VÓTÁIL 100

Roscommon Commemorative Lecture Programme

Wednesday 25th April, 2018
King House, Boyle
INTRODUCTION

Cllr. Orla Leyden
CATHAOIRLEACH, ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL

As Cathaoirleach of Roscommon County Council I support the hosting of the Vótáil 100 Commemorative Lecture Programme. I would like to welcome our esteemed speakers and visitors to County Roscommon and welcome the participation of the Vótáil 100 Steering Committee through its Chairperson Senator Ivana Bacik. This event is being held in the magnificent King House, reflecting Boyle’s strong links with Margaret Cousins, one of the co-founders of the Irish Women’s Franchise League. In celebrating the centenary of women’s suffrage in Roscommon we are reflecting on Margaret Cousin’s legacy and the pioneering work of the Irish Women’s Franchise League. We welcome the involvement of the National Library of Ireland and National Museum of Ireland, two of Ireland’s pivotal cultural institutions who through images, sources and analysis of objects of the Irish Women’s Suffrage bring us closer to understanding this historic period. This commemorative programme also provides analysis of women’s participation in politics today, looking at candidate selection, gender quotas and the response of political parties.

It is my hope that Roscommon’s Vótáil 100 event will create a space to advance the participation of women in politics in 2018 - this would be a fitting legacy to the memory of Margaret Cousins and Hannah Sheehy Skeffington, founders of the Irish Women’s Franchise League and Countess Markievich, first woman T.D. in the revolutionary first Dáil.

Mr. Eugene Cummins
CHIEF EXECUTIVE, ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL

Roscommon County Council is delighted to be associated with this important and most appropriate Commemorative Lecture Programme. The event signals the key role being played by the Local Authority in developing local programmes linked to national initiatives as part of the Decade of Centenaries, the Creative Ireland Programme and the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018. It clearly demonstrates the commitment of Roscommon County Council to delivering high quality cultural events, showcasing our cultural facilities, attracting speakers and visitors and working collaboratively with the government led Expert Advisory Group on Commissions and the Houses of the Oireachtas Vótáil 100. The success of such programmes is testimony to the strong and vibrant arts, culture, libraries, heritage and community programming that takes place each year throughout the county and the relationship and response of our communities, groups and local organisations.

Mr. Richie Farrell
CHAIRPERSON/CONVENOR

1918 was another significant year in which historical events such as the granting of voting rights to women in 1918 in certain circumstances, the anti conscription campaign, the death of John Redmond, the change in fortunes of the Irish Parliamentary Party, the end of the First World War and the results of the general election that year changed the social and political landscape. It is important to recall and shed further light on these events and through this commemorative lecture programme we have a welcome opportunity at a very local level to reflect on all these issues. This event provides an occasion for us to broaden our understanding of the historical context of the period, learn from the continuous research being undertaken by our various speakers, the work of our national institutions and to build, develop and plan for further commemorative programmes over the coming years.

Mary Butler
ACTING COUNTY LIBRARIAN, ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL LIBRARY SERVICES

Roscommon County Council Library Services are delighted to support Vótáil 100, the commemorative lecture programme to be held in King House on April 25th. The anniversary of the Representation of the People Act, 1918 is not only a significant event for women in Ireland but it also reflected the international situation at the time when Women’s suffrage was very much to the fore. The Library service collects and makes accessible a substantial Archive and Local Studies collection, with a reference and research service based at the County Library headquarters. This collection contains a wealth of information on the history and society of the County including material on the suffragette movement in Ireland and in Roscommon.

