



In a front line trench, France, World War I
(Library of Congress, Washington)

World War I in 1916

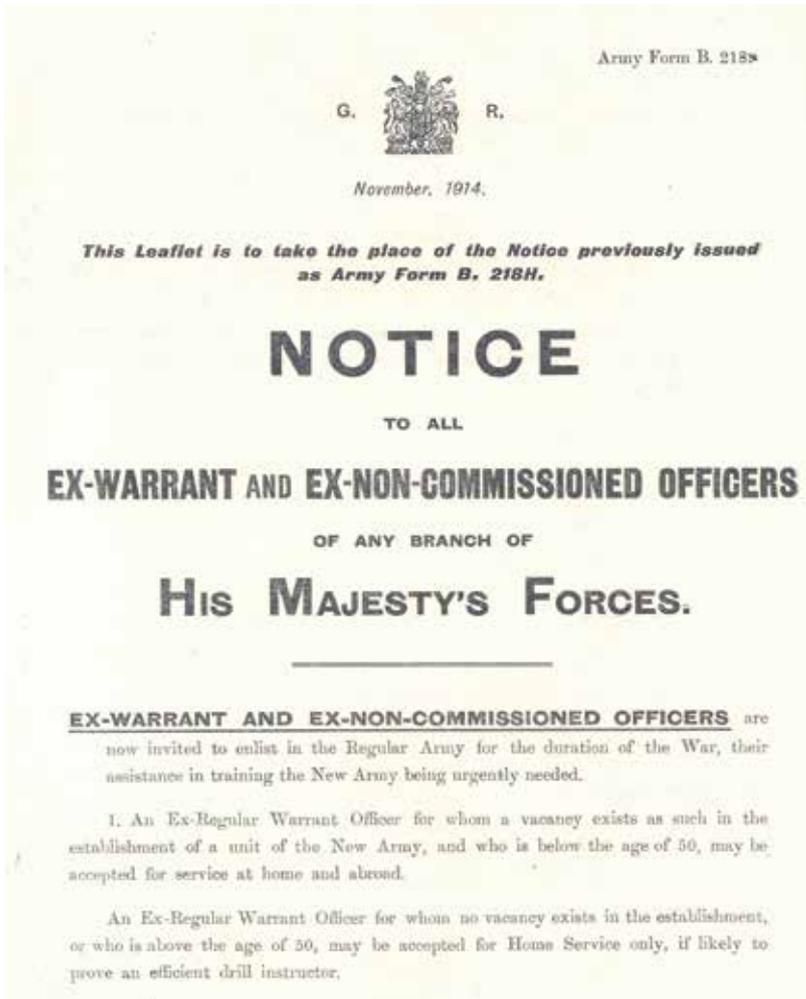
When war was declared on 4 August 1914, there were already over 25,000 Irishmen serving in the regular British Army with another 30,000 Irishmen in the reserve. As most of the great European powers were drawn into the War, it spread to European colonies all over the world. Donegal men found that they were fighting not only in Europe but also in Egypt and Mesopotamia as well as in Africa and on ships in the North Sea and in the Mediterranean.

1916 was the worst year of the war, with more soldiers killed this year than in any other year. By the end of 1916, stalemate on land had truly set in with both sides firmly entrenched. By now, the belief that the war would be 'over by Christmas' was long gone. Hope of a swift end to the war was replaced by knowledge of the true extent of the sacrifice that would have to be paid in terms of loss of life.

Recruitment and Enlisting

Recruitment meetings were held all over the County. In 1916, the Department of Recruiting in Ireland wrote to Bishop O'Donnell, in Donegal, requesting:

"... that recruiting meetings might with advantage be held outside the Churches . . . after Mass on Sundays and Holidays."



British Army recruitment notice to former army personnel, November 1914 (Donegal County Archives)

Men from all communities and from all corners of County Donegal enlisted. They enlisted in the three new Army Divisions: the 10th (Irish), 16th (Irish) and the 36th (Ulster), which were established after the War began. They also joined established regiments such as the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, the Royal Irish Fusiliers, the Royal Irish Rifles, the Connaught Rangers, the Royal Munster Fusiliers, and the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. They joined regiments in England, Scotland and Wales. Emigrants enlisted in the armies of Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, India and the United States. Some joined the Royal Flying Corps while others from Donegal were in the Royal Navy and were Merchant Seamen. For many, the reasons for enlisting were a combination of unemployment, idealism and adventure. The pay was good compared to other employment and an allowance was paid to the spouse of the soldier while he was away on duty.

Irish chaplains of all denominations volunteered for service during the War. In January 1916, a Circular was sent to the Bishops of Ireland, requesting their assistance in soliciting Catholic priests to volunteer. Fr. Sean McGlynn, Fr. William MacNeely, Fr. Thomas Molloy, Fr. Hugh Smith, Fr. William Devine, Rev. Dr. Barry Duggan and Fr. John Mc Glynn were among those who volunteered from the Donegal Diocese.



Canon Kerr (Donegal County Museum Collection)

Fr. Patrick Carr (also known as Canon Kerr) from Fanad, who volunteered in 1916, wrote from France:

“Only those who have been subject to the withering breath of war . . . can catch a glimpse of the true extent of ruin and misery brought about by the ‘Great War’”

Reverend J. Jackson Wright, a Presbyterian Minister from Ballyshannon, served with the 36th (Ulster) Division and was awarded the Military Cross after the Battle of the Somme.

Naval Operations

Although World War I was fought mainly on land, command of the sea enabled the Allies to transport the vital resources required on the Western Front and elsewhere. On 31 May 1916, the Battle of Jutland took place between the British Royal Navy's

Form 12. (Article 40.)

SEPARATE REGISTER for the Half-year ended the 30th day of September 1916, of Persons admitted liable by law to maintain them, have claimed to pay the cost of (To be kept by the Master of the Workhouse and

Go: A separate file of this Register shall be opened at the beginning of each half-year. The names and other particulars of Persons remaining at the close of the preceding half-year are to be transferred, in red ink, below

