

**Mary Ellen ‘Molly’ Adrien (1873-1949): Cumann Na mBan Volunteer: & descendant of Dr John Adrien (Adreen) of 19 Dawson Street, Dublin**

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Molly's image (in the centre above) was obtained from *An Phoblacht* (Dublin, 30 Mar. 2014);

<https://www.anphoblacht.com/contents/23870>

This paper on Molly's life has been an end of term module CM 24 Gender in a local context essay under lecturer Ann Matthews at NUI Maynooth, submitted in January 2006. It was presented in that same year to the Skerries Historical Society; and in the following years to the Loughshinny & Rush Historical Society; the Old Dublin Society; the Garristown Historical Society; and also at venues at Oldtown, & at the Fingal County Council Archives, Swords. An article based on it has appeared in the *Dublin Historical Record*, Vol.69. No.2 (autumn/winter 2016).

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## Abbreviations

B.R.C.	Belgian Refugees Committee
B.A.	Bachelor of Arts
C.C.	Catholic Curate
C. of I.	Church of Ireland
D.C.	District Councillor
E.P.P.I.	Enhanced Parliamentary Papers Ireland
I.R.A.	Irish Republican Army
I.V.	Irish Volunteer
L.G.B.	Local Government Board
M.A.	Master of Arts
M.D.	Medical Doctor
P.C.	Peace Commissioner
P.P.	Parish Priest
R.C.	Roman Catholic
R.D.C.	Rural District Council
RIA	Royal Irish Academy
RCPI	Royal College of Physicians Ireland
S.S.	Saints
T.C.D.	Trinity College Dublin
T.D.	Teachta Dála
U.C.D.	University College Dublin
W.R.C.	War Refugee Committee (British)

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## Introduction

Mary Ellen Adrien, fondly known as Molly, was born on 21 September 1873, at Micknanstown, County Meath. She came from a prosperous middle-class Roman Catholic professional family; whose menfolk had a propensity to have become medical doctor-surgeons of some repute. The Adrien's, according to Sir Charles Cameron, had been of Huguenot extraction, which in general terms, were Protestants who fled persecution in France after the terms of the Edict of Nantes were abolished by King Louis XIV in 1685.<sup>1</sup> Molly's family linkages in Dublin City were through her great-great-grandfather, William Adrien, who was a tallow-chandler at 42 Thomas Street, Dublin, in c. 1783.<sup>2</sup> Along the way some of the Adrien's became Roman Catholics through inter-marriage as was the case with Molly's forebears in the lineage from the William Adrien discussed here, who was her great-great-grandfather, while her great-great-grandmother was Mary Betagh.

One of their sons, John Adrien (Adreen), was born in 1760 and later trained in Paris as a doctor-surgeon. Cameron wrote that after Adrien had graduated in 1781:

He set up practice in Meath Street and devoted himself chiefly to surgery and midwifery. In 1798 when Lord Edward Fitzgerald was mortally wounded by Major Sirr, the first surgeon who attended him was Adrien who happened to be in a house-no doubt his father's-close to that in which Lord Edward Fitzgerald had been concealed. John Adrien gradually removed his abode eastwards, as his practice became more extensive. Having lived in Great Ship-street, Eustace-street, and Fleet-street, he finally took the splendid house, No. 20 Dawson Street, which had been the town house of Lord Northlands, and is now the house of the RIA [Royal Irish Academy]. It is said that he had rooms set apart for the use of his country patients, so that to some extent his house was a private hospital. He died in 1827 [sic]. Dr Adrien married Mrs Derrick, a widow. His eldest son, John Thomas, was born in Eustace-street, on the 17<sup>th</sup> May, 1798. He was educated in Trinity College and graduated B.A., in 1818. ... A son of John Adrien still survives in the person of Dr William Adrien born about 1807.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Charles A. Cameron (Sir), *History of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and the Irish schools of medicine; including numerous biographical sketches: also, a medical bibliography* (Dublin, 1886), p. 458.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Watson (comp. ed.), 'The Dublin Directory; merchants and traders' in, *The Gentleman's and citizen's almanack* (Dublin, 1783), p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Cameron, *History of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland*, p. 458.



It was probable that the various doctor Adrien's and their families were, in common with other Irish professionals in the field of medicine at that time, would have enjoyed a social standing within their own communities on a par with minor gentry if not higher. However, in the case of Molly and her younger siblings, that prosperity was to come crashing down to earth in dramatic fashion, firstly with the death of her mother Mary (nee, McCullagh), who died from Tuberculosis in 1886 at the age of thirty-five years, when Molly was thirteen years old. And secondly, only four years later, when her father Edward became ill and died in July 1890, at the age of forty-four years. The loss effectively orphaned Molly and her brothers and sisters from that point on, but the situation, bad as it was, got even worse when the youngest child, William, died in the December of the same year as his father, at the age of five years.

As Molly's life went along into her late twenties, she suffered a loss of a different kind when (according to a relative, Margaret Griffin, nee, Savage) she lost the love of her life, Patrick Griffin, and with him went the prospect of marriage and perhaps children too. He had forsaken her in favour of her younger sister Mary Christina Adrien, also known as 'Eva' or 'Ba' who Patrick Griffin married in 1905. That event seems to have had a profound impact on Molly, and Margaret Griffin spoke about a subsequent estrangement between the parties which endured all the remainder of their lives.

In the year 1914, Molly made history in the local sense when she became the first female to have become a poor-law guardian at the Balrothery Union, a role she was to play until the end of 1925, having been the chairperson for the years leading up to then. From 1914 onwards, Molly was a Cumann na mBan Volunteer, and during that time she had participated in the 1916 Easter Rising, where she carried despatches from leaders in the GPO, i.e., from Patrick Pearse, and James Connolly, to Thomas Ashe, Commandant of the Fifth Battalion in north County Dublin. Later, she was engaged in activities as a Cumann na mBan Volunteer in the War of Independence, and the Civil War period, where she supported the anti-treaty side.

Molly spent her whole life in the company of her devoted brother, Edward, also known as 'Ned' primarily at their home 'Garden-view cottage' at Oldtown, County Dublin. However, as time went along their lives together became ever harder due to declining financial circumstances, coupled with increasing age and failing health. She had to fight long and hard with the military authorities in her quest for a military service pension to obtain desperately needed money to put food on the table and to keep themselves warm in winter time. While she was subsequently bestowed with medals for her deeds in the 1916 Rising and War of Independence, what she really needed most was a weekly income she could depend upon. In the event, she and Ned eked out a miserable existence until their deaths in June and July 1949

respectively. Molly was aged seventy-six years while 'Ned' was a little less. She got a military send off at her graveside at Crickstown cemetery, County Meath. Obituaries in the press attested to her great standing within the area of Oldtown where she lived her entire life, and a wall-plaque was erected on a bridge near her home in memory of her brave deeds as a Cumann na mBan Volunteer.

## Chapter one: Molly's forbears in Dublin City

When it came to the surname Adrien, it was the case, according to Michael C. O'Laughlin, that it occurred in a number of variants, examples being, Adryan, Adrien, Adrain, Adrian, Drain, and Drean. He pointed out that some of the names of Adrien may actually be of the 'old Irish family of O'Drean'. Subsequently the name may be found as Drean and Drain. This Irish family was found anciently in Roscommon, where they served as chiefs of Calry [Calraighe]. Note the place name of Ballydrain near Tullynakill. Additionally, the name spelled as Adryan in the 17<sup>th</sup> century is found in Co. Dublin. This family name is traditionally linked to the province of Ulster in Ireland'.<sup>4</sup> The Ulster connection is supported by other writers in the field of surnames and their origins, namely, Sean de Bhulbh, and by Edward MacLysaght, who separately pointed to the Adrien's having arrived in this country from England by way of Carrickfergus, County Antrim.<sup>5</sup> A perusal of the primary sources for births, marriages and deaths revealed a few examples of Adrien's in that province and more bearing the surname Drain. Another variant which is of importance here because of its family lineage to Molly Adrien was Adreen. With regard to one of the variants seen above, i.e., Adryan, it appears from the work of Jon G. Crawford, *A Star Chamber court in Ireland*, ... showed that two members of that family, Elizabeth, and Joyce, who was a leather-dresser, were both residents of Dublin City and had come to the attention of the above mentioned court in the period from 1571 to 1641.<sup>6</sup> That information is important in that it demonstrates that Adryan's were in Dublin well before the Edict of Nantes had been abolished by King Louis XIV of France, in October 1685. Another man who was here before that time had to do with the burial of a Luke Drane, on 17 November 1683, who was attached to the Church of Ireland Parish of St. Peter's, Dublin.<sup>7</sup> The next earliest found here was a baptismal record for a Paul Adreen, of the Combe [sic] on 30 March 1724, at the parish of St. Luke, Dublin. His father was Isaac Adreen, a merchant, while his mother's name was Mary. That family's faith was Church of Ireland,<sup>8</sup> and the parish was formed under an act of parliament in 1708 whereby a part of St. Nicholas Without had been

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<sup>4</sup> Michael C. O'Laughlin, *The book of Irish families, great and small*, 2 vols. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Kansas City, 1997) i, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Sean De Bhulbh, *All Ireland surnames* (Limerick, 2002), p. 148: Edward MacLysaght, *The surnames of Ireland* (Dublin, 1991), p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Jon G. Crawford, *A star chamber court in Ireland: the court of Castle Chamber, 1671-1641* (Dublin, 2005), pp 136, 240, 265,450, 463-4

<sup>7</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Burial of Luke Drane, St. Peter's, Dublin, on 17 Nov. 1683. Book No. 1, page 128, entry No. 1358, record identifier DU-CI-BU-252441.

<sup>8</sup> [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Baptism of Paul Adreen, St. Luke's, Dublin on 30 Mar. 1724. Book No. N/R, page 16, entry No. N/R, record\_identifier, DU-CI-BA-100409, image file name d-155-1-1-240. (Accessed 11 Aug. 2015)

given ‘in the denomination of St. Luke’s’.<sup>9</sup> Further information about Paul came from the *Dublin Directory for the year, 1752, containing an alphabetical list of names, and places of abode, of the merchants and traders of the city of Dublin*, which showed that he had a grocery business at Fleet Street, Dublin, at that time.<sup>10</sup>

When it came to the first known descendants of Molly Adrien, which first arose in Dublin City, these appear to have been Molly’s great-great-grandparents, William Adrien, and Mary Betagh. Their marriage probably took place in c. 1758 as their first child appears to have been born in the following year.