Mary Mullins
ARTS OFFICER, ROSCOMMON COUNTY COUNCIL

Roscommon County Council Arts Office is delighted to support Vótáil 100, the Commemorative Lecture Programme in King House on April 25th. The programme of lectures celebrates the very significant work carried out by the suffrage movement to ensure that women would have the right to vote. The arts and cultural programme of Roscommon County Council must respond to the unique needs and desires of the citizens of this rural county. But any programme must also challenge, stimulate and inspire with the introduction of topics and programmes, which are new, different and often out of the ordinary. An inclusive and high quality programme, which addresses all of this, must be the aspiration for - and aim of those people within the Council, who develop and deliver the arts and cultural programme to the citizens of County Roscommon. I am confident that this Commemorative Lecture Programme will be thought provoking and challenging, stimulating and motivating for young and old, men and women.
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<td>9.00am</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.30am</td>
<td><strong>Richie Farrell</strong></td>
<td><strong>Welcome &amp; Introductions</strong></td>
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<td>9.45am</td>
<td><strong>Cllr Orla Leyden</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cathaoirleach Roscommon County Council</strong></td>
<td><strong>Opening Address</strong></td>
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<td>10.00am</td>
<td><strong>Eugene Cummins</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chief Executive, Roscommon County Council</strong></td>
<td><strong>Commemorations: More Than Set Pieces</strong></td>
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<td>10.10am</td>
<td><strong>Sinead McCool</strong></td>
<td><strong>Expert Advisory Group on Commemorations</strong></td>
<td><strong>Votes for Women: Campaigning in the West of Ireland</strong></td>
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<td>10.30am</td>
<td>Tea/Coffee</td>
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<td><strong>Mary Clancy</strong></td>
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<td>11.00am</td>
<td><strong>Senator Ivana Bacik</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chairperson: Vótáil 100 Steering Committee</strong></td>
<td><strong>Irish Legislative Gender Quota: The First Election</strong></td>
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<td>11.30am</td>
<td><strong>Mary McAuliffe - UCD</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Women voted early and in large numbers”: Irish Women, the vote and the 1918 General Election</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rematerialising A Revolution: Tracing the objects and imagery of the Irish women's suffrage movement</strong></td>
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<td>12.00pm</td>
<td><strong>Claire McGing - Maynooth University</strong></td>
<td><strong>Women's Political Representation in Dáil Éireann, 1918-1973</strong></td>
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<td>12.30pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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SINÉAD McCoolE

Sínead McCoolE is a well-known Irish historian. She has written extensively in the area of modern Irish History, with a focus on the role of women. Her books include *Guns and Chiffon*, *No Ordinary Women* and *Easter Widows*.

She has curated exhibitions both in Ireland and the US, working for museum designers, book publishers, graphic artists and national cultural institutions and currently works in the Commissions Unit of the Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht. She was responsible for the setting of Mayo County Council’s Jackie Clarke Collection and is on secondeent to the Commissions Unit of the Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht. She was Curatorial and Historical Advisor on the 2016 Project Team that coordinated the National Commemoration.

She has contributed to wider deliberations on commemoration as a member of Government’s Expert Advisory Group on the Decade of Centenaries 2012-2023.

MARY McAULIFFE

Mary McAuliffe is an Assistant Professor in Gender Studies at UCD and holds a PhD from the School of History and Humanities, Trinity College Dublin. Her latest publications are *We were there; 77 women of the Easter Rising* (co-written with Liz Gillis), and *Kerry 1916; Histories and Legacies of the Easter Rising* on which she was a co-editor. Her latest research includes a forthcoming biography of Margaret Skinnider (UCD Press, late 2018), and a major research project on gendered and sexual violence during the Irish revolutionary period, 1919-1923.

CLAIRE McGING

Claire McGing is Athena SWAN Project Officer at Maynooth University, where she also lectures and researches in the Department of Geography. She has published research widely on gender representation in Irish politics.

MARIE EGAN PAUL

A native of Boyle, Maire Egan Paul was a member of the Boyle Town Council since 2004 and was last Mayor in 2014. She has two daughters Davina and Christina and lives at Erris Bay. A member of Fine Gael, Maire comes from a prominent political family as both her father Tommy Egan Senior and her brother Tommy Egan Junior were long serving public representatives. She is an active member of many community groups and numerous bodies in Boyle and has a keen interest in culture, history and heritage.

She has a passionate and abiding interest in the life and career of Margaret Cousins, the co-founder of the Irish Women’s Franchise League, travelling to India where Margaret worked and has given many lectures.
SANDRA COLLINS

Dr Sandra Collins is the Director of the National Library of Ireland. Sandra is originally a mathematician and has worked in digital innovation and cultural heritage over 20 years in the public and private sectors. She was previously the founding Director of the Digital Repository of Ireland in the Royal Irish Academy and she serves on the Irish Government’s Open Data Governance Board and the Irish National Open Research Forum. She is a member of the Chester Beatty Library Board of Trustees, the Board of the Irish Manuscripts Commission and the Council of the Library Association of Ireland.

MARY CLANCY

Mary Clancy lectures in NUI, Galway. She has written on Irish women’s political history, life-stories in European contexts, edited *Saothar: Journal of the Irish Labour History Society* and contributes to documentaries.