Register No.		Name and Surname	Residence	Sex	Age	Whether Single, Married, Widower, or Widow	Employment or Calling	If dependent, in what capacity, whether as Wife, Child, Servant, or Apprentice, and of whom	Religious Denomination	Date of discharge or death
If returned from last half-year, original Number (a)	If admitted during half-year, consecutive Number									
							<i>12th Bn. Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers</i>			
			<i>Assess due for Military Patients</i>							
			<i>Linns Camp</i>							
	819	J. Connon		m	19	Single	Soldier	27209	12 th Bn. R.I.F.	Presbyterian
	820	G. Morrison		m	18	"	"	27220	"	"
	821	G. W. Kirkpatrick		m	21	"	"	28627	"	"
	822	John W. Keenan		m	18	"	"	28706	"	6 of D
	823	Robert W. Keon		m	19	"	"	28705	"	"
	824	Tom Humphrey		m	19	"	"	27726	"	"
	825	Robert Gamble		m	18	"	"	26673	"	Presbyterian
	826	Joseph Dunne		m	26	"	Capt	27388	"	6 of B
	827	M. W. Arthur		m	20	"	Private	28784	"	6 of D
	828	James Dodeell		m	18	"	"	27415	"	"
	829	William W. Nelson		m	18	"	"	27371	"	Presbyterian
	830	James Muthollan		m	26	"	"	27052	"	6 of D
	831	Robt. Irwin		m	25	Married	"	28170	"	"
	832	Samuel Jack		m	20	Single	"	17435	"	"
	833	W. J. Kerr		m	19	"	Left	27370	"	"
	834	W. M. Laird		m	32	"	Private	28922	"	"
	835	Tom G. Kullidge		m	18	"	"	28728	"	"
	836	J. Forest		m	19	"	"	28121	"	"
	837	James Spillane		m	24	"	"	27142	"	"
	838	Joseph Reid		m	18	"	"	27972	"	"
	839	Hubert W. Kinn		m	25	"	"	27868	"	"

Extract from the admission register of Ballyshannon Fever Hospital, giving the names of soldiers from the 12th Battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, admitted and treated, 1916 (Donegal County Archives)



Lanty Gallagher, Gunner on the HMS Lion during the Battle of Jutland, 31 May 1916 (Gallagher Family Collection)

Grand Fleet and the Imperial German Navy's High Seas Fleet. It was the largest naval battle of the war and the only full-scale clash of battleships.

Lanty Gallagher from Carrickfinn was a Gunner on HMS Lion during the Battle of Jutland. It is reputed that he fired the first shots which began the battle. 99 men were killed and 51 wounded on HMS Lion including Lanty who was struck by a piece of shrapnel. He returned home after the war.

Donegal men who were killed at the Battle of Jutland included: Alexander Hamilton, Laghey, Royal Marine Light Infantry, HMS Defence; George Robinson, St. Johnston, Engine Room Artificer, HMS Indefatigable; and John Todd, Rathmullan, Stoker 1st Class, HMS Defence.

:: FROM THE TRENCHES. ::
 By PATRICK MACGILL, London Irish Rifles; author of "Children of the Dead End," etc.
 No. 4—DEAD MEN.

"I'll give you a half-franc for a green envelope," I said, and my Cockney friend, Bill Teake, took the green envelope, which needed no regimental censure but was liable to examination at the Base, from his pocket.

"Arl franc and five fags," he said, speaking with the studied indifference of a fishwife making a bargain.

"Half a franc and two fags," I answered.

"Arl a franc and four fags," he said.

"Three fags," I ventured.

"Done," said Bill, and added, "I've now sold the bloomin' line of communication between myself and my ole man for a few coppers and a couple of messy fags."

"What's your ole man's profession, Bill?" I asked.

"Is wot?"

"His trade?"

"Yer don't know my ole man, Pat?" he enquired. "Everybody knows 'im. 'E 'as as good a reputation as old times. Yer must 'ave seen 'im in the Strand wiv 'is shiny buttons, burnished like gold in a jooler's winder, carryin' a board wiv 'Gold Metal Polish' on it."

"Oh!" I said with a laugh.

"But 'e's a devil for 'is suds 'e is—"

"What are suds?" I asked.

"Beer," said Bill. "'E can 'old more'n any man in Lunnon, more'n the chucker-out at The Cat and Mustard Pot boozier in W— Road even. Yer should see the chucker-out an' my ole man comin' 'ome on Saturday night. They keep themselves steady by rollin' in opposite directions."

"Men with good reputations don't roll home inebriated," I said. "Excessive alcoholic dissipation is utterly repugnant to dignified humanity."

"Wot?"

"Is your father a church goer?" I asked.

"Not 'im," said Bill. "'E don't believe that one can go to 'eaven by climbin' up a church steeple. "'E's a good man, that's wot 'e is. "'E works 'ard when 'e's workin', 'e can use 'is fives wiv anyone, 'e can take a drink or leave it, but 'e prefers takin' it. Nobody can take a rise out of 'im fer 'e knows 'is place, an' that's more'n some people do."

"Bill, did you kill any Germans this morning?" I asked.

"We had made a charge that morning and captured two German trenches. It was now noon and we were standing in a trench which cut across the road to Loos: the whirlwind of battle had spent itself and now all was very quiet."

"Maybe I did," Bill answered, "and maybe I didn't. I saw one bloke, an Allemong, in the front trench laughin' like 'ell. 'I'll

make yer laugh, 'I said to 'im, and shoved my bayonet at 'is bread basket. Then I seed 'is foot; it was right off at the ankle. I left 'im alone. After that I'd a harney. I was gain' round a traverse and right in front of me was a Boche, eight foot 'igh or more. Ooh! 'e 'ad a bayonet as long as 'imself, and a beard as long as 'is bayonet."

"What did you do?"

"Ooh! I retreated," said Bill. "Then I met four of the Jocks, they'd bombed. I told them wot I seen and they went up with me to the place. The Boche saw us and 'e rushed inter a dug-out. One of the Jocks threw a bomb, and bang!"

"Have you seen Jimmy James?" I asked.

"No, I didn't see 'im at all," Bill answered. "I got a whiff of gas and it made me 'arf drunk. I was mad. 'Oo's this comin'?"

The newcomer was Jimmy James, a clean shaven youth of twenty who belonged to our section. We shook hands.

"So you've got through it all right?" I asked.

"I suppose I did," he answered, but his voice lacked confidence. He was for the moment like a man awaking from a nightmare, and at a loss to distinguish the real from the unreal. "I got a whiff of gas," said Jimmy, "and it made me drunk. The ——— regiment got mixed up with ours, and I came across J—— who was at school with me. I hadn't seen him for three years. We shook hands and had a long talk about home. Somehow I forgot we were in a charge. . . . I saw a German, mother naked, running round in a circle. . . . One of his own people's shells hit him. . . ."

"Did you kill any Allemonds?" asked Bill.

"I smote seventeen from the nave to the chaps," said Jimmy with a smile, sitting down on the banquette.

"Wonderful!" I exclaimed.

"Wonderful damned lie," said Bill.

"It's quiet now," I remarked. "There's nothing doing here at the moment. Now and again a German machine gun goes pot against the sandbags. Two men came down the road an hour ago, and they got hit in the head."

"And that's Loos!" said Jimmy James, getting to his feet and looking up the road. "It's bashed about a lot. There's hardly a house standing. And that's the Tower Bridge," he concluded, looking fixedly at the Twin Towers that stood scared but unbroken over Loos coal mine."

"There was a sniper up there this mornin'," said Bill. "'E didn't 'arf cause some trouble. Knocked out dozens of our fellers. 'E was brought down at last by a bomb."