**Text-box 1: The children from the marriage of William Adrien & Mary Betagh were**

(1) William Adrien was baptised in 1759, at the parish of SS. Michael and John, Dublin, where the sponsors were Jas Ward and a Mrs Higgins.<sup>11</sup>

(2) John Adrien was baptised in 1760, at the parish of SS. Michael and John, Dublin, where the sponsors were James Murphy and [smudged name] Campbell.<sup>12</sup>

(3) Teresa Adrien was baptised in 1766, at the parish of SS. Michael and John, Dublin, where the sponsors were Bartholomew Levy and Elinor Grant.<sup>13</sup>

(4) Joseph Adrien was baptised on 30 March 1769, at St. Catherine’s parish, Dublin, where the sponsors were Christopher Betagh and Elizabeth Betagh.<sup>14</sup>

(5) James Adrien was baptised on 24 April 1769, at St. Catherine’s parish, Dublin, where the sponsors were Richard Betagh, and [no name] Adrien.<sup>15</sup>

(6) Mary Anne Adrien was baptised on 20 May 1770, at St. Catherine’s parish, Dublin, where the sponsors were Columb Adrien and Teresa Nugent.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Archiseek, [www.archiseek.com/2010/1714-st-lukes-the-coombe-dublin/](http://www.archiseek.com/2010/1714-st-lukes-the-coombe-dublin/) (Accessed 7 Aug. 2015)

<sup>10</sup> *The Dublin directory for the year, 1752, containing an alphabetical list of the names, and places of abode, of merchants and traders of the city of Dublin* (Dublin, 1752), p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Baptism of William Adrien, in 1759, at SS. Michael and John, Dublin. Book No. 2, page 21, entry No. 6, record\_identifier, DU-RC-BA-45980. (Accessed 11 Aug. 2015)

<sup>12</sup> [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Baptism of John Adrien, in 1760, at SS. Michael and John, Dublin. Book No. 2, page 41, entry No. 3, record\_identifier, DU-RC-BA-46094. (Accessed 11 Aug. 2015)

<sup>13</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Baptism of Teresa Adrien, in 1766, at SS. Michael and John, Dublin. Book No. 2, page 126, entry No. 6, record\_identifier, DU-RC-BA-46996. (Accessed 11 Aug. 2015)

<sup>14</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Baptism of Joseph Adrien, on 30 Mar.1769, at St. Catherine’s parish, Dublin. Book No.3, p, 52, entry No. 1930, record\_identifier DU-RC-BA-317083. (Accessed 12 Oct.2015)

<sup>15</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Baptism of James Adrien, on 24 Apr. 1769, at St. Catherine’s Parish, Dublin. Book No. 3, page 72, entry No. 2672, record\_identifier, DU-RC-BA-317146. (Accessed 11 Aug. 2015)

<sup>16</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Baptism of Mary Anne Adrien, in 1770, at St. Catherine’s Parish, Dublin. Book No. 3, page 95, entry No. 3556, record\_identifier, DU-RC-BA-318032. (Accessed 11 Aug. 2015)

(7) Teresa Adrien was baptised on 22 February 1772, at St. Catherine's parish, Dublin, where the sponsors were Susanna Adrien and John Veldon.<sup>17</sup>

(8) Francis Adrien was baptised on 2 July 1773, at St. Mary's parish, Dublin, where the sponsors were George [no surname given] and Frances Drake.<sup>18</sup>

It is seen above that two children, Joseph and James were born close together, but the only explanation for that situation is that Joseph might have been born in the previous year or two where there was a gap between the births. Moving on, information from the 'Dublin directory; merchants and traders' in, *The gentleman's and citizen's almanack*, for the year 1783, compiled by Samuel Watson, bookseller, gave an entry for a William Adrien, tallow-chandler at 42 Thomas Street, Dublin in the year 1783, which showed that he was still in business there in that year.<sup>19</sup> Sir Charles A. Cameron, a former president of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, in his 1886 work, *History of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and of the Irish schools of medicine*; ... he wrote several short biographies one of which was about a 'John Thomas Adrien, who was a professor of medical jurisprudence at the college during the period 1829-1830'. Cameron gave his opinion that 'the Adrien's are descended from a French Huguenot family who settled in Ireland after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. In [the] process of time they became Roman Catholics--probably as a result of intermarriage. In the last century one of them, William Adrien had a son named John, born in 1760, who was educated in Paris as a medical man, and graduated in that city as M.D., in 1781. He set up in practice in Meath-street, and devoted himself chiefly to surgery and midwifery'.<sup>20</sup>

Cameron further wrote about Dr John, that:

On Tuesday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March, 1784, the voice of the College was first heard in the board-room of the Rotunda Hospital. ... The next proceeding was the election of Henthorn as secretary, and Dease, as treasurer, for the remainder of the current year. The College then resolved themselves into a "Court of Examiners" and elected the following to be members of the College:

<sup>17</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Baptism of Teresa Adrien, on 22 Feb. 1772, at St. Catherine's Parish, Dublin. Book No. 3, page 130, entry No. 4878, record\_identifier, DU-RC-BA-319359. (Accessed 11 Aug. 2015)

<sup>18</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Baptism of Francis Adrien, on 2 July 1773, at St. Catherine's, Dublin. Book No. 3, page, 156, entry No. 5862, record\_identifier DU-RC-BA-320297. (Accessed 11 Aug. 2015)

<sup>19</sup> Samuel Watson (comp. ed.), 'The Dublin directory; merchants and traders' in *The gentleman's and citizen's almanack* (Dublin, 1783), p. 14.

<sup>20</sup> Charles A. Cameron (Sir), *History of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and of the Irish Schools of medicine; including numerous biographical sketches: also a medical bibliography* (Dublin, 1886), p. 458.

George Doyal, William Vance, James Sullivan, Francis M'Evoy, Clement Archer, William Hartigan, Thomas Edwards, Sir Henry Jebb, Charles Bolger, Isreal Reade, John Hallahan, Richard Rice Gibbon, John Doyle, Alexander Lindsey, Edward Kent, Francis L'Estrange, James Scott, Paul Houston, Patrick Cusack Roney, James Rivers, **John Adrien**, Thomas Costello, James Horan, George Penny, Benjamin Wilson, William Leake (City Surgeon), Henry Lennon, Robert Moore Piele, William Whiteway, Henry Lyster, Richard Sparrow, James Farrel, William Swan, Edward Whiteway, Abraham Bolton, John Esmond, George O'Brien, William Lee, Andrew Wilson, John O'Berne, Alexander Graydon, John Forde, Peter Reilly, Henry Green, John Morton, James Reilly, Frederick Drury, and William Cleapam.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> March they were all sworn in as members, with the exception of Cleapam, who neglected to pay the fees. All the forgoing persons were first granted "Letters Testimonial" qualifying them to practise surgery before they were elected members. At the present time a candidate may obtain the Fellowship of the College without, in the first place, becoming a Licentiate thereof.<sup>21</sup>

Cameron also put it that two surgeons, Hume and Adrien, had examined the body of the 'Rev William Jackson as it lay in the dock at the King's Bench, Christ Church, on May-day, 1796. Jackson had been convicted four days previously of high treason, and was called up for sentence, but managed to procure and swallow some poison, which took fatal effect in the presence of the Court'.<sup>22</sup> The Dr Hume mentioned above might have been Gustaveus, who was one of the two presidents of the RCSI in the year 1795, with the other being Clement Archer.<sup>23</sup> While it has been seen above that Dr Adrien was actively working at his profession in Ireland from soon after he graduated in Paris, and certainly from 1784 onwards, and yet, despite this, when a work by Peter J. Wallis, titled, *Eighteenth Century medics: subscription, licenses, apprenticeships*, was looked to for information about Adrien's, as doctors or otherwise, it is curious that none were mentioned within its pages.<sup>24</sup>

Sir Richard Musgrave, Bart, wrote in his, *Memoirs of the different rebellions in Ireland; from the arrival of the English ...* that Fitzgerald had been sworn in as a United Irishman at the house of Oliver Bond, in the early part of 1797. Furthermore, it was there that he accepted the 'commission of colonel, the office of treasurer, and representative of the county of Kildare' in

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<sup>21</sup> Cameron, *History of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and of the Irish Schools of medicine; ...* pp 123-4.

<sup>22</sup> Cameron, *History of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and of the Irish Schools of medicine; ...* p.324.

<sup>23</sup> Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland; <https://www.rcsi.ie/history> (Accessed 5 July 2015)

<sup>24</sup> Peter F. Wallis (Contributors, R.V. Wallis, & T.D. Whittet), *Eighteenth century medics: subscription, licenses, apprenticeship* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1985).

addition to his being ‘a delegate for the province of Leinster’. Then, in March 1798, he was among others who had arrest warrants issued against them because of the discovery of a ‘plot to cause an insurrection’ in Ireland. With a price on his head of £1,000, Fitzgerald had to go into hiding, before later, on 18 May, coming to Dublin City whereupon he was hidden in a safe-house on Thomas Street. However, a Major Sirr, on foot of information received, arrived at the house of one ‘Murphy, a featherman [merchant] in Thomas Street’ on the next day 19 May, where a melee broke out while Fitzgerald was taken into custody, but not before a number of those involved were injured. Fitzgerald was wounded by a pistol shot in the shoulder, while Captains Swan and Ryan were both hurt, with the latter having been cut by Fitzgerald’s dagger to the extent that ‘a cut in the lower part of his belly was so large, that his bowels fell out on the floor’. After being taken into custody, the prisoner was removed to Dublin Castle for interrogation.<sup>25</sup> Cameron gave more information about John Adrien, who in 1798, when Lord Edward Fitzgerald was mortally wounded by Major Sirr, the first surgeon who attended him was Adrien who happened to be in a house-- no doubt his father’s-- close by to that in which Lord Edward had been concealed’.<sup>26</sup>

Thomas Moore’s work, *The life and death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, gave an account of what had ensued prior to the call out of Dr Adrien, to administer medical aid to those injured in the fracas. A salient extracted passage went:

After a time, it being understood that doctor Adreen, a surgeon of much eminence, was in the neighbourhood, messengers were immediately despatched to fetch him, and his attention was called to the state of the three combatants. The wounds of Major Swan, though numerous, were found not to be severe; but Mr. Ryan was in a situation that gave but little hope of recovery. When, on examining Lord Edward’s wound, Adreen pronounced it not to be dangerous, his lordship calmly answered “I’m sorry for it”? From Thomas-street he was conveyed in a sedan-chair, open at the top, to the Castle, where the papers found upon him, one of them containing the line of advance upon Dublin, from the county of Kildare, were produced and verified. On hearing that he was at the Castle, the Lord Lieutenant sent his private secretary, Mr. Watson, to

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<sup>25</sup> Richard Musgrave, Bart; *Memoirs of the different rebellions in Ireland; from the arrival of the English: also a particular detail of that which broke out in the XX11D of May MDCCACV111; with the history of the conspiracy which preceded it* (2 Vols. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Dublin, 1882) i, pp 245, 247, 251-54. James Kelly, in his biography, titled, *Sir Richard Musgrave, 1846-1818: ultra Protestant ideologue* (Dublin, 2009), wrote that Musgrave had written ‘a seminal’ account of the 1798 Rebellion, albeit it was a little bit on the ‘partisan’ side of the event.