She has a chapter about the *West of Ireland in Irish Women and The Vote: Becoming Citizens*, Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward, editors, (re-published, 2018).

MARY BRENNAN

Mary Brennan is a Government of Ireland Scholar, whose research interest is in the comparative study of gender in political decision making. Her current research centres specifically on the interaction of electoral gender quotas and political parties. Mary holds an MSc in Politics and a BA (Hons) Politics (major) Psychology (minor) from UCD. Mary is currently based in Brussels as an affiliated scholar to the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) Belgium.


DONNA GILLIGAN

Donna Gilligan is an Irish museum archaeologist, material culture historian, and heritage educator who has worked in the Irish museum and heritage sectors for the past twelve years. She holds a B.A. and M.A. in Archaeology and an M.A. in Museum Practice & Management. She recently completed a further M.A. in Design History and Material Culture, where her thesis dealt with the material and visual culture of the Irish women’s suffrage movement.

Donna currently works as Education Officer for the National Print Museum, and also as a freelance heritage educator and researcher. In May of this year of the suffrage centenary, she will curate an exhibition at the National Print Museum entitled “Print, Protest and the Polls: The Irish suffrage campaign and the power of print media”, which will explore how the Irish suffragists utilised print to promote their fight for female enfranchisement.
Margaret (Gretta) Cousins, suffragist, theosophist, educator and feminist, was born Margaret Gillespie on 7th November 1878, in Boyle, Co Roscommon, and lived out her commitments on two continents. She was the eldest of fifteen children of Joseph Gillespie, petty sessions clerk, and Margaret Annie Gillespie (nee Shera). She was educated locally until 1894, when she was awarded a scholarship for the Victoria High School for Girls in Derry. She went on to study at the Royal Academy of Music in Dublin, graduating B.Mus. from RUI in 1902.

She married James Cousins in 1903. She worked as a part-time music teacher, and joined him as a vegetarian, theosophist and medium, among Dublin’s literary circles. This activism led her to a women’s suffrage conference in Manchester. Back home, she joined the Irish Women’s Suffrage and Local Government Association in 1906. In 1908, with Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, she founded the Irish Women’s Franchise League, and became its leading speaker. She served two one-month prison terms, in England in 1910, and in Tullamore in 1913, for breaking windows in Government Buildings.

War and the winding down of suffrage campaigns probably encouraged Margaret and James Cousins to move to India in 1915, living in Madras (now Chennai) among theosophical communities. She brought Irish experience to Indian women’s campaigns for political and social freedom. She founded the Women’s Indian Association in 1917, editing its monthly journal. Their campaign developed into demands for women’s education and against child marriage, leading to the All-India Women’s Conference, 1926, and an All-Asia Women’s Conference in 1931, organised by Cousins. In 1932 she served ten months in prison for supporting Gandhi’s free-speech campaign.

She wrote numerous letters, articles and pamphlets in Ireland, Britain, and India on theosophy, education and women’s rights and with her husband compiled a joint autobiography, We Two Together. A series of strokes paralysed her from the 1940’s. She received financial donations from both her admirers and the Indian Government in recognition of her service to the country. She died on 1st March 1954 in Adyar, India.

Dr Munro is the grand-nephew of Margaret Cousins. He is a retired Forensic Medical Officer and previous GP. His grandfather was brother to James Cousins, Margaret’s husband and Irish poet. Keith and his wife travelled to India three times in the 1990s and addressed meetings in some twelve cities informing the members of The All India Women’s Conference, founded by Gretta, of her Irish life and especially her part in the Irish Women’s Franchise League. In September 1994 Shobana Ranade, then President of the AIWC made a pilgrimage to Ireland, met with President Robinson and unveiled a plaque on the Crescent outside the home where Gretta was born. The Munro’s attended the 75th or Platinum Jubilee of the AIWC held in Pune in January 2003, taking a message from President McAleese. Dr Munro is currently writing a book outlining Greta Cousins life from her point of view.
VÓTÁIL 100: ROSCOMMON COMMEMORATIVE LECTURE PROGRAMME
King House, Boyle, Co. Roscommon F52 WR26

For further information on programme details & booking, please contact:
Tel: Mary Mullins 090 66 37321/090 66 37243
Email: ghoare@roscommoncoco.ie

Brochure available online at http://www.roscommoncoco.ie/en/services/community/arts

Prebooking essential as places are limited.