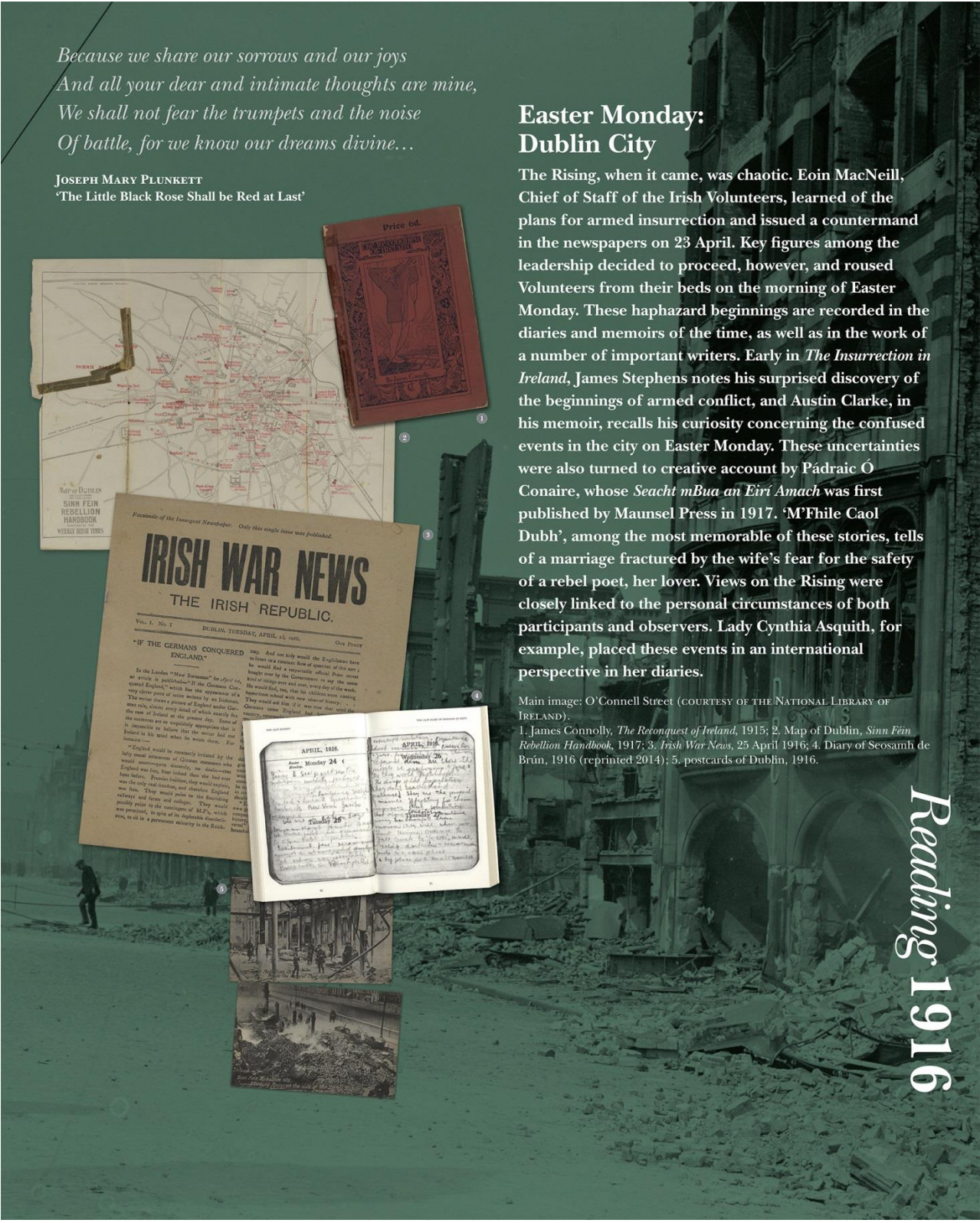
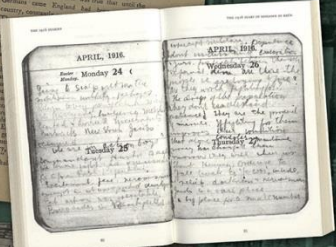
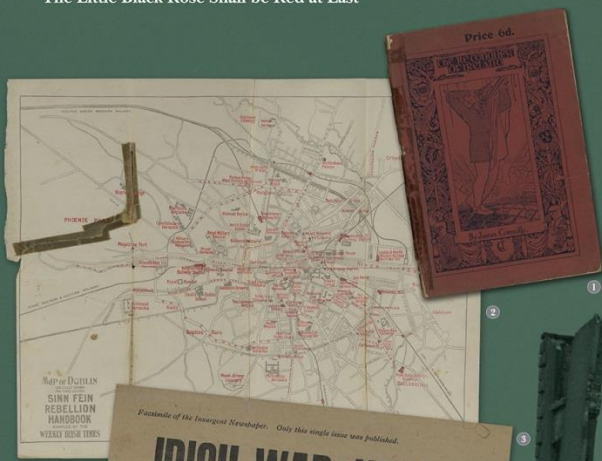
JOSEPH MARY PLUNKETT
 'The Little Black Rose Shall be Red at Last'