<sup>26</sup> Cameron, *History of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and of the Irish Schools of medicine; ...* p. 458. See, manuscript research papers donated by Peter F. Byrne. (RIA, file SR/16/1/D/ Academy Archives/History/box 1/Adrien).

assure him that orders had been given for every possible attention being shown to him, consistently with the security of his person as a state prisoner. By the gentleman who was the bearer of this message, I have been favored with the following particulars, ... I found Lord Edward leaning back on a couple of chairs, in the office of the secretary in the war department, his arm extended, and supported by the surgeon, who was dressing his wound.<sup>27</sup>

While it might at first be reasonably thought that it was Dr Adrien who had accompanied Fitzgerald and therefore it was him who was at his side while in the Castle, that does not seem to have been the case. However, when his grandson Dr John William Adrien, died in 1910, an obituary in the *Freeman's Journal*, gave the following details under the heading 'An echo of "98" the 'death of a Drogheda doctor. The death is announced from Drogheda of Dr J.W. Adrien, whose grandfather, also a medical man, attended Lord Edward Fitzgerald in Newgate prison, Dublin.<sup>28</sup> If the foregone be the case then there was no mention of it in an article by CJ Hume Logan, titled 'Who fears to speak of ninety-eight' published in the *Ulster Medical Journal*, which gave it that;

In the struggle to arrest Lord Edward ... [Major] Sirr, in turn shot Lord Edward in the right shoulder. His wound having been dressed by Dr Adrien, he was taken by sedan chair to the Castle, where he was examined by the Surgeon General—George Stewart. He was subsequently taken to Newgate jail where he was attended twice daily by Stewart and Dr Lindsay. Captain Ryan died from his injuries to his groin on 30 May 1798. Lord Edward, on 1 June, had already been thirteen days in prison, and his health was deteriorating by the day. In view of his condition, Dr John Armstrong Garnett was to live in the prison specifically to look after Lord Edward's medical needs. He was subsequently taken to Newgate gaol. ... His death [occurred] at two o'clock on 4 June. ... An inquest found that death was due to water in his chest.<sup>29</sup>

Mary MacCready, in her article 'Mary Moore, 1798 rebel' tells that 'for a few short days in May, 1798, the fate of the rebellion lay in the hands of Mary Moore as she sought shelter for Lord Edward Fitzgerald. ... and acted as his courier'. MacCready pointed to the work of WJ Fitzpatrick, *The sham squire and the informers of 1798: with jottings about Ireland a century*

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<sup>27</sup> Thomas Moore, *The life and death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald* (revised from 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., with added notes; New York, 1855), p. 184.

<sup>28</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 5 July 1910.

<sup>29</sup> CJ Hume Logan, 'Who fears to speak of ninety-eight' in *The Ulster Medical Journal*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (Apr. 1992), pp 63-74.



ago, where it was written that Mary Moore, while acting on Lord Edward's behalf oft travelled 'as a patient in Dr Adrien's carriage, with her arm bandaged up, and her clothes marked with blood'.<sup>30</sup> Cameron gave further information to the effect that:

John Adrien gradually removed his abode eastwards, as his practice became more extensive. Having lived in Great Ship, Street, Eustace-street, and Fleet-street, he finally took the splendid house, No. 20 Dawson Street, which had been the town residence of Lord Northlands, and is now the house of the RIA. It is said that he had rooms set apart for the use of his country patients, so that to some extent his house was a private hospital. He died in 1827 [sic]. Dr Adrien married Mrs Derrick, a widow. His eldest son, John Thomas, was born in Eustace Street, on the 17th May, 1798.<sup>31</sup>

It will be seen later, from another source that Dr John had died a year later than that stated above, i.e., in 1828.

#### **Text-box 2: The children of John Adrien & Margaret Derrick, were**

(1), John Thomas was the eldest son born in Eustace Street, on 17 May 1798. <sup>32</sup>
(2), Thomas Adrien was baptized at St. Andrew's, parish, Dublin, in 1797. The sponsors were, Thomas Johnston and Alicia Adrien. <sup>33</sup>
(3), William Edward Adrien was another son born c. 1801. <sup>34</sup>
(4), Margaret Adrien was baptized at St. Andrew's, parish, in 1803. The sponsors were, Sylvester Costigan and Cath McGeagh. <sup>35</sup>

As well as the instance seen above where Sylvester Costigan was a sponsor of an Adrien child, there was another instance when Costigan married Cath Fitzsimons on 19 February 1804, at

<sup>30</sup> W.J. Fitzgerald, *The sham squire and the informers of 1798: with jottings about Ireland a century ago* (3<sup>rd</sup>. ed. Dublin, 1895); cited in Mary MacCready, 'Mary Moore, 1798 rebel'. From the Women's Museum of Ireland. [www.womensmuseumofireland.ie](http://www.womensmuseumofireland.ie) (Accessed 26 Apr. 2014).

<sup>31</sup> Cameron, *History of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and of the Irish Schools of medicine*; ... p. 458.

<sup>32</sup> Cameron, *History of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and of the Irish Schools of medicine*; ... p. 458.

<sup>33</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Baptism of Thomas Adrien at St. Andrew's Parish. Book No. N/R, p. 192, entry No. 646, Record\_Identifier, DU-RC-BA-159915. (Accessed, 11 Oct. 2015)

<sup>34</sup> *Irish Times*, 24 Sept. 1889.

<sup>35</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Book No. 10, p.202, entry No. 4268, Record\_Identifier, DU-RC-BA-163977. (Accessed 11 Oct. 2015)

St. Catherine's Parish, Dublin, where one of the two witnesses was John Adrien.<sup>36</sup> This demonstrates that John Adrien and Sylvester Costigan were on sociable terms for years before Dr John held a lease on house number nineteen in Dawson Street, from 1810 until his death in 1828. Further information about the leases for that building is available from an Adrien file held by the Royal Irish Academy, Dawson Street, Dublin, it having been donated by former Dublin man, Peter F. Byrne, who is a descendent of the Adrien's of that city. He was, at the time of the donation, living in California, USA. Among his deposited material there are details about the leasehold arrangements between Dr John Adrien and several other parties in the period 1810 to 1828 when he died. Much of the material came from memorials (deeds) held by the Registry of Deeds, Henrietta Street, Dublin. The extracts from Peter Byrne's work used here will retain the source number for each deed searched by him. The details were that:

On May 31st 1769, Baron Knapton of Abbeyleix sold the house to Thomas Knox (Memorial 503286). A new house was erected on the site ... Thomas Knox became M.P. for Dungannon in 1781 and was created Baron Welles in the same year. Knox was advanced to the Viscountcy in 1791, as Viscount Northland of Dungannon. This accounts for the house being known as Northland House. ... Thomas Knox on October 10th 1803 assigned the house to his son, William, Bishop of Derry (1803-1831), (Memorial 503286). In view of the ruinous state of the Mansion House in October 1805 a committee of Dublin Corporation recommended the purchase of the house from the bishop, it being "a permanent and well-built house in the most complete and thorough repair". This was not proceeded with by the Corporation (C.A.R.D. 15/430). The terms were 4000 guineas for a perpetual lease subject to £6-5s per annum. On 9 June 1810, William, Bishop of Derry assigned the land and premises thereon to John Adrien (surgeon), for ever subject to a yearly rent of £6 sterling and a sugar loaf payable to the representatives of the late Joshua Dawson (memorial 428004). This was probably a form of fee farm. John Adrien was born in *c.* 1760, and graduated as a medical doctor in Paris in 1781, and was elected a member of the R.C.S.I. at its first meeting on 2 March 1784. ... John Adrien is reputed to have set aside rooms at number 19 for the use of his country patients (Cameron, p. 459). Adrien was indebted to the estate of the late Sly. Costigan and consequently, on 17 March 1819 mortgaged that place as security to Michael Powel, trustee of Costigan's estate (memorial 503286). Generally, with unregistered title (as here), a mortgagee is entitled to have possession of the title deeds as security but in this case the title deeds were missing. Adrien had a right to redeem on repayment of principal and interest by 1 February 1821. Adrien did

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<sup>36</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Church record for the marriage of Sylvester Costigan & Cath Fitzsimons. Book No. N/R, p, 13, entry No. N/R, record\_identifier DU-RC-MA-95676, image filename st.catherine\_mf\_1740\_1818\_ma\_0273. (Accessed 21 Oct. 2015).

not redeem the mortgage but in a trans., with the Duke assumed liability for repayment (memorial 526252). Further, on 1 May 1823 Adrien granted an interest to John Gill subject to the Duke of Leinster's interest (memorial 528717). Adrien died intestate on 8 November 1828, and Cameron (p. 459), gives the year as 1827, but although a family friend (of a later generation), he was not always completely accurate in his valuable work. A copy of the relevant entry in the Inland Revenue administration records is attached. The value of the house goods is given as £88-13-9. This may seem extraordinary but considering the mortgages and catastrophic fall in the value of houses especially larger premises, this is not surprising (Maxwell, p. 93). In 1835 the house passed into the hands of Thomas Gresham (the hotel keeper), who let it as a Freemason's tavern and later as a Conservative Club. By 1845 it was occupied by the Irish Reform Club and in 1852 the RIA, moved into it (Guinness, p. 71).

Memorial No. 526252. Adrien to Duke of Leinster. To the register appointed by act of parliament for registering deeds, wills, conveyancing and so forth. A memorial of a certain indenture of lease bearing date 22 November 1822 made between John Adrien of Dawson Street, Dublin, Esq., and Margaret Adrien otherwise Derrick his wife of the one part and his grace Augustus Frederick Duke of Leinster John Fowler, Esq., and the Revd. John Armstrong Coghlan, both of Gardiner Street, Dublin, of the other part wherein after reciting as therein mentioned did grant bargain sell----release and confirm unto the said Augustus Frederick Duke of Leinster John Fowler Esq., and John Armstrong Coghlan in their actual possession there being by virtue of a bargain----sale therein mentioned and to their heirs and assigns all that and those the said lot of ground situate lying and being in Dawson Street, Dublin, containing in front 46 ft. and 7 inches and 181 ft. in depth be the same more or less bounded on the west by Dawson Street, aforesaid on the east to Lord Molesworth's ground and on the south by the Lord Mayors garden and on the north by St. Anne's Church with the dwelling house, out house, and offices and all other buildings and erections built and erected thereon and numbered eleven and all singular the rights, privileges, advantages, appendances and appurtenances thereto belonging or in anywise appertaining to hold unto the said Augustus Frederick Duke of Leinster John Fowler and John Armstrong Coghlan their heirs and assigns to and for his their proper use and for ever at the yearly rent of £100 sterling payable half yearly in which said deed are contained the usual covenants between landlord and tenant and other covenants to enable the said Augustus Frederick Duke of Leinster John Fowler and John Armstrong Coghlan their heirs and assigns to reduce the said yearly rent from £100 sterling to £6. 5s. at the rate of £10 sterling per cent per annum and also a further covenant to insure said granted on released premises against fire and a further covenant to make good any repairs wanting to the said premises on the notice therein mentioned and in said deed is also contained a covenant on the part of the said Augustus F .... Fowler, and Armstrong Coghlan their heirs etc., to pay off a certain

mortgage debt therein mentioned due to the executors of the late Sly. Costigan and save and keep indemnified the said John Adrien from all damages, expenses and costs and liabilities arising there from and said deed also contained a covenant that said J. Adrien and Margaret his wife should levy a fine with proclamations to ensure to the purposes the said granted premises unto the said Augustus etc., and Coghlan and their heirs etc., and which this memorial are witnessed by Edward Trim of Dame Street, Dublin, Notary Public, and George Irwin of French Street, Dublin, Attorney at law. John Adrien (seal), and signed in the presence of E. Trim and G. Irwin. All this was done on 9 December 1822. Francis Armstrong.

Memorial 528717. Adrien to Gill. To the register appointed by act of parliament for registering deeds. A memorial of an indented deed of conveyance bearing date 1 May 1823 between John Adrien, Esq., Dublin, and Margaret Adrien nee, Derrick, his wife, of the first part and John Gill of Grange-gorman Lane in the county of Dublin, of the other part whereby reciting as therein is recited and after reciting a certain indenture of release bearing date 22 November 1822 and the said John and Margaret of the one part and his grace the most noble Augustus F, etc., Duke....Leinster J. Fowler, Esq., and the Revd. J. Armstrong Coghlan both of Gardiner Street, Dublin, of the other part whereby the said John and Margaret granted released and confirmed unto the said Augustus...F. Duke ...Fowler, and J. A. Coghlan, and their heirs, etc., all that and those a certain lot of ground situate, etc., To hold all and singular at a rent of £100 payable half yearly ...<sup>37</sup>

Information from the website of the Freemasons of Ireland told that in the 1820s that the Grand lodge of Ireland had arranged to lease No. 19 Dawson Street for use as the headquarters of Irish Freemasonry for a time. 'From there, following a brief sojourn in the Freemasons coffee house in D'Olier Street, the order moved to another rented premises, Commercial buildings on Dame Street.<sup>38</sup> The death of Dr John Adrien brought an end of his tenure of 19 Dawson Street, but when it came to his wife thereafter, some details came from the 'Kirkpatrick Biographical Archive' which is a collection of, among other things, newspaper cuttings, manuscript notes and extracts from printed works relating to individual Irish medics. Within it was a copy of a prerogative court document which states that Dr John Adrien had died intestate on 8 November 1828. When the prerogative court sat on 2 December 1828, it awarded a 'sum sworn under' of £184 to the sole beneficiary, Margaret Adrien of 20 Dawson Street, Dublin. The description of the property was stated on the document under the heading of 'inventory' contained a house

<sup>37</sup> Peter Byrne, donation to RIA. Adrien file.

<sup>38</sup> [www.irish-freemasonry.org/pages\\_GL/Grand%20lodge\\_History.html](http://www.irish-freemasonry.org/pages_GL/Grand%20lodge_History.html) (Accessed 11 Aug. 2015).

and goods valued at £88-13; along with stock of £25 value and another lesser sum of £5, which altogether came to £118-13.<sup>39</sup> In the above can be seen that the Dawson Street house was given as number twenty rather than the more usual number nineteen, but no reason for the difference can be ascribed here.

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<sup>39</sup> RIA, (Extracts from the Royal College of Physicians Kirkpatrick Biographical Archive relating to the Adrien family of medical practitioners; file SR/16/1/D/Academy Archives/History/ box 4/Adrien). This material came into the possession of the RIA, on 1 Aug. 2007 having been donated by the RCPI. The general RCPI website can be viewed on, <https://www.rcpi.ie/article.php?1oc1D=1.12.19.28> (Accessed 30 June 2015)

## Chapter two: Molly's early life

Beginning with Molly's paternal grandparents who were Dr William Edward Adrien of Oldtown, County Dublin, and Maria Teresa Kelly, formerly from the parish of Donymore, in County Meath. The couple married there on 18 July 1836, and their witnesses were Edward Rooney, and Catherine Marianne Lynch.<sup>40</sup>

### Text-box 3: The children of Dr. William Edward Adrien & Maria Teresa Kelly, were

(1) Catherine Mary Joseph 'Cathy' Adrien (subject's aunt) might have been born in 1837, as according to Margaret Griffin, she was the first born. She married in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 1879, at Balrothery.<sup>41</sup>

(2) John William Adrien (subject's uncle) was born, in c. 1838<sup>42</sup>. In the year 1872 he was the medical officer at the Drogheda Poor Law Union. A press report gave his details as John W. Adrien, Esq. M.D., residing in St. Peter's Parish, Laurence Street, Drogheda, and was the eldest son of William Edward Adrien of Oldtown, County Dublin, who married Mary Elleanor Josephine Riddick, of 64 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin, at the Pro-Cathedral, Marlborough, Street, Dublin, on 9 September 1872. The officiating priest was Rev. William Purcell, ably assisted by the Revs, Nicholas Donnelly, and James Moonan, of Drogheda, CC., along with Thomas O'Reilly. The witnesses were Thomas D. McCann and Juliana Riddick. The bride was the second daughter of George and Elizabeth Riddick. He was from lower Dominick Street, Dublin, a solicitor.<sup>43</sup> During their married life, the couple had a total of twelve children born alive, but sadly, by census time in 1911 only five were still living. Dr John died in 1910. His wife died in the following year.

(3) Mary Adrien (subject's aunt) was the eldest daughter born in County Dublin, in c. 1839. Details from her will showed that she was a spinster who died on 30 December 1905, at the home of her niece at Eileen Villas, Drumcondra, Dublin. Her will went for probate on 12 March 1906, had three codicils attached to it. She was described as having been late of Oldtown, and the 1901 census showed her living there. Her estate of £750-18s-9d., was granted to Nicholas J. Kelly, farmer.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> NLI. (Catholic parish registers at the NLI; Donymore/microfilm 04179/06, diocese of Meath). <http://registers.nli.ie> (Accessed 12 Sept. 2015)

<sup>41</sup> Family search online. <https://familysearch.org> The marriage of Catherine Mary Joseph Adrien, in 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 1879, at Balrothery, Vol. No. 2, p. 503.

<sup>42</sup> Family search online. <https://familysearch.org> The death of John William Adrien in 1910, at Drogheda. His estimated birth was c. 1838, Vol. No. 2, p. 288. (Accessed 22 Oct. 2015).

<sup>43</sup> *Irish Times*, 10 Sept. 1872. Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) The marriage of John W. Adrien & Ellen Riddick in 1872. Book No. N/R; p, 96, record\_identifier, DU-RC-MA-131611, image filename, St. Mary's-pro-cath\_mf\_1881-1904\_ma\_0283. (Accessed 13 July 2015). Census of Ireland, 1911.

<sup>44</sup> NAI Calendars of wills & administrations, 1858-1922. <http://www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie> The Will of Mary Adrien, who died in 1905. (Accessed 21 Sept. 2015). Census of Ireland, 1901. *Irish Times*, 1 Jan. 1906.

(4) Edward William Adrien (subject's father) was born c. 1846. He became a doctor-surgeon and lived at Micknanstown, County Meath. On 26 November 1870, he married Maria McCullagh, who came from Ratheny, Lusk.<sup>45</sup> He died in July 1890, his wife having predeceased him in 1886.

(5) Elizabeth Josephine 'Bessie' Adrien (the subjects aunt) was the couple's youngest daughter who was born in c. 1851. She died at the age of twenty-three years on 19 March 1874, and her remains were interred with her parents at Crickstown cemetery.<sup>46</sup>

Molly's grandfather had been dispensary doctor for Oldtown, and Kilsallaghan, from c. 1857, and had the use of a medical dispensary and a separate cottage (known as Garden-view) where he resided. He held the properties on a lease from his employer the Balrothery Poor Law Union at a combined rent of £10 per annum. Along with that, he held a separate agreement on a garden close to the cottage, along with associated out offices, and seventeen perches of land on an annual rent of £4, which was also leased from the union.<sup>47</sup> Because the 1847 Griffith's *Valuation* for Oldtown does not contain any record of a dispensary having been there in that year, then it must have been built after that date, but before 1857.<sup>48</sup> In any event, a press report dated September 1871, gave it that Dr William Edward had been the medical officer at the Balrothery workhouse since it had opened some thirty-years previously, i.e., in c. 1841.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Book No. N/R, p, 55, entry No. N/R, record\_identifier DU-RC-MA-131081, image filename, st.mary's-pro-cath\_mf\_1881-1904\_ma\_0242 (Accessed 12 Oct. 2015)

<sup>46</sup> Details from Adrien grave headstone, at Crickstown, Curraha, County Meath (Barony of Ratoath). *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 20, 21 Mar. 1874. See also [www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com) (Accessed 14 June 2013)

<sup>47</sup> Valuation Office, Dublin, Cancelled Valuation books, for Oldtown.

<sup>48</sup> *Griffith's Valuation*, 1847.

<sup>49</sup> *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 11 Sept. 1871.

**Fig. 1: Molly's home Garden-view cottage as it was in 2005** <sup>50</sup>



The cottage at Oldtown was a second-class dwelling which was held ‘in fee’.<sup>51</sup> From information on the Adrien family grave headstone at Crickstown cemetery at Curraha, near Ashbourne in County Meath, it can be said that Molly Adrien’s grandmother Mary, had died on 28 May 1853 when she was thirty-seven years old.<sup>52</sup> She would have then been in the seventeenth year of her marriage with William. It can also be determined that she was born in *c.* 1816. Her husband continued on with his work until November 1879 when he made it known to his employers that he wished to retire. He had put his decision on paper and when the Balrothery Board of Guardians next met, a letter from him dated 24 November 1879 contained details regarding his intended resignation as medical officer of the union workhouse, which he had held for the last thirty-nine years. For its part, the board ‘realising his circumstances as to age [76 years] etc., reluctantly accepted his resignation’. When they had their weekly meeting in mid-December of that year, the main item to be dealt with was about filling the medical officer vacancy. It was proposed by Lord Talbot de Malahide that Dr Adrien, jun., should be appointed to succeed his father. The resolution was seconded by Charles Cobb, and the

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<sup>50</sup> Photograph taken by the author in 2005. However, by that time the cottage had been modernised by its then owner, Trish Monks.

<sup>51</sup> Census of Ireland, 1901 for Oldtown, Clonmethan, County Dublin.

<sup>52</sup> Details from the Adrien grave headstone at Crickstown cemetery, Curraha, Ashbourne, Co. Meath. As viewed in 2005, by the author and Tom Byrne, Wyanstown, Oldtown, Co. Dublin, who very kindly had brought him to an otherwise difficult to find cemetery.



Chairman, Henry Baker, J.P., allowed the proposal to be adopted.<sup>53</sup> Ten years later, an obituary told that:

The death of Dr Adrien of Oldtown occurred on last Saturday evening [21 Sept. 1889] at his residence at Oldtown. He was a much-respected physician, who was in his 88<sup>th</sup> year of his age. He was medical officer of Balrothery Union, and Oldtown dispensary for 40 years. Neither during that period, nor at any other time of his life, was he often heard to say [that] any form of illness [which] caused him to remain in bed for even a day. Nine years ago, at the earnest solicitation of his friends, he resigned his appointments and relinquished practice. He took to his bed on last Monday, when he had constant professional aid from his sons, Dr Edward William Adrien, of Balbriggan, and Dr John Adrien, of Drogheda, with Dr Davys, of Swords. On his resigning the poor law appointments he was granted full retiring allowance, and received a very flattering and unanimous expression of opinion from the board in which was recorded the appreciation in which he was held as one of their most efficient officers. His daughter, Miss [Mary] Adrien, resided with him, his wife having predeceased him several years ago. Interment takes place on to-morrow, Tuesday, in Crickstown.<sup>54</sup>

Further information about his pension arrangements with his employer came from the online source ‘Enhanced parliamentary papers Ireland’ (EPPI), in a paper titled the ‘Return of medical officers of workhouses and dispensaries in Ireland who have resigned and applied for superannuation allowances’. Therein, it was stated that William Edward Adrien was the workhouse medical officer of the Balrothery Union, until he resigned and made application for pension on 17 November 1879, at the age of seventy-six years. He had been in that post for no less than thirty-nine years. After due diligence he was granted ‘a full’ two-thirds of salary and emoluments. On the later date of 30 January 1880, he resigned after twenty-eight years (seventeen years were under the old act of parliament), as dispensary medical officer for the district of Kilsallaghan, from which he was further granted ‘a full’ two-thirds of salary and emoluments for his tenure in that post.<sup>55</sup> Another obituary in the *Irish Times*, on 24 September 1889, gave more details in that:

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<sup>53</sup> *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 27 Nov., 19 Dec. 1879.