Life in the Trenches

Early in the War on the Western Front both sides dug lines of trenches that stretched from the Belgian coast to the border of Switzerland.

A Battalion typically served time in the front line trenches, followed by a period spent in support, and then in reserve lines. A short period of rest would follow before the cycle would start again. Hugh Francis Law, Marble Hill, 1st Battalion, Irish Guards, described life in the trenches;

“as an endless labour of repairing collapsing ditches, filling sandbags, venturing out under darkness towards enemy lines through barbed wire. The dead were everywhere in no man’s land, and casualties had to be constantly tended to” (Law, F, 1983).

In May 1916, Hugh Law heard news of the Easter Rising in Dublin but reported that “no talk of it or its implications were apparent from his men.”

Soldiers waded through water-filled trenches alive with frogs and covered with red slugs and horned beetles. Rats fed on the multitude of corpses contaminating food and spreading disease. Lice thrived in the seams of dirty uniforms and carried an infectious disease known as Trench Fever. The smell in the trenches was a foul combination of rotting corpses, latrines, sweat, creosol and chloride of lime that was used to lessen the risk of infection and to drive away flies. The moist cold subterranean environment gave rise to a new set of ailments including Trench Foot caused by having to stand in wet slime for days and nights.

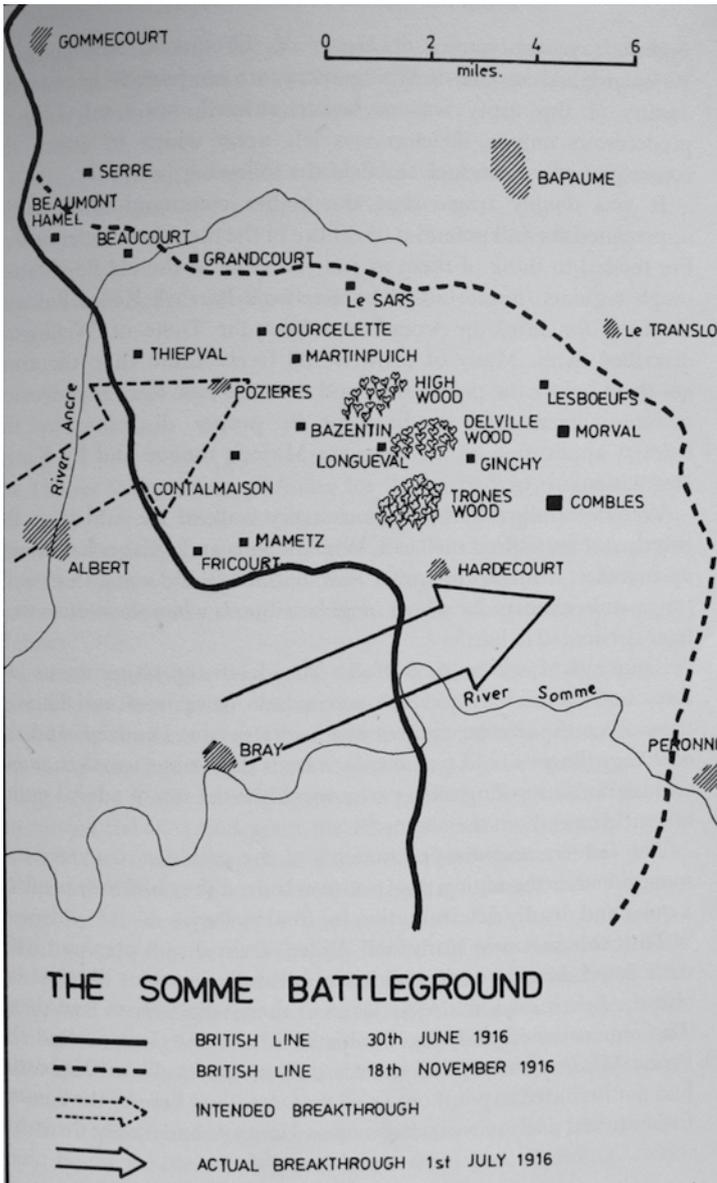
The 16th (Irish) Division was subject to a terrible gas attack between 27 - 29 April (Easter Week) 1916 which resulted in 1,980 casualties, at Hulluch in Northern France. Among those who died were men from Donegal including Michael Doherty, Letterkenny, 26005, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers; Francis Hegarty, Frosses, 17009, Royal Dublin Fusiliers; and John Doherty, Fanad, 14507, Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

The Battle of the Somme

For many homes in County Donegal, 1916 was remembered as the Year of the Somme. The Battle of the Somme began on 1 July 1916, when at 7:30 a.m., whistles blew for the soldiers to go into battle ('over the top' as it was known). By midnight on that first day over 60,000 British soldiers had been killed, wounded or taken prisoner. Many Donegal men fought and died during the Battle of



Lt. Francis Law, Irish Guards, in France
 (Law Family Private Collection)



Map of Somme battleground (Donegal County Museum Collection)

the Somme. They included men such as Private Francis Long, Bruckless, 16839, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, who died of wounds received on the first day of the Battle, and Major Douglas Gausen MacNeece, Redcastle, Royal Field Artillery, who was killed on 16 August. Major MacNeece is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial in France along with 74,000 soldiers whose bodies were never found.

Private Hugh Mulhern, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, from Baltoney, Gortahork, was wounded by a grenade during the Battle of the Somme. He was rescued from No Man's Land by his neighbour from Gortahork, who saved his life by carrying him to a Casualty Clearing Station. His right hand was amputated from above the wrist and he lost the first finger from his left hand.

The Battle of the Somme eventually petered out in November 1916. It was a tragedy on a breathtaking scale. British forces lost 420,000 soldiers. The French lost 200,000 men and the Germans nearly 500,000 soldiers.

Prisoner Of War

Pte. Joseph Andrew Armstrong was born in Ballybofey. In 1915 he enlisted, at the age of 43, with the 54th Battalion Australian Imperial Force. He was listed as 'Killed in Action' on 20 July 1916 during the Battle of the Somme and his next of kin, Mrs Ellen Philips was informed of his death. Later, on 7 December 1916, he was officially reported as a Prisoner of War (POW). In his Witness Statement Pte. Armstrong said,

"We took part in an action against enemy position at 6 p.m. on 19th July 1916. The enemy was strongly entrenched. Our instructions were to take the 2nd line of trenches. We captured the 2nd line. The enemy counter-attacked early next morning and recaptured position and made prisoners of us all. We were all severely wounded and had to be carried off the battlefield on a stretcher. I (Private Armstrong) was lying severely wounded between first and second line of German trenches, when Segt Wilson, 53th Batt, came out under heavy fire and assisted me into the first trench. After capture we were taken to a dressing station at Lille and then transferred to Valenciuis where we were all operated upon by a German Doctor. I (Private Armstrong) had 12 pieces of shrapnel taken from different parts of my body. I was given an anaesthetic but other Privates



WWI Memorial to Captain James Douglas Gausen MacNeece. (Donegal County Museum)



Soldiers and a Nurse at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station (CCS), a military medical facility behind the front lines. These wounded soldiers were moving through the medical chain, having come from the front line medical officers and dressing stations.
(George Metcalf Archival Collection, Canadian War Museum)



were operated on without anaesthetic.” (Witness Statement Official Circumstances of Capture, Australian Imperial Forces, December 1918).