Easter Monday: Dublin City

The Rising, when it came, was chaotic. Eoin MacNeill, Chief of Staff of the Irish Volunteers, learned of the plans for armed insurrection and issued a countermand in the newspapers on 23 April. Key figures among the leadership decided to proceed, however, and roused Volunteers from their beds on the morning of Easter Monday. These haphazard beginnings are recorded in the diaries and memoirs of the time, as well as in the work of a number of important writers. Early in *The Insurrection in Ireland*, James Stephens notes his surprised discovery of the beginnings of armed conflict, and Austin Clarke, in his memoir, recalls his curiosity concerning the confused events in the city on Easter Monday. These uncertainties were also turned to creative account by Pádraic Ó Conaire, whose *Seacht mBua an Eirí Amach* was first published by Maunsel Press in 1917. 'M'Fhile Caol Dubh', among the most memorable of these stories, tells of a marriage fractured by the wife's fear for the safety of a rebel poet, her lover. Views on the Rising were closely linked to the personal circumstances of both participants and observers. Lady Cynthia Asquith, for example, placed these events in an international perspective in her diaries.

Main image: O'Connell Street (COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND).
 1. James Connolly, *The Reconquest of Ireland*, 1915; 2. Map of Dublin, *Sinn Féin Rebellion Handbook*, 1917; 3. *Irish War News*, 25 April 1916; 4. Diary of Seosamh de Brún, 1916 (reprinted 2014); 5. postcards of Dublin, 1916.

Reading
 1916



Here's to you, Pearse, your dream not mine,
But yet the thought, for this you fell,
Has turned life's water into wine...

GEORGE RUSSELL

'To the Memory of Some I Knew Who are Dead and Who Loved Ireland'

Theatres of War: Easter Week

In keeping with the importance of drama within the revivalist movement, the Rising itself had a theatrical quality. Many of the strategies adopted by the rebels were symbolically important and sought to place them in the revolutionary tradition of Robert Emmet and Wolfe Tone. The choice of the General Post Office as the rebel headquarters enabled the insurgents to control the communication networks, and international news agencies worldwide reported on events in Dublin. Pictorial features revealed the devastated landscapes of Sackville Street and other key sites in the city centre, often reading these events within the context of First World War politics. The broad thoroughfare outside the GPO offered an appropriate stage for the reading of the Proclamation, which had been produced secretly in Dublin in the days before the Rising. A shortage of type meant it had to be printed in two parts and there were some irregularities in the typesetting. Though Pearse's declaration of a Republic generated limited interest among bystanders, it was to become an important moment in the articulation of Ireland's independent identity. Pearse's role as educator, language activist and poet, would become central to how the story of the Rising was told.

Main image: View of damaged city from the top of Nelson's Pillar (COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND).

1. Patrick Pearse; 2. Easter Proclamation, *Sinn Féin Rebellion Handbook*, 1917; 3. *Easter Proclamation*, (reprinted 1960); 4. *The 'Sinn Féin' Revolt Illustrated*, 1917.



Reading 1916

*Alas the bugles on the distant plain –
The guns break forth with their insistent din,
The dews of noon-day leave a crimson stain
On grass, that all men's feet must wander in.*

EVA GORE-BOOTH
'1916'

Aftermath: Changing Opinions on War and Revolution

The execution of the rebel leaders within weeks of the Rising had a powerful impact on public opinion. Many who had strongly opposed the revolution now began to see the heroism of the participants. Returning to Dublin after fighting in Gallipoli, poet Francis Ledwidge was moved to learn of the uprising – his elegy for his friend Thomas MacDonagh would become among the most famous dedicatory poems of the period. The executed leaders were widely commemorated in verse, as well as by memorial cards and keepsakes. Among those imprisoned, Constance Markievicz was the most celebrated. Both Markievicz and her sister, the poet Eva Gore-Booth, had rejected a privileged upbringing in favour of political activism. Gore-Booth, however, was a pacifist and social reformer, opposed both to revolutionary and state-sponsored violence. In spite of their differences, the two sisters shared a close personal bond that is expressed in their writings. Gore-Booth was living in England at the time of the Rising, and her letters shed interesting light on her visits to Ireland after the execution of the leading rebels.

Main image: O'Connell Street between Abbey Street and North Earl Street (COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND).

1. *Women, Ideals and the Nation*, 1909 (signed by Constance Markievicz);
2. Eva Gore-Booth, Constance Markievicz in R. M. Fox, *Rebel Irishwomen*, 1935;
3. Eva Gore-Booth letter (undated); 4. First World War recruitment poster (COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND).

Reading 1916



*I write it out in a verse—
MacDonagh and MacBride
And Connolly and Pearse
Now and in time to be,
Wherever green is worn,
Are changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.*

W.B. YEATS
'Easter, 1916'

Legacies: Remembering the Rising

In the period following the establishment of the Free State in 1922, the Easter Rising came to be seen as the foundation of modern Irish identity. The story of the nation, as well as of individuals and their families, became closely linked to these events and to the values of heroism and sacrifice that were so central to the writing of the time. Personal memoirs sought to capture revolutionary experience, or to reflect on the role of family members in the events of Easter Week. The published writings of those who died were gathered and anthologised both in Ireland and abroad, reinforcing the literary underpinnings of this as a “poets’ revolution”. Creative responses, both in music and the visual arts, continued throughout the century. In popular culture, too, the rebels lived on – ballads and songs commemorated their lives and deeds; postcards made their faces known to later generations. The memorialisation of these figures was an important part of modern Irish print culture, which often reflected directly on the effects of this narrative on modern Ireland.

Main image: Ruins of Freeman Press and Telegraph, 1916 (COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND).

1. 'In Memoriam Pádraig Mac Piarais', musical score by Arnold Bax; 2. Dora Sigerson Shorter, 1916 Memorial monument in Glasnevin; 3. F. X. Martin, ed., *1916 and University College Dublin*, 1966; 4. Lia Mills, *Fallen*, 2013; 5. Liam O'Flaherty, *Insurrection*, 1950; 6. *1916-1966: What Has Happened?*, 1966; 7. Roddy Doyle, *A Star Called Henry*, 1999.

Reading 1916



*He shall not hear the bitter cry
In the wild sky, where he is lain,
Nor voices of the sweeter birds
Above the wailing of the rain.*

FRANCIS LEDWIDGE
'Thomas MacDonagh'

Reading 1916

AN EXHIBITION AT UCD Special Collections

The Easter Rising was a formative event, not only for Ireland's political future but for her cultural identity too. University College Dublin was closely associated with the movements for social and political change that emerged during this period, and many staff and students were actively involved in the affairs of Easter Week. For writers who lived through these events, such as James Stephens or W. B. Yeats, an immediate response seemed necessary; later generations grew to creative maturity in the knowledge of Ireland's revolutionary past, and of its effects on cultural memory. From idealised possibility to stark reality, the Rising has helped to shape how Ireland's identity is read in text and image – through its literature, journalism and popular culture. This exhibition gives an insight into how this event has been represented, exploring the circulation of printed texts depicting the Rising, both in this period and later, and revealing the important role these played in shaping the opinions and aspirations of Irish citizens.

Main image: Henry Street, with the shelled remains of the G.P.O. (COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND).

1. *The 'Sinn Féin' Revolt Illustrated*, 1917; 2. Letter from Patrick Pearse to Henry Morris, 24 February 1903; 3. W. B. Yeats, *Easter, 1916* (COURTESY OF JOSEPH HASSETT). 4. Easter Proclamation, *Sinn Féin Rebellion Handbook*, 1917