<sup>54</sup> *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 23 Sept. 1889.

<sup>55</sup> *Enhanced Parliamentary Papers Ireland* (EPPI). (HC 1881 (74) 79, 173, pages: 15).  
[www.dippam.ac.uk/eppi/documents](http://www.dippam.ac.uk/eppi/documents) (Accessed 13 Sept. 2015)  
[www.dippam.ac.uk/eppi/documents/16948/page/451567](http://www.dippam.ac.uk/eppi/documents/16948/page/451567)

On Saturday last there died at his residence, Oldtown, Balbriggan, in the 88<sup>th</sup> year of his age, Dr. Adrien, father of Dr. John W. Adrien, of this town [Drogheda] and of Dr. Edward Adrien, of Balbriggan. Deceased was for more than 40 years medical officer of Balrothery Union, and in the district of Balbriggan he enjoyed a large and lucrative private practice. During his professional career, and, indeed, in all his lifetime, he was never sick until Monday last, 16<sup>th</sup> instant, when he was seized with the illness—the first and last—which proved fatal. Deceased was, son of Dr. Adrien, who attended Lord Edward Fitzgerald in Newgate prison. The late Dr. Adrien's father was the prison doctor in Newgate, and lived at the time in the Royal Irish Academy [19] Dawson Street, that place being then his private residence, and in this place, the gentleman whose death is now recorded was born. His father—Lord Edward's physician—frequently told him the circumstances attending the last illness and death of the Lady Geraldine, and the statements were afterwards re-told 'over and over again'. Dr. Adrien was himself a United Irishman; but very few were aware of the fact. The funeral of Dr. Adrien will take place on to-morrow (Tuesday).<sup>56</sup>

*The Nation*, on 28 September 1889, stated that it was the father of the deceased Dr William Edward who had attended to Lord Edward Fitzgerald at Newgate prison after the latter's arrest on 19 May 1798. It also put it that Dr William's father was a United Irishman.<sup>57</sup> From the details in the obituary it can be worked out that William Edward Adrien had been born around the year 1801. However, arising from that date of birth means that William could not have been born in the Dawson Street house, as his father Dr John Adrien had not taken a lease on it until 1810.

### **Molly's parents**

These were, Edward William Adrien, of Micknanstown House, Micknanstown, County Meath, and Maria Catherine (also seen as Mary Kate) McCullagh, of Ratheny, near Lusk, County Dublin, who were married at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Marlborough, Street, Dublin, on 26 November 1870. The ceremony was conducted by the Rev William Purcell, and the witnesses were, Edward Kelly and Ellen Adrien. Edward's origins were County Meath, while Mary was from [Dublin City] but then living at Lusk in County Dublin. Edward's father was William Edward Adrien, a surgeon, while Mary's was a merchant.<sup>58</sup> While it is not completely clear

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<sup>56</sup> *Irish Times*, 24 Sept. 1889.

<sup>57</sup> *The Nation*, 28 Sept. 1889.

<sup>58</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.Irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.Irishgenealogy.ie) Church record for the marriage of William Adrien & Maria Catherine McCullagh. Book No. N/R; p. 55, record-identifier, DU-RC-MA-131081. Image filename, st.mary's-pro-cath\_mf\_1881-1904\_ma\_0242. (Accessed Aug. 2015) Online details came from,

from the evidence available, it is nevertheless thought that Mary was the only surviving child of the late Patrick McCullagh, Esq., of D'Olier Street, Dublin.<sup>59</sup> Further details came from *Griffiths Valuation*, for Dublin City, where it was recorded that a Patrick McCullagh was a leaseholder of a house and small yard on that street in *c.* 1854.<sup>60</sup> The photograph below shows Molly's parents taken at an unspecified place and date in time.

**Figs. 2 & 3: Molly's parents, Edward William Adrien & Maria Catherine McCullagh<sup>61</sup>**



The children of Dr Edward William Adrien and Maria Catherine McCullagh were those below (Molly was the third child and was born on 21 September 1873, at Micknanstown House, Micknanstown, County Meath).

[https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage\\_returns/marriages\\_1871/11332/8159421.pdf](https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage_returns/marriages_1871/11332/8159421.pdf) (12 June 2019)

<sup>59</sup> Un-identified newspaper. [www.limerickcity.ie/Ewart.pdf](http://www.limerickcity.ie/Ewart.pdf) (Accessed 10 Feb. 2014).

<sup>60</sup> Ask about Ireland. [www.askaboutireland.ie/griffiths-valuation/index](http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffiths-valuation/index) (Accessed 15 July 2015).

<sup>61</sup> Photographs taken at Rowlestown House, by the author on 10 Oct. 2005.

**Text-box 4: The children of Edward and Maria Adrien were**

(1) William Edward was born on 7 October 1871, at Micknanstown, County Meath. He was baptized at Ardcaith on 10 October, where the sponsors were Edward Kelly, and Ellen Adrien. <sup>62</sup>
(2) Patrick was born on 11 September 1872, at Micknanstown. He was baptized at Ardcaith, on 12 September, where the sponsors were Edward Rooney and Bessie Adrien. He received education at Ampleforth College, Ampleforth, in north Yorkshire, England, in 1889. His death took place on 22 December 1929, at Buenos Aires, Argentina, where his body had been buried by the 'rites of the Catholic Church.' <sup>63</sup>
(3) <b>Mary Ellen 'Molly'</b> (our subject) was born on 21 September 1873, at Micknanstown. She was baptised on 19 August 1876, at Ardcaith, where the sponsors were Robert Curtis and Mary Ward. <sup>64</sup>
(4) Edward Joseph was born on 27 October 1874, at Micknanstown. He died in December of that year. <sup>65</sup>
(5) John was born on 21 September 1876, at Micknanstown. When his will went to probate at Dublin on 17 September 1898, it stated that he was late of Oldtown and had died at sea on 28 November 1897. His effects amounted to £873-6s-9d went to his older brother Patrick. <sup>66</sup>
(6) Christina Mary [Eva] was born on 24 December 1877, at Micknanstown. She was baptised at Ardcaith on 27 December, where the sponsors were Patrick Arnold and Mary Brennan.
(7) Kate, born on 1 May 1879, at Micknanstown. <sup>67</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Civil record for the birth of William Adrien, in 1871. Group registration No. 11687449, SR district/ reg. area, Drogheda. (Accessed 16 July 2015).

<sup>63</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Civil record for the birth of Patrick Adrien, in 1872. Group registration No. 11879790, SR district/reg. area, Drogheda. (Accessed 16 July 2015). Catholic Parish Registers at the NLI. [registers.nli.ie](http://registers.nli.ie) Ardcaith baptism for Patrick Adrien on microfilm 04180/03. (Accessed 18 Sept. 2015). Ampleforth College, north Yorkshire, England. [www.monlib.org.uk/students/list1866.hlm](http://www.monlib.org.uk/students/list1866.hlm) (Accessed 21 Sept. 2015). *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 13 Sept. 1872. *Weekly Irish Times*, 5 Feb. 1930.

<sup>64</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Civil record for the birth of Mary Ellen Adrien, in 1873. Group registration No. 10070939, SR district/reg. area, Drogheda. (Accessed 16 July 2015). Catholic Parish Registers at the NLI. [www.Registers.nli.ie](http://www.Registers.nli.ie) Ardcaith baptisms for Mary Adrien on microfilm 04180/03. (Accessed 18 Sept. 2015). (Accessed 19 Oct. 2015)

<sup>65</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Civil record for the birth of Edward Adrien, in 1874. Group registration No. 11973117, SR district/ reg. area, Drogheda. (Accessed 17 Sept. 2015). *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 27, 29 Oct., 3 Dec. 1874.

<sup>66</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Civil record for the birth of John Adrien, in 1876. Group registration ID 9128558, SR district/ reg. area, Drogheda. (Accessed 20 Sept. 2015). NAI Calendars of Will's & administrations, 1858-1922. [www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie) The Will of John Adrien. (Accessed 20 Sept. 2015).

<sup>67</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Civil record for the birth of Kate Adrien in 1879. Group registration ID, 9663883, SR district/reg. area, Drogheda. (Accessed 19 Oct. 2015)

(8) Edward 'Ned' was born on 31 October 1882, at Drogheda Street, Balbriggan. His baptism occurred on 4 November 1882, by Rev. Jacobus Walsh, and the sponsors were Maria Gleanala Adrien, and Patrick Adrien.<sup>68</sup>

(9) Elizabeth Maria was born on 26 June 1884, at Drogheda Street, Balbriggan. She was baptised on 30 June, by Rev. Edward Markey and the sponsors were Julianus Cumiskey, and Celea Markey.<sup>69</sup>

(10) William Ignatius was born on 30 July 1885, at Dublin Street, Balbriggan. He was baptised on 3 August, by Rev. Thomas N. Boland, and the sponsors were Joanus Adrien, and Catherine Maria Kenny. He died on 17 Nov. 1890, when he was five years old. The cause of death was 'gastric fever' over seven days. Mary Adrien [Molly aunt] was present at the death at Oldtown.<sup>70</sup>

An indication as to the likely income of Molly's father as medical doctor-surgeon before his death can be derived from an advertisement inserted in the press after he had resigned as dispensary medical officer at Stamullen, then a part of the Drogheda Poor Law Union, where a replacement had to be procured. The advertisement, dated 6 November 1879, offered the following remuneration of £110 per annum, plus a sum of £20 for acting as sanitary officer, and also any fees due for registration and or vaccination works carried would go to the doctor. By way of a comparison, an advertisement in the same newspaper offered a salary for a midwife for the Lusk Dispensary of £20 per annum.<sup>71</sup>

### **Molly's mother died from TB, aged thirty-five years, in 1886**

On 5 November 1886, Molly's mother, Maria Catherine, had died from Tuberculosis suffered over a period of eight months, when she was thirty-five years old. Her husband was present at her death.<sup>72</sup> The place of death was given as Balbriggan but might equally have been at her

<sup>68</sup> *Irish Examiner*, 4 Nov. 1882. Catholic Parish Registers at the NLI. [registers.nli.ie](http://registers.nli.ie) Church record for Balbriggan Parish baptism of Edward Adrien on 4 Nov. 1882, on microfilm 0921/01. (Accessed 18 Sept. 2015).

<sup>69</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Civil record for the birth of Elizabeth Adrien, in 1884. Group registration ID 11813783, SR district/reg. area Balrothery. (Accessed 15 Sept. 2015). *Irish Times*, 4, 5 July 1884. Catholic Parish Registers at the NLI. [registers.nli.ie](http://registers.nli.ie) Church record for Balbriggan Parish baptism of Elizabeth Adrien, on microfilm 09210/01. (Accessed 18 Sept. 2015).

<sup>70</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Civil record for birth of William Adrien, in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 1885. Group reg. ID 9826209, SR district/ reg. area, Balrothery, Vol. No. 2, p, 277. His age was five years. (Accessed 16 Oct. 2015). The same source gave it that William died in 1890. Group registration ID, N/R, SR district/reg. area, Balrothery, (Accessed 16 Oct. 2015). Catholic Parish Registers at the NLI. [www.Registers.nli.ie](http://www.Registers.nli.ie) Church record for Balbriggan Parish baptism for William Adrien, on microfilm 09210/01. (Accessed 18 Sept. 2015).

<sup>71</sup> *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 6 Nov. 1879.

<sup>72</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Civil record for the death of Mary Kate Adrien, in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 1886. Group registration ID, N/R., SR district/reg. area, Balrothery, Vol. No. 2, p. 264. (Accessed 16 Oct. 2015). Online details accessed from,

home at Micknanstown. She had left a number of young children the eldest of which still living at home was Molly, then aged thirteen years. Those siblings younger than her ranged in age down to William, who was then a year and three months old. Maria, in an obituary was described as ‘the affectionate wife of Edward William Adrien, M.D.,’ and also told that her remains would be interred on the next Sunday, at Clonalvy cemetery in County Meath.<sup>73</sup> Whatever about the grief that must have engulfed the family members over their loss, and however long that it lasted. It was nevertheless the case that mundane life events would inevitably have resumed sooner or later and one aspect of that resumption would have been the children’s continued education. In any case, for whatever reason, there was a connection with Carlow Lay College, County Carlow, where Dr Edward Adrien had been an invited guest at the college’s annual ‘academical exercises’ in July 1883.<sup>74</sup> How or why that was so, is simply not known. However, valuable information (made known to the author by Maree Baker, Skerries, who is a passionate genealogist), to the effect that a number of male Adrien’s had attended at Ampleforth College, north Yorkshire, in England, then run by the Benedictine Monks, and lay staff from nearby Ampleforth Abbey. Three names were found on the school register, who were Molly’s two cousins from Drogheda, namely, John, and William, whose details were in the register in the year 1887. Her brother, Patrick Adrien, whose address was Balbriggan, was found in Ampleforth in the year 1889.<sup>75</sup>

When it came to Molly’s education the details were practically non-existent. However, her family relations, Margaret, and Declan Griffin, jogged their memories and said that they thought that Molly had first gone to the Loreto Convent at Balbriggan, thence she went to a Catholic boarding school at Surbiton, England, from where she afterwards attended a Catholic finishing school somewhere in France.<sup>76</sup> With regard to Molly’s early schooling, when Sister Patricia Herron, a nun at the Balbriggan Convent, and who was known to the author’s mother, Mary ‘Mollie’ when asked about school registers for the relevant period, said that she believed these no longer existed.<sup>77</sup>

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[https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths\\_returns/deaths\\_1886/06233/4784231.pdf](https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1886/06233/4784231.pdf) (12 June 2019)

<sup>73</sup> *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 6 Nov. 1866.

<sup>74</sup> *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 3 July 1883.

<sup>75</sup> Ampleforth College, Ampleforth, north Yorkshire. [www.monlib.org.uk/students/list1866.hlm](http://www.monlib.org.uk/students/list1866.hlm) (Accessed 21 Oct. 2015).

<sup>76</sup> The author and his wife Valerie in conversation with Margaret and Declan Griffin, on 10 Oct. 2005.

<sup>77</sup> Sister Patricia Heron, Loreto Convent, Balbriggan, spoken to by the author’s mother, Mary, on 6 Jan. 2006.

### **Molly's father died aged forty-four years from cancer, in 1890**

It has already been stated that Molly and her siblings had suffered the untimely loss of their mother who was only thirty-five years old in 1886, but little could they have known then that their father would die on 11 July 1890, at the age of forty-four years. He had been ill for a year from epithelioma of the pharynx when he finally succumbed at 'his Balbriggan address'. His remains were removed for interment at Crickstown cemetery on the next day, Sunday, at 12.30.<sup>78</sup>

The Balrothery Board of Guardians, at their next meeting in that same month, proposed a vote of sympathy on his passing.<sup>79</sup> In addition, on 26 July 1890, a press report gave the following information:

A meeting of the Balbriggan Dispensary and Sanitary Committee was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July, '90. Present—Messrs. P M'Cabe, in the chair, D Reilly, E King, W Sherwin, and J Seaver. Mr. Stack, clerk of union, was in attendance. Proposed by Mr. M'Cabe, seconded by Mr. King—“That having learned with profound regret of the sad and untimely death of the medical officer of our district, Dr. Edward W Adrien, we, the committee of the Balbriggan Dispensary District, tender his bereaved relatives our most heartfelt sympathy, and at the same time we desire to bear testimony to the many excellent qualities which he possessed and exercised in the discharge of his professional duties. To the poor he was always kind and attentive, and to the public at large he was a skilful attendant, and a kindly friend, and the committee feel that his death will not alone be a private loss to his friends but a public calamity to the people, and that it will be hard indeed to supply the place of one who was at once a skilful doctor, a kindly friend, and a straightforward, upright and honourable man. That a copy of the resolution be forwarded to Miss Adrien [Molly], one to Dr. J Adrien, Drogheda [brother], and another to master Adrien [his son, Edward, who was Molly's younger brother 'Ned']”.<sup>80</sup>

Dr Nowlan was appointed as locum tenens for Dr Adrien, at a salary of two-guineas a week.<sup>81</sup> While all of the above demonstrated the loss of Edward Adrien to the community as a doctor, the situation nevertheless remained that his children were then bereft of both parents and were effectively orphaned. While Margaret Griffin thought that Molly, then aged seventeen years,

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<sup>78</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Civil record for the death of William Adrien, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 1890. Group registration ID, N/R, SR district/reg. area Balrothery, Vol. No. 2, page, 247. His age was forty-four years. (Accessed on 16 July 2015). *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 12 July 1890: *Irish Times*, 12 July 1890: *Drogheda Independent*, 19 July 1890.

<sup>79</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 19 July 1890.

<sup>80</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 26 July 1890.

<sup>81</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 19 July 1890.

and her younger siblings had been were ‘made wards of court’ the sources do not appear to support that suggestion. However, there had been other Adrien children dealt with by the Irish courts system, but that might have been another branch of the Adrien family and the events occurred in c. 1867.<sup>82</sup> As to what happened then to Molly and her siblings little is known apart from a suggestion by a daughter of above mentioned Margaret Griffin, i.e., Brenda McLoughlin (nee, Griffin), who had heard it said within her family that some Adrien’s had at some point stayed at the ‘Grand Hotel’ in Bridge Street, Balbriggan.<sup>83</sup>

In September 1890, a situation developed whereby Mary Adrien [Molly’s aunt], was given notice by a Kilsallaghan committee to vacate the Oldtown Dispensary as it was reported that a new premise’s would soon be ready.<sup>84</sup>

On 13 December 1890, the ‘will of Edward [William] Adrien, otherwise Adreen, late of Balbriggan, Co. Dublin, MD., who died 11 July 1890, at the same place, was proved at the principal registry [Office] by John W. Adrien, of Laurence Street, Drogheda, M.D., and Edward Rooney, of Rathanny, Lusk, and James Ennis, of Naul Park, Balbriggan, both in County Dublin, esquires the executors. Effects [smudged] 16s.10d’.<sup>85</sup> Other details in the will were that in the left-hand side margin were the words ‘for correction affidavit, see 1899’.<sup>86</sup> The above Dr John Adrien, who was the medical officer of the Drogheda Poor-law Union, had attended upon his sick brother, chiefly at night, from about the second day of June 1890 until his death, a period of some forty nights in all. He then, as already mentioned, took care of his affairs.<sup>87</sup>

### **Molly and her siblings lose their home**

The house and premises formerly occupied by the late E.W. Adrien, M.D., Micknanstown, Balbriggan, were to be let by private treaty by order of his executors. Proposals will be received up to Friday 15 August, by J.H. McCann, solicitor, Laurence Street, Drogheda.<sup>88</sup> In addition, its contents were to be sold at auction by Joseph Dillon, of 25 Batchelor’s Walk, Dublin.

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<sup>82</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 15 May 1867.

<sup>83</sup> Brenda McLoughlin (nee, Griffin), Swords, told the author after his presentation of Molly Adrien’s life story at Oldtown, on Tuesday 19 Jan. 2006.

<sup>84</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 27 Sept. 1890.

<sup>85</sup> NAI Calendar of wills & administrations, 1858-1922. Will of Edward William Adrien, proved on 13 Dec. 1890. [www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie) (Accessed 15 Nov. 2015).

<sup>86</sup> NAI Calendar of wills & administrations, 1858-1922. Will of Edward William Adrien. Accessed from, [http://www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie/reels/cwa/005014904/005014904\\_00010.pdf](http://www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie/reels/cwa/005014904/005014904_00010.pdf) (22 June 2019)

<sup>87</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 18 Oct. 1890.

<sup>88</sup> *Irish Times*, 12 Aug. 1890.



Advertisements about the terms and details appeared in the press, whereby the sale was to take place at Dr Adrien's 'large residence' at [Micknanstown] Balbriggan, on the Tuesday and Wednesday, 5 and 6 August 1890.

The following items were to be offered for sale:

Fashionable light-running one-horse brougham; nearly new reversible Stanhope; most serviceable polo-cart; all [were] built by Dennehy; 2 sets of harness; ladies and gent's saddles and bridles; very handsome and useful grey cob; 5 highly valuable young greyhounds of the following pedigrees; Adroitness, by MacPherson, dam Moneybox; Admiral 111, by Adroitness, dam LLL, pupped May, 1889; Adventurer 11, by Adroitness, dam LLL, pupped May 1889; Black bitch, by Adroitness, dam Adeline, by Merton; black dog by Adroitness, dam Adeline, by Merton; horse clothing, stable requisites, garden tools, seats, and other outdoor matters; small billiard table and fittings of billiard room; library tables; medicine chests; large variety of surgical and medical instruments and appliances; stock of medicines and drugs in show and other bottles; select library of miscellaneous and medical books; compact enclosed bookcase; 2 beautiful rook rifles, by Calderwood; 2 double breechloaders, one by Calderwood, the other by Peyton; entire fashionable furniture of drawing, diningroom, library, several bedrooms and basement storey, viz, ebonised and walnut cabinets, mantelpiece and other glasses, a convex mirror, sofas, settees, easy and sets of single chairs in handsome coverings, a very superior drawing room suite, dinner, breakfast, loo, card, and other tables; a pedestal sideboard, Brussels tapestry, and Kidder carpets and hearthrugs; tastefully hung window curtains, hall and staircase furniture, an eight-day clock, iron bedsteads and palliasses, wire-woven and best hair mattresses, feather beds and bedding, wardrobes and cases of drawers, washstands, towel rails; miscellaneous bedroom and kitchen furniture and utensils, a collection of glass, dinner and other china and delft, a useful collection of culinary matters, furniture of servant's apartments. Terms of sale to commence at 12 o'clock.<sup>89</sup>

Another press insertion on 6 September, as ordered by the late doctor Adrien's executors was that the house and premises were to be let by private treaty forthwith.<sup>90</sup> The foregoing provides an insight into the type of lifestyle enjoyed by the Adrien family prior to the death of Dr Edward. The paraphernalia to do with outdoor pursuits are much in evidence too. With regards to the greyhounds these were seemingly used for breeding young dogs for sale and older dogs for use in coursing hares. An example of the latter was seen at a meeting of the Mourne Park

<sup>89</sup> *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 30 July, 4, 5 Aug. 1890. *Irish Times*, 31 July, 1890. *Drogheda Independent*, 2 Aug. 1890.

<sup>90</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 6 Sept. 1890.

Coursing Club, to be held on a number of days beginning on 14 September 1887. Among the entries for the ‘Brownlow Stakes’ for dog puppies, at £4. 10s., each, was an entry by Mr Edward William Adrien’s ‘blue Adroitness, by MacPherson—Moneybox, January’.<sup>91</sup>

Another pursuit that Dr Adrien engaged in was fox hunting, presumably on horseback. An example of such a hunt attended by him was when the Gormanstown Harriers met on Friday 17 November 1876, at Walshestown, and the Nevat [Nevitt, County Dublin] where the former proved poor sport while the latter was much better and was said that it ‘always holds game in abundance’. The quarry was chased for a time until the ‘puss managed to baffle her pursuers’ and presumably got away unharmed. Dr Adrien, as already mentioned, was there along with other notables were Messrs: Woods (2), Harper, Burnett, P. Reynolds, Miss Cumiskey [Cumisky], Messrs. Adrien, Markey, Rooney, King, Wilson (2); and several others.<sup>92</sup> It was seen earlier in this study that two members of the above families, i.e., Cumiskey, and Markey, had been sponsors of one of the daughters of Dr Adrien and Maria McCullagh, Elizabeth, who was born at Drogheda Street, Balbriggan, and this demonstrates that a social linkage existed between them. Both the Cumisky’s and Markey’s were Roman Catholic families in Balbriggan and were members of the business community there.

Returning to the auction of further goods from the former Adrien home which were offered for sale on 6 August 1890, where the details were that ‘the modern and fashionable household furniture and effects of the late Dr Adrien, at his residence, [Micknanstown] Balbriggan; comprising, the chief furniture and appointments of first and secondary bedrooms and dressing rooms, servant’s apartments; the furniture in drawing rooms, the embellishments, the ornaments, the bric-a-brac, pictures, etc. Kitchen furniture, oil-clothes, curtains, etc. To be sold at the residence of the late ...’.<sup>93</sup> As the year 1890 drew to an end another tragedy lay in store with the death of Molly’s youngest sibling, her five-year-old brother, William, who passed away at his aunt Mary’s home at Oldtown, County Dublin, on 17 November 1890. The cause of death was gastric fever over seven days.<sup>94</sup> It is not known here whether William was buried in his father’s or his mother’s burial places. Because the youngster was with his aunt at Oldtown when he died, there is every likelihood that some of his siblings, including Molly, were there too.

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<sup>91</sup> *Irish Times*, 1 Sept. 1887.

<sup>92</sup> *Irish Times*, 20 Nov. 1876.

<sup>93</sup> *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 6 Aug. 1890.

<sup>94</sup> Accessed from, [https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths\\_returns/deaths\\_1890/06089/4737559.pdf](https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1890/06089/4737559.pdf) (22 June 2019)

In any case, the next source of information where Molly might have been concerned came from a press report on 8 August 1898, which gave details about a week-long fund-raising bazaar at Balbriggan. A short extract went:

Yesterday, at two o'clock, there was opened to the public, in the grounds of the Catholic Church of St Peter, Balbriggan, a very well organized and interesting bazaar, the object of which is to clear off a debt which has been incurred in the renovation of the church. A sum of £6,000 has already been expended in the renovation works and paid off, but about £1,000 more is wanted and the committee expects to get it. ... The committee consists of the Rev P Fee, PP; Rev P Doyle, CC; Rev M Russell, CC; Dr Liston, Dr Nowlan, and Messrs. W Butler, P Markey, JP Maughan, and JJ Collins. ... Within the grounds stood three marquees. One of these was allotted to the exhibition stalls, another was a tea stall, and within the third a variety entertainment is to be given. ... The Frugal stall was presided over by Mrs. Cumisky, and Mrs. Nowlan, assisted by the Misses Adrian [sic], the Misses Ennis, Miss Doyle, and Miss K Cumisky. ... The bazaar, lit by coloured lamps, was open in the evening and attracted a large attendance. The bazaar will be continued until Monday, the 15<sup>th</sup> instant, inclusive.<sup>95</sup>

While it cannot be confirmed whether Molly was one of the Misses Adrien mentioned in the above report, it might have been her and, or her sisters, Eva, and Elizabeth. In any case, more solid ground is reached from information in the 1901 census of Ireland where it shows that Molly was head of the household in a second part of a second-class house number sixty on Drumcondra Road, West side, in the parish of St George, Dublin. The other part of the house was occupied by a Margaret McKevitt, who had four rooms at their disposal. Meanwhile, with five rooms at her disposal, Molly, then aged twenty-six years, had living with her, Eva, twenty-two years, Katie, twenty-one years, and Edward who was aged seventeen years. They were all Roman Catholics, and single, and had derived their income from land holdings.<sup>96</sup>

From the same census, it was seen that house number nine at Oldtown (Garden-view cottage), was then occupied by Molly's aunt Mary, a single woman aged sixty-two years, and who derived her income from dividends. Her home was a second-class dwelling which was then 'in fee'.<sup>97</sup> She had lived there with her father, Dr William Edward Adrien, and subsequent to his death in 1889, as his principal beneficiary and sole executrix, the sum of £1,040.1s. 2d.,

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<sup>95</sup> *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 8 Aug. 1898.

<sup>96</sup> Census of Ireland, 1901.

<sup>97</sup> Census of Ireland, 1901.

went to her.<sup>98</sup> Some six years later, when she died, on 30 December 1905, the probate of her will (with three codicils), and the effects of £750. 18s. 9d., went to Nicholas J. Kelly, a farmer [in County Meath].<sup>99</sup>

It seems that in the period between the time of the 1901 census, and 1905, that Molly had something of a personal crisis in her life. The details, according to Margaret Griffin (nee, Savage, of Swords), and her son Declan, were that her relationship with Patrick Griffin had irretrievably broken down because he had left her in favour of her younger sister, Eva (also known as ‘Ba’). Margaret Griffin told the author that such an event as had happened to Molly, whereby her man was taken from her by another female, in this case her sister, was colloquially known in north County Dublin, as being tantamount ‘to cutting another girls bush’. In any case, the situation was far from amicable and the parties became bitterly estranged for the remainder of their lives.<sup>100</sup> Details from the 1901 census of Ireland showed that Patrick Griffin was thirty-four years old, single, a Roman Catholic, and a farmer who had been born in County Dublin, in c. 1867. He lived in a second-class house number four at Oldtown, which he shared with two sisters, Ellen, aged twenty-nine years, and Susan, aged twenty-six. There were also two male farm servants living in the home.<sup>101</sup>

### **Molly’s former boyfriend, Patrick Griffin married Eva Adrien in Sept. 1905**

It is reasonable to presume that Molly would have been less than happy at the thought of her former boyfriend, Patrick Griffin marrying her sister Eva on Wednesday 13 September 1905, at St. Paul’s Roman Catholic Church on Arran Quay, Dublin. Patrick was described as a farmer from Rowlestown, Kilsallaghan; while Christina Mary was a full spinster then living at Raheny, Lusk. The witnesses were, Richard McCann and Margaret Mary Rooney. Charles R. Murphy, C.C., from Lusk, officiated and was ably assisted by the Rev. R. J. Sladen, C.C., of Arran Quay. The grooms father was, Thomas Griffin while the brides was the late Edward Adrien of Oldtown.<sup>102</sup> Not surprisingly, there was no mention of Molly on the marriage certificate as the sisters were estranged by then. Eva was most likely staying with the Rooney family, whose farm was situated at Raheny, Lusk. Two members of that family, James and Edward Rooney

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<sup>98</sup> The will of William Edward Adrien, in the NAI, [www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie) (Accessed 9 Oct. 2015)

<sup>99</sup> The will of Mary Adrien, in the NAI, [www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie) (Accessed 9 Oct. 2015)

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Margaret and Declan Griffin, on 10 Oct. 2005.

<sup>101</sup> Census of Ireland, 1901.

<sup>102</sup> Irish Genealogy. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Marriage of Christina Mary ‘Eva’ Adrien and Patrick Griffin, on 13 Sept. 1905. Civil records, group registration No. 1874632, SR district/ area, north Dublin. *Irish Independent*, 14 Sept. 1905.

were to become involved as Irish Volunteers in the Easter Rising of 1916, and took part at the ‘Battle of Ashbourne’ on Friday 28 April in the above year.<sup>103</sup>

Following their wedding, Patrick and Eva Griffin lived at Rowlestown House, near Kilsallaghan, situated to the west of Swords town. The 1911 census of Ireland, rated it as a first-class dwelling. Patrick Griffin was head of the household, and his occupation was described as a farmer-grazier. He and Eva lived there with their children, Margory, aged four years, Thomas, aged three, Stephen, aged two, and, Clare, who was then an infant.<sup>104</sup>

**Fig. 4: Patrick & Eva Griffin (nee, Adrien), & family<sup>105</sup>**



Their children, in chronological order were, Margaret ‘Marjorie’ Ann (b. July 1906); Thomas (b. August 1907); Stephen (b. 1908); & Clare, who was an infant.<sup>106</sup> There are six children in the photograph so clearly some of them were born in the years after the 1911 census was completed.

Returning to Molly and the 1911 census, where it showed that she relocated from Drumcondra to the former home of her aunt, Mary, at Garden-view cottage, Oldtown, who had previously died. Molly was then aged thirty-six years, while her brother, Edward, was twenty-nine. Both were single, and in the box provided for details of occupations there was none

<sup>103</sup> Peter F Whearity, *The Easter Rising of 1916 in north County Dublin: a Skerries perspective* (Dublin, 2013), p. 44.

<sup>104</sup> Census of Ireland, 1911.

<sup>105</sup> Photographed by author on 10 Oct. 2005, from original in Rowlestown House.

<sup>106</sup> Census of Ireland, 1911.

given.<sup>107</sup> The dwelling was numbered differently between the two censuses whereby it was number nine in 1901, and number nineteen in the 1911 return, however, no explanation can be given. Arising out of the above are a few questions, firstly, how did Molly and Edward get possession of the house? And secondly, why was there no mention of the pair still deriving incomes from land as had been the case in 1901? Or, had they perhaps used their combined incomes to purchase the cottage and therefore had expended their wealth in that way? In any event, it remained their home thereafter right up until the time of their deaths in June and July 1949, respectively. Meanwhile, their sister Eva lived in the fine period residence known as Rowlestown House shown below.

**Fig. 5: Rowlestown House, Rowlestown, County Dublin.** (Margaret & Declan Griffin dated the house from *c.* 1789, and said that it was owned prior to the Griffin's by the McCormack family).<sup>108</sup>



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<sup>107</sup> Census of Ireland, 1911.

<sup>108</sup> Photographed by author in 2005. Interview between the author and his wife Valerie, and Margaret & Declan Griffin, at Rowlestown House, on 10 Oct. 2005.

### Chapter three: Molly as a Poor-Law Guardian; Rural District Councillor, & Cumann na mBan Volunteer

An important aspect of Molly's life was when she made history, in the local sense, by becoming the first female to join the board of guardians of the Balrothery Poor Law Union, in July 1914.<sup>109</sup> On entering the boardroom for the first time, Molly was roundly cheered by the members. The Chairman, T.L. Smyth, said it was an honour for him to preside over the introduction of the board's first lady guardian and he had long thought that the board suffered from a lack of female participation and congratulated Miss Adrien on her appointment. He expressed regret that other districts had not acted similarly in bringing women onto boards and went on to say that Molly was no stranger among them as her family were one of the most respected in the area and had long and honoured associations with the board members. Mr P. Matthews [Skerries] said that elsewhere in the country where lady guardians had been elected, they had proved to be a great success.<sup>110</sup> It might be interesting to note that prior to the 1896 House of Commons Act which allowed women to be elected onto such boards that such an event could not have occurred. However, females still had to await a further local government act in 1898 before they could participate as a member of district councils.<sup>111</sup> From information in a publication titled *Discovering women in Irish history* that in 1899 there were '85 women elected as poor law guardians'.<sup>112</sup>

In the wider sphere, the new-found freedom for women was not well received in all quarters. Rosemary Cullen-Owens wrote that, in the House of Lords, that Viscount Clifden thought that the board of guardians was no place for 'spouting women doing men's work'. He feared that it would increase the power of priests on the boards due to females supporting them in debates.<sup>113</sup> Whatever about the above limitations then imposed on women in May 1914, Molly put herself forward for election in the Balrothery Union local elections for the district of Clonmethan. There were two males also running in that area and these were, Richard J. Rooney, J.P.; and Peter Walsh, farmer.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>109</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 11 July 1914.

<sup>110</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 11 July 1914.

<sup>111</sup> PRONI. [www.proni.gov.uk/uk/female\\_suffrage\\_in\\_the\\_uk\\_and\\_ireland\\_timeline2.pdf](http://www.proni.gov.uk/uk/female_suffrage_in_the_uk_and_ireland_timeline2.pdf) (Accessed 6 Nov. 2015).

<sup>112</sup> Department of Education and Science, Gender Equality Unit, *Discovering women in Irish history* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 2004), p. 98.

<sup>113</sup> Rosemary Cullen-Owens, *Smashing times: a history of Irish Women's suffrage movement 1889-1922* (Dublin, 1995), pp 29-30.

<sup>114</sup> *Irish Times*, 6 May 1914

### Arrival of Belgian refugee's at Balrothery Union, in October 1914

With regard to Molly having received some schooling in France, one would expect that she would have attained a measure of fluency in the French language while there. Thus, when a number of Belgian refugees arrived at the Balrothery workhouse in late 1914, Molly, would have been expected to have been in a position to hold a conversation with them. In this regard, the editor of the *Fingal Independent*, Hubert Murphy, wrote that when Belgian refugees arrived at the Balrothery Union workhouse, that Molly and a few others 'were found to be excellent interpreters to the French-speaking refugees'.<sup>115</sup>

In December of that same year, Molly tried to handle a situation on her own which might have been better left to the Balrothery board of guardians to have handled collectively rather than individually as she had done. Anyway, it seems that trouble had erupted at Lusk Carnegie Library on two fronts, firstly, there was an alleged non-payment due to the cleaning lady, and secondly, there was the unauthorised taking of coal for the fire in the Carnegie Library by people using its facilities. Anyway, Molly, without the boards say so, presented herself at the home of the cleaner, Miss Connor, in an effort to sort out the problem.<sup>116</sup> Perhaps she intended to impress the board by getting the problem sorted out quickly, but after words were exchanged between the pair, Molly was sent away with a flea in her ear and no nearer to resolving the issues at hand. However, the matter did not end there as in March 1915, after a letter from Miss Connor was read at a board meeting, Molly took umbrage at the way the other guardians appeared to find favour with as she put it 'the word of a mere servant' over her account. When the chairman tried to explain that they simply could not understand why she had gone to the woman's home in the first place, Molly left the boardroom in a huff.<sup>117</sup> However, she soon returned to the guardian meetings and the matter was seemingly never raised again.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> *Fingal Independent*, 5 Aug. 2008.

<sup>116</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 12 Dec. 1914.

<sup>117</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 30 Jan. 1915; *Drogheda Independent*, 13 Mar. 1915.

<sup>118</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 17 Apr. 1915.



### Molly as a Cumann na mBan Volunteer

When it came to Molly's participation as a Cumann na mBan Volunteer, valuable information has been left to us by her sworn statement given to a government appointed Advisory Board in 1936. The process entailed a question and answer process which in turn led to a document dated 4 March of that year being preserved amongst her file (No. 152), held in the Military Archives in Dublin and available now on the online website [www.militaryarchives.ie](http://www.militaryarchives.ie). The information provided by Molly concerns the whole period of her military activity from 1914 to c. 1921. It is proposed here that extracts from the statement will be interspersed in the narrative as it goes along, beginning with the one below.

#### Extract 1: Molly's sworn statement

[Extract from] Sworn Statement of Miss Mary Adrien (File No. 152) made before Advisory Committee on 4 <sup>th</sup> December, 1936. <sup>119</sup> [Military Archives, Dublin]	
Question	Answer
Were you a member of Cumann na mBan?	Yes, the Central Branch.
When did you join?	November, 1915.
Did you remain associated with the movement?	I was attending the Cumann na mBan Branch.
And running a Branch in Lusk?	I was Director of that—we did stretcher drill etc.
This was before Easter Week?	From November 1915 up to Easter Week.

Further details about her participation as a Cumann na mBan Volunteer came from a Dublin City based Irish Volunteer, Seamus Kavanagh, who wrote that:

At this time [July 1914] I was assistant instructor with Volunteer 'Mocky' Comerford to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion. ... also, instructor to the Central branch of Cumann na mBan, who paraded in 25 Parnell Square, where they were instructed in first-aid, stretcher drill, ceremonial drill, physical drill and signalling. Nurse Adrian [sic] of Lusk, Co. Dublin, was one of the first-aid instructors. The officers of the branch at that time, to the best of my knowledge, were; Mrs. Tom Clarke, Mrs. Ceannt, Miss Brennan, (a sister of Mrs. Ceannt), Mrs. Reddin (the mother of Kenneth—now [later] District Justice Reddin), Miss McMahan (a sister to General P. McMahan, Secretary, Department of Defence, and now Mrs. Sorcha Rodgers, Kilbarrack, Co. Dublin), the Misses Ryan ( Mrs. S.T. O'Kelly, Mrs. Mulcahy and Mrs McCullough), the two Misses Hanrahan (a sister of Míchéal Hanrahan, executed after the Rising in 1916), Mrs. Joe McGuinness (whose husband was later T.D., for Longford), Miss Leslie Price (now Mrs. Tom Barry, chairman of the Irish Red Cross Society). The Central branch of Cumann na mBan was

<sup>119</sup> Military Archives, Dublin.

WMSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

looked on as a sort of headquarters branch, and very often I was assisted in instructing the branch by the Reddin brothers ... It was the branch that designed the Cumann na mBan uniform, which was comprised of a tunic on something the same pattern as a Volunteer officers tunic, loose skirt, leather belt and tweed slouch hat.<sup>120</sup>

Another reference to Molly and the Central branch came from another female Volunteer, Mrs Aine Heron, who wrote that:

I attended meetings regularly twice a week. One night we would have drill and the other night first-aid instruction. We marched out for the first evening after dark and we aroused quite a lot of interest, as the public had not yet got used to the idea of women marching in step like soldiers. Nora Foley carried the flag. She was a great person, as was Miss Adrien from north County Dublin. The latter afterwards took part in the Ashbourne fight, and she succeeded in getting in and out every day to the G.P.O., with messages. ... On the Saturday of the surrender, I saw a group of Cumann na mBan ... The next thing I remember was being called to a meeting at 25 Parnell Square by Sorcha McMahon at which she read out the statement proclaiming Cumann na mBan an illegal organisation.<sup>121</sup>

In early April 1915, Molly found herself chairing a meeting of the Balrothery Board of guardian's where only herself and two other guardians had turned up. One of the items discussed concerned a letter sent by the Belgian refugees to the editor of the *Drogheda Independent*, prior to their leaving Balrothery workhouse bound for the workhouse at Dunshaughlin, in County Meath. The details in the letter were as follows:

Dublin, 4<sup>th</sup> April, 1915. Dear Sir. Kindly reserve a little space in your most interesting newspaper to give publicity to the deep feelings of gratitude which we Belgians do care for the Irish people. Thanks beforehand. Joseph Weygeleir, Belgian refugee, Easter Sunday.

As we are the last refugees leaving the Balrothery Union, for the reason that the place was to be cleared for other purposes, and we were living there for five months, surrounded by the most heartily sympathetic regards, we find it our duty to express, in the name of all the Belgian refugees who left there, our deepest show of gratitude. We consider us, nevertheless our exile, at home, thanks the comfort, thanks the sympathy, thanks the never-failing kindness. We would be ingrates without mentioning that we all owe this to the master of the union, Mr. Duffy; and

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<sup>120</sup> Seamus Kavanagh. B.M.H. W.S. 1670.

<sup>121</sup> Aine Heron, Mrs. B.M.H. W.S. 0293.

to the nurse, Miss L Hegarty. They never failed when anything could be done for a refugee. They were individual examples of that warm-hearted Ireland. We might not end this without saying that we the most thankful feelings to Mr. James Stack, the clerk of the union, who had his share in the sympathy shown by the Irish people to our suffering Belgium. We cannot better express our thankful feelings than to cry, as an honour to Ireland, as a blessing for Ireland, "God save Ireland". Sincerely thankful. Joseph Weygeleir, Oscar Verkouille and family. Pierre Gods, Joseph Neyns.<sup>122</sup>

With regard to the above, it was the case that one of the guardians, namely, Mr. Sweetman, spoke out against the writer of the letter because he felt that the guardians had been snubbed by not being mentioned in it. However, Molly stood up for the Belgian's by saying that they had not intended, in her view, to castigate the guardians within their letter.

In the first week in May 1915, a 'deserving tribute [was paid to] Dr. Hayes, M.O., Lusk, who was presented on Friday with a handsome onyx clock, suitably inscribed, in recognition of his voluntary services by the members of the Irish Volunteer Ambulance class, and Miss Mary Adrien, D.C., [district councillor] who assisted, with a pair of silver table lamps, as a token of gratitude and esteem. The hon. sec., Miss Eileen Morgan, was also the recipient of a massive silver Tara brooch'.<sup>123</sup> In July of that year, when Molly had chaired a meeting of the Balrothery Board of guardians, the issue of the expenses incurred in caring for the Belgian refugee's in the workhouse came up as a matter of discussion among the three guardians and the clerk who had presented themselves for the meeting at the workhouse office. The general feeling was that the board were not being sufficiently remunerated for the time and effort expended towards the Belgian's, but it was decided that the matter should be postponed until a larger number of guardians had assembled on another day in the future.<sup>124</sup> Further information about the Belgian refugee's at Balrothery can be gotten from the author's two-part article on that subject in *Riocht na Midhe*, published in the 2009 & 2010 issues of the Meath Archaeological and Historical Society's annual journal. Also available to view on, <http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/7696/>

Also, in July 1915, Molly was again the recipient of another prize, this time it was a silver tea-kettle and a spirit lamp, for the part she played as honorary secretary of a 'local first aid and home nursing class' which ran over a period of time at Oldtown. However, the main

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<sup>122</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 10 Apr. 1915.

<sup>123</sup> *Irish Independent*, 10 May 1915; cited in, Bairbre Curtis 'Fingal and the Easter Rising 1916' in Joseph Byrne (ed.), *Fingal Studies 1: Fingal at War* (2010), p. 39.

<sup>124</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 3 July 1915.

credit was awarded to a Dublin City doctor, Patrick Dolan, whose address was 60 Amiens Street. He was given a ‘silver revolving breakfast dish and convertible tureen’ for his efforts in teaching the females who attended the classes. The presentations had taken place on the Tuesday prior to the 24<sup>th</sup> July, at a place in Oldtown known as the ‘Village wall’ [hall] where Mrs