The POWs were later sent to Augsburg, Bavaria and were then moved to Lager Hammelburg (‘Camp Hammelburg’) where they were sent out to work at various jobs. After the Armistice, Private Armstrong was repatriated to Australia.

Pte. Hugh Mulhern, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, wounded at the Battle of the Somme, 1 July 1916.
(Mulhern Family Private Collection)

LIFE IN COUNTY DONEGAL IN 1916



Gweebarra Bay, c.1900s
(Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)

County Donegal's Rural Landscape

"I was gazing along my own glen in Donegal with its quiet fields, its sunny braes, steep hills and white lime-washed cottages, snug under their neat layers of straw." (MacGill, 1916)

The 34,233 inhabited houses that stood in the County Donegal landscape in 1916 housed a population of 168,537 people. The rural, agrarian landscape was characterised by small subsistence farms in the west of the county and large farms in the east of the county. Seasonal migration by workers from west Donegal to farms in the Laggan was in decline by 1916 but another important seasonal migrant route to Scotland via the port of Derry had been established. The practice of out-migration and emigration left its imprint on the County Donegal landscape with the uninhabited buildings in the county reaching 3,128 buildings by 1916. The number of inhabited buildings had declined since the 1860s while the number of uninhabited buildings increased over the same period and mirrored population decline since the Great Famine of the 1840s.

In the early twentieth century, the housing stock in County Donegal was classified into four classes of houses. Most of the houses counted in the 1911 Census were Second-Class and Third-Class houses (93.5%), while 6% of the housing stock was classified as First-Class houses and 0.5% as Fourth-Class housing.

The homes in which most Donegal people lived were modest houses of two or three rooms. In 1916, many of these homes would have been sheltered under a rope-thatched roof, although this was changing as slate was brought in through the rail and road networks. The front door of these cottages would have led directly into the main living space known as 'the kitchen'. The main gable hearth provided heat and a place for food preparation as well as the focal point for family, friends and neighbours to exchange stories and songs, share news, play music and entertain.



First Class House: Glendooen Rectory
(Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)



Second Class House: Foster's Terrace, Moville
(Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)



Third Class House: Barnes
(Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)



Fourth Class House: Gweedore
(Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)



Barney's Bridge, Gweedore, c.1900s
(Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)

Farming and Fishing

Farming

Many farms in County Donegal in the 19th century consisted of tiny, subdivided holdings managed under the widespread practice of 'rundale', which is where land is farmed in common by neighbours. Grain, potato and flax were grown. By the early twentieth century, the long tradition of arable farming had declined throughout Ireland and livestock farming, particularly of sheep, was on the rise.

In December 1916, Dunfanaghy Rural District Council (RDC) passed a resolution stating that it was a duty of landowners to increase tillage (Dunfanaghy RDC, 9 December 1916, DCA). Prices rose during World War I, though the main beneficiaries were the wealthier farmers.

People began to realise that there were opportunities in fishing and kelp (seaweed). On 8 April, the Milford RDC passed a resolution agreeing to petition the Department of Agriculture and the Congested Districts Board to organise a proper scheme for buying kelp "as a substitute for manure hitherto imported from Germany and further petition the military authorities to grant permission to kelp makers to burn seaweed between sunrise and sunset" (Milford RDC, 8 April 1916, DCA).



Cottage in Buncrana, c.1900s
(Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)

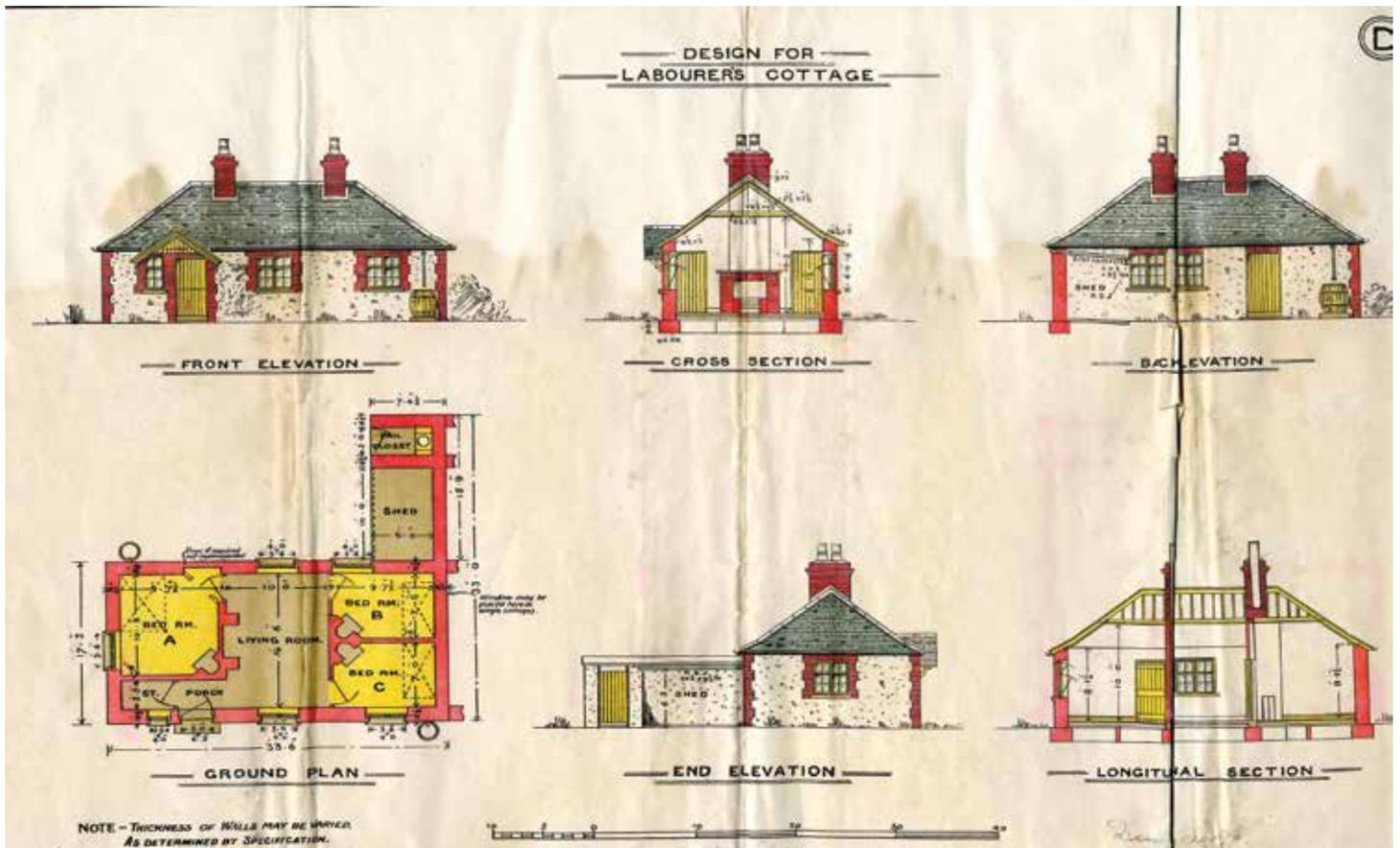
During the summer of 1916, there were fierce storms, low temperatures and heavy rain. Blight appeared in Donegal in August. The combination of this, a labour shortage and the wet ground, caused many of the potatoes to rot. The result was increased prices and a shortage of potatoes. This also affected the seed crop for sowing the following year (Derry People, 1916).

Glenties Union asked the Donegal Committee of Agriculture to impress on the Department of Agriculture the problems that would ensue if, as predicted, “during the coming spring, 75 of the 81 tenants of labourers’ cottages who held half acre plots would be unable to procure seed potatoes.” In December 1916, potatoes were being sold for one shilling per stone. A resolution was adopted by Letterkenny Rural and Urban Councils “pointing out to the Government the necessity of prohibiting the exportation of potatoes from Ireland.”

The Irish Chief Secretary estimated the yield of sound potatoes to be approximately four acres per statute acre, 2.2 acres less than in 1915 and 1.5 tons less than the ten-year average for 1904 – 1915. The estimate was 2,350,000 tons against 3,710,000 tons in August 1914.

GLENTIES FAIR —Held on 12th September. Medium sized fair composed chiefly of second and third class store bullocks. Few shippers present, and demand slow at 20s to 25s per head less than recent fairs. About 35 per cent. of the cattle remained unsold owing to the high prices asked. Medium supply of blackfaced mountain sheep; demand keen at an advance of 8s per head on recent fairs, and a clearance almost effected. **Store Cattle**—Over six and not exceeding twelve months, second class, £5 15s to £8; one year old and under two years, second class, £9 to £10; liveweight average, 46s; third class, £6 15s to £8 10s; liveweight average, 42s 6d; two years old and under three years, second class, £13 to £16 10s; liveweight average, 47s; third class, £9 to £11 10s; liveweight average, 48s. **Fat Cattle**—Cows and bulls, second class, £15 to £28; liveweight average, 44s; third class, £10 to £13 10s; liveweight average, 40s. Springers, cows and heifers, second class, average £20; third class, average £16. **Lambs** (under twelve months old), mountain, 16s to 21s. **Store sheep**, one year old and under two years, mountain, 24s to 29s; two years old and over, mountain, 30s to 38s 6d.—**Report of Department.**

Extract from *Derry Journal*, listing prices for Glenties fair, 1916
(Courtesy Derry Journal)



Labourers' Cottages model D plan, 1908
(Donegal County Archives)

Land ownership and housing

Until the late 19th and early 20th century very few farmers in Ireland owned the land they farmed. They farmed on the property, called landed estates, of wealthy landowning classes, many of whom were 'absentee landlords' living in England. Following years of campaigning by the Land League and other organisations, and a series of land purchase acts from 1870, farmers gradually came to own their farms. Due to World War I, the purchase of land had ceased by 1916 and did not resume until the Irish Free State commenced its policy of compulsory purchase of estates which were still being rented. Under various pieces of housing legislation, agricultural labourers who worked for farmers were gradually re-housed into local authority built labourers' cottages.

Improvements in Farming and Fishing

Improvements in fishing and farming were assisted by Congested Districts Board (CDB) schemes. These included pier and railway building, the provision of financial assistance for local enterprises and agricultural development, and the facilitation of the purchase of land by small farmers. The Department of

Newspaper article on the development of co-operative societies in Ulster, 1916

(Courtesy Derry Journal)

CO-OPERATIVE NEWS.

Six new Agricultural Societies have been registered in Ulster since the beginning of the present year. Two of these are already in active operation, two which were primarily intended to operate as flax societies are to start work in his department at the opening of the scutching season, and the two remaining ones have not yet succeeded in finding suitable premises. One other society is in process of organisation.

In addition to the above a new Milling Society has been registered at Ardara, Co. Donegal. There is already a very successful Agricultural Society in this district, and the object of the new society is to take over the site of an old mill and erect the necessary buildings and plant for grinding purposes.

Unfortunately there are still a number of agricultural societies in Ulster which are only serving their members to a very small extent. There is a wide field of usefulness for all societies of this kind, not only in the marketing of general farm produce, but also by adopting the co-operative implement scheme. So far the promoters of this scheme have found it very difficult to induce many of the older established societies to extend their activities in this direction. Mr. Lowry will direct special attention to this field of organisation work during the coming winter, so it is to be hoped that before another year most, if not all, of our co-operative societies will have availed themselves of this useful scheme.



Harvest time in Malin Head, c.1900s (Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)

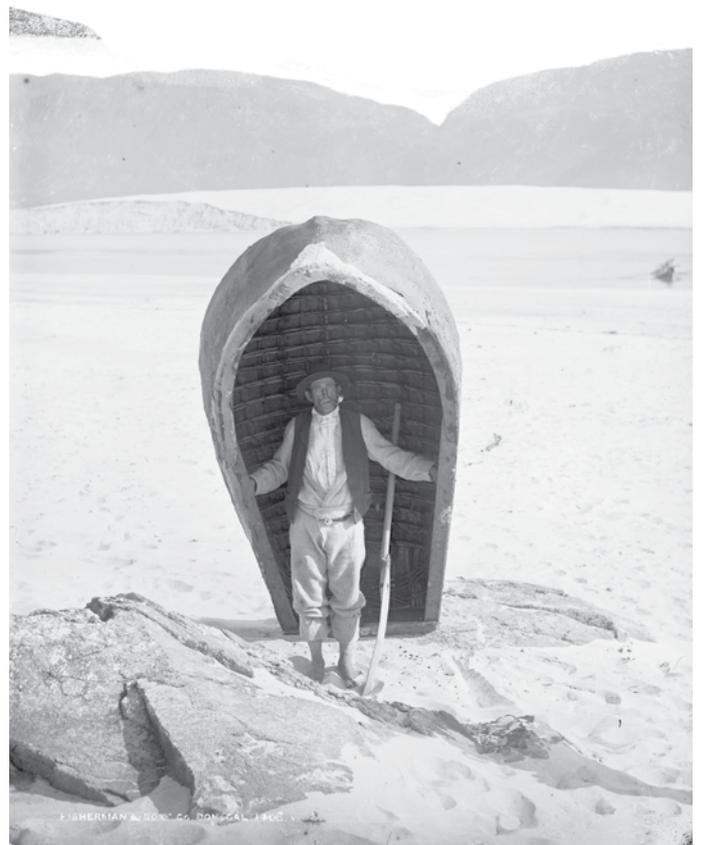
Agriculture and Technical Instruction sought to improve farming practices through training, grants and prize giving. Co-operative societies also grew in the first decade of the twentieth century. Paddy 'The Cope' Gallagher's Templecrone Co-operative Society was particularly successful, celebrating its tenth anniversary in 1916.

The use of working horses was still widespread on Donegal farms in 1916. It was March 1917 before the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction established a motor tractor section. It was 1917 before the first Ford Tractors were registered in Donegal.

Fishing

Fishing has always been a vital part of County Donegal's economy and prior to World War I up to 7,000 people were involved, part-time and full-time, in the fishing industry. Many of them were also farmers. Herring was particularly important as it formed part of the basic diet of people in Donegal.

Before World War I, fishing was already under threat in the county as fishermen in Donegal could not afford the large steam drifters owned by the Scottish and English fishermen.



A fisherman in County Donegal, c.1900s (Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)



Curing fish at Downings, c.1900s
(Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)

They were instead consigned to the use of smaller boats such as Greencastle yawls. Neighbours often shared vessels. The steam drifters were large and powerful. Fishermen could get away faster with their catch, and quickly export it at good prices to Britain. Local fishermen, with rowing and sailing boats, had to be content with selling their produce in smaller quantities, and to supporting the larger industry in jobs such as packing, gutting, curing and carting. In the years prior to 1916 however, the CDB had begun a programme to develop the fishing industry in Donegal. They assisted local fishermen in the purchase of six steam drifters. The CDB then sought further local capital investment to create a modern fishing industry in the county. The war however interrupted this programme. The Admiralty requisitioned the steam-drifters. The *Calistoga* and the *Gweedore* sailed to the Dardanelles to take part in the War, with the former lost six weeks after its arrival. The *Finross* was lost at sea on 26 November 1916. Furthermore during the War, the Admiralty laid mines along the north coast of Donegal and fishing was restricted from Malin Head to Tory Island. People involved in fishing, including the ancillary industries, were left jobless. Local men however continued to fish inshore, away from the mines. Herring was plentiful in 1916–1917 and prices, which had plummeted, rose again. Exporting produce could be slow although the existence of the Letterkenny and Burtonport Extension helped in transporting consignments of fish to market by railway.

The loss of employment in the wider fishing industry meant that people had to seek work elsewhere, often choosing the traditional route of seasonal migration to Scotland. By 1916 however, as the war became protracted, and casualties rose, the recruiting campaigns grew ever more widespread and more urgent. Young labourers travelling to Scotland were in danger of being conscripted into the armed forces. Many remained at home, unemployed, even though labourers were in demand with so many men away at war.

The practice of hiring out children as young as nine to work for farmers in the wealthier Laggan (east Donegal) farming district was common in early twentieth-century Donegal. But the numbers of children having to leave school and work for part or all of the year in the Laggan or even as ‘tattie hokers’ in Scotland increased greatly from 1915 to 1918 and teachers in Donegal despaired that children would ever receive a decent education.



Fair day in Glenties, c.1900s
(Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)

Town Life

Donegal in 1916 was very much a rural county. Towns and urban areas did not have large populations. Letterkenny, the county's largest town then as now, had a population probably not much more than that registered in the 1911 Census: 2,194 people.

Since the advent of modern local government in 1898, local people, for the first time, had a role to play in the development of their own locality and by 1916 both male and female property owners could vote and stand for all local elections. Donegal County Council and the Rural and Urban District Councils as well as the Boards of Guardians were responsible for the provision of clean and safe housing, water supply, sewerage systems, roads and footpaths, and public lighting, as well as prevention of the many infectious diseases still in existence.



Ardara, c.1900s
(Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)

In Letterkenny for example, the Urban District Council employed Surface Men to maintain the roads. This work included removing mud from the street and when the weather was hot, watering the streets to keep the level of dust down.

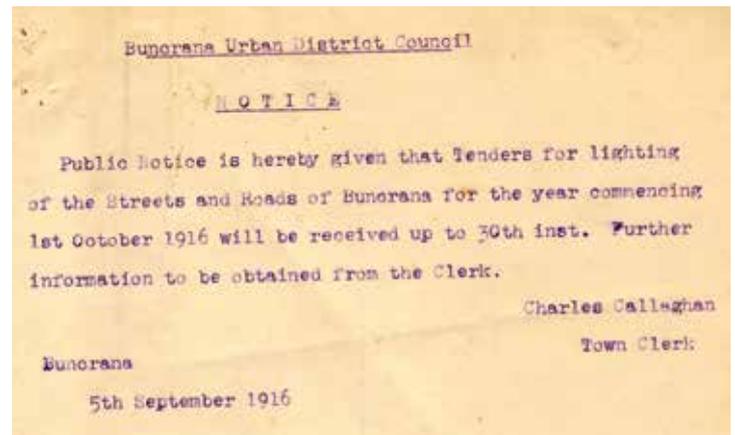
The Rural and Urban Councils' roles included the building and maintenance of new houses in urban areas (under the Housing of the Working Classes and Labourers' Cottages Acts) as well as the inspection of private homes and lodgings/boarding houses if they were deemed a danger to public health, or unfit for human habitation. Housing was basic for most people in 1916. Many homes did not have more than two rooms and few had toilets or bathrooms. Homes had no running water or electricity. In June 1916, Donegal Rural District Council's medical officer complained that there were too many "cess pits and manure pits too close to dwelling houses" in Mountcharles and these "were a cause of ill health." (Donegal RDC, June 1916, DCA).

At the start of 1916, World War I had been raging for over 18 months. The death toll was steadily mounting and continued involvement in the war was also putting huge financial pressures on the British government. Much important local development was slowly grinding to a halt, including the building of houses, as money, labour and materials were scarce. Local elections, due to be held in 1916, were postponed.

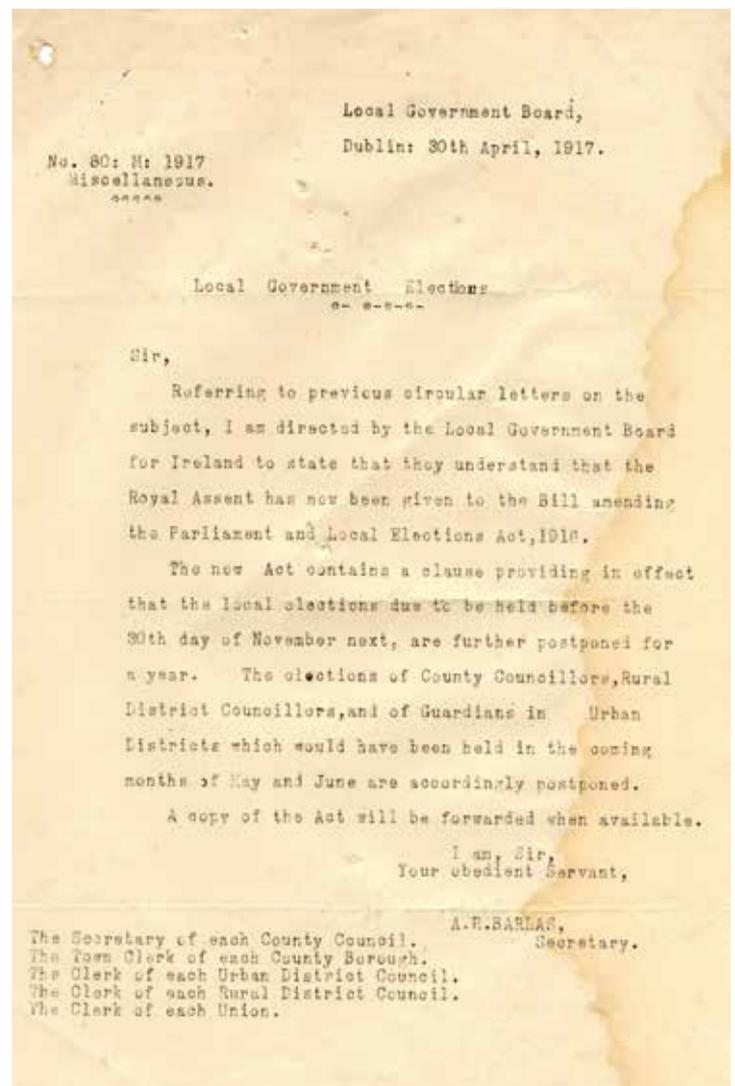
In November 1916, Letterkenny Rural District Council reported that one of their housing contractors, in seeking an extension of his contract, complained that the delays in building cottages were because "all the help he had went [sic] and joined the army" (Letterkenny RDC, November 1916, DCA).

However, some work which had been planned or begun in earlier years did proceed, though often with delays in completion. For example in Ballyshannon in February, 14 labourers' cottages at Erne Street were in the process of being built, and the building of houses was still taking place at Carrickboy, Townparks and Magheracor. In Glenties in February, the Rural District Council (RDC) estimated its 1916 expenditure on housing was at £1,800, and a number of houses in the area were built by July.

The importance of updating water and sewerage systems was underlined in February 1916 when houses at River Row in Moville were flooded with sewerage water.



Notice from Bunrana Urban District Council, seeking tenders for lighting of its streets, 5 September 1916 (Donegal County Archives)

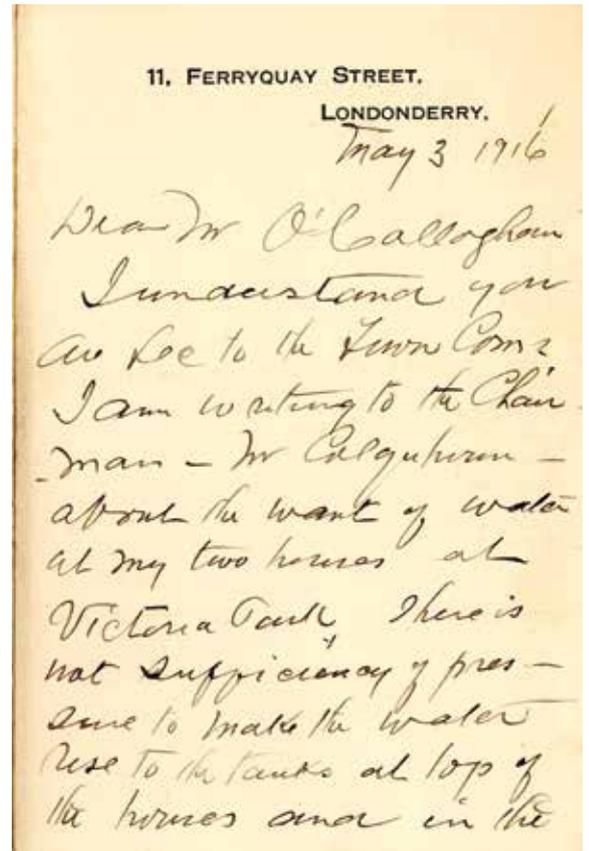


Circular letter from the Local Government Board to all local authorities, relating to the postponement of 1916 elections, 30 April 1917 (Donegal County Archives)

Inishowen RDC resolved in May to construct a new sewer for the area. The quality of the existing water supply had to be continuously monitored. It was reported on 8 July to Glenties RDC that an analysis of water had produced bad results.

During the War, the military presence in Donegal increased particularly in Inishowen. This was sometimes a cause of friction between local townspeople, local authorities and the War Office. Soldiers were often accused of speeding on local roads and causing damage to roads. In May, Inishowen RDC decided to ask the War Office for a grant to help maintain roads from Buncrana to Dunree Fort, on account of the heavy military traffic thereon. On 1 June the minutes report a reply from the Lough Swilly Garrison, stating that traffic was not heavy enough to damage the road, and therefore there was no reason for a grant from the War Department (Inishowen RDC, May, June 1916, DCA).

The War also had an impact on the railways. Fuel costs rose. The difficulty of getting spare parts and skilled fitters meant that the rolling stock (such as engines and carriages) could not be kept in good repair. A special meeting of Donegal County Council was called in late 1916 to discuss the ongoing problems. Orders were given that gates and gatemen were to be put on all level crossings and that "engines be sufficient to have passengers conveyed up to or near the scheduled times in their timetables." A public enquiry was demanded. (Derry Journal, 4 October 1916).



Extract from letter from H. Thompson to Buncrana Urban District Council, relating to his weak water supply, 3 May 1916 (Donegal County Archives)



Gweedore Railway Station, c.1900s (Courtesy of National Library of Ireland)

38 REGISTER OF *Lower Fahan* NATIONAL SCHOOL.

Date of Entrance.	Register Number.	PUPIL'S NAME IN FULL.	Age of Pupil last Birth Day.	Religious Denomination.	Residence.	Occupation or Means of Living of Parents.	State the Name and County of the last National School at which the Pupil attended; and the Class in which he last passed.		
							School.	County.	Class.
1916 22. 5. 16	357	1 Phyllis Martin	7	R.C.	Buncrana	Photographer	Kellymacarry	Donegal	II
22. 5. 16	358	2 Margaret McKinley	4	I.C.	Buncrana	Labourer	Never at School before.		
26. 6. 16	362	3 Anne Harpham	9	I.C.	Buncrana	Thine Sweeper			
2-10-16	368	4 James Little	8	I.C.	Linsford	Farmer	Linsford N.S.	Donegal	II
2-10-16	369	5 Mary Anne Little	9..	I.C.	Linsford	Farmer.	Linsford N.S.	Donegal	II

Extract from Lower Fahan National School register, 1916
(Courtesy of Fahan National School)

Children and School Life

For many children school life did not change much during the early decades of the 20th century. In 1831 the national school system had been established in Ireland. However, school attendance was not compulsory until the passing of the Irish Education Act in 1892. Under this act children from the ages of 6 to 14 were required to attend at least 150 days of school each year. Local authorities ran school attendance committees in an attempt to enforce attendance but their successes were mixed. According to the Commissioners' report on education for 1916, 70% of children attended school, a rate considered good given the circumstances of that year. It is no doubt true that even if this figure is accurate, the 30% who did not attend school were at work, either at home, in neighbouring counties or in the lowlands of Scotland.

There were many challenges for those who did attend school and for their teachers. The cost of the war meant that capital works, including school building, were suspended. In 1916, rural schoolhouses in County Donegal were basic, usually consisting of one room. Children often had to collect firewood and turf from the locality to keep their building warm in winter. The children of farming and labouring families were frequently absent from school to help at home, particularly during harvesting. Children often attended

COPY OF SCHOOL TIME TABLE.

(a) Time at which School opens each morning 9.22 a.m.
 (b) Time for combined Secular Instruction—From 10.4.20 to 3.0.20.
 (c) Time for Religious Instruction
 (d) Time of commencement of Attendance, or Half-Attendance 10.50.
 (e) Vacations

Dates on which School was closed during school year to be entered on 30th June.

OCCUPATION OF THE STANDARDS

Time	To	I. Std.	II. Std.	III. Std.	IV. Std.	V. Std.	VI. Std.	VII. Std.	VIII. Std.
10.0	10.30	Arith	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation
10.30	11.0	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic
11.0	11.30	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic
11.30	12.0	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic
12.0	12.30	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic
1.0	1.30	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic
1.30	2.0	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic
2.0	2.30	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic
2.30	3.0	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic	Dictation	Arithmetic

Give here a brief statement of the grouping of Standards adopted.
 Principal :- Standards I - VII. All Subjects (Music's Readwork omitted)
 Assistant :- Standards I - II & IV. All Subjects. Std. I - III - Music's Readwork
 Principal :- Standards I - VII. All Subjects.

Enter here a complete copy of Master's Time Table.
 Enter here the day in each week, and the time of a Short Catechism Lesson as given to Pupils.
 Enter here the days and hours of which Extra Instruction is given, under the Standard below it.

Algebra :- Mon. & Wed. 9.20 - 10.0
 Geometry :- Tues. & Thurs. 9.20 - 10.0

Principal Teacher's Signature: W Crawford
 Date: 10/7/16

Timetable for Massinass National School, July 1916
(Courtesy of Donegal County Archives)

NAME OF PUPIL	Days set apart for the Extra Instruction in			This Course			164
	Irish	Needlework	Laundry	Irish	Needlework	Laundry	
...	96
...	16
...	28
...	95
...	116
...	102
...	116
...	40
...	63
...	110
...	1
...	13
...	19
...	3
...	10
...	97
...	28
...	49
...	3
...	32
...	44
...	12
...	94
...	21
...	10
...	29
...	4
...	8
...	22
...	113
...	26-24

Rollbook for 'extra subject', Irish, taught at Massinass National School, June 1916 (Courtesy of Donegal County Archives)

and geography. Only girls were taught 'extra subjects' such as cookery, laundry and needlework. There were also drawing and singing classes. Religion and nature study were also taught.

Local clergy, Protestant or Catholic, generally oversaw the management of national schools. Before the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922, children did not have to learn Irish. More complex mathematical subjects were sometimes taught as extra subjects.

Department of Education Inspectors visited schools to ensure that the teaching was of the required standard, and that the schools themselves were in good condition. Teachers along with their pupils were often responsible for maintaining cleanliness and a dust-free environment. The Inspector of Drumoghill National School reported several times between March and June 1916 on the need to keep closets (toilets) and floors scoured and swept and the building well ventilated (Drumoghill NS register, DCA). The Inspector also noted in May 1916 that discipline should be improved. "No unnecessary noise or talking should be allowed," he wrote on 8 May 1916. In November that year, the inspector emphasised the importance of neater writing and the need for improvements in learning of tables. He also made observations relating to the teaching of singing and drawing, indicating their importance as subjects in 1916.

Visited from 1 to 2.2.5 2 day of June 1916

Name of Teacher giving instruction in Special Branch.	Special Branch taught.	Date of	
		Training in Subject.	Appointment to this School.
Principal, Mr. Lunnan	Laundry	Organiser's Office	
Assistant, Miss Kelly	Needlework		

Proficiency of Classes

Creditable work under difficult conditions

SUGGESTIONS.

1. Grate needs attention as very little practice can be done with a large class.
2. Even with present grate more practice might be done; (on day 6 girls washed 3 articles & were not kept busy)
3. A temporary line might be put up at lesson; it is wrong to have garments hung on metal when damp

Needlework
 1. Specimens lot preserved as shown, dated in books.
 2. Girls in 5th Std might have garments suitable to their Std (in programme)
 3. Butting out might be practised every month

Organiser.

Extract from Organiser's Observation Book for Massinass National School, 2 June 1916 (Courtesy of Donegal County Archives)



Original building for Coláiste Uladh
(Courtesy of National Library of Ireland)

Coláiste Uladh

Dáil Uladh, the Ulster wing of the Gaelic League, was established in 1905. One of the great obstacles to the spread of Irish in schools was the lack of properly qualified teachers.

“The Colleges for training teachers of Irish were established to meet the great demand for qualified teachers of the National Language, and to remedy the defect in our educational system which made no adequate provision for the training of such teachers” (Conference of Irish Colleges, 1916)

Its first major commitment to help in the revival of the northern dialect of Irish was to establish an Irish language summer college for teachers in Cloughaneely, County Donegal. In 1906 this college, initially known as Ardscoil Cholmcille was based in a dwelling house. Later named Coláiste Uladh and based in a newly-built hall, it heralded a new era in the Donegal Gaeltacht and altered the economic, cultural, and social fabric of the area. The local economy was boosted through the Gaelic League’s policy of self-sufficiency: the schoolhouse was fitted with locally-made wooden furniture and households offered boarding to the visiting students, thus supplementing their incomes. The college hall was built by monies provided by Roger Casement. The college taught linguistics, comprising phonetics, grammar and prose composition, poetry, reading, recitation and story-telling; methods of teaching, including lectures on methods, demonstration of methods, and practice in same; history of literature; history of Ireland; vocal music; dancing; lectures on miscellaneous subjects; and games and amusements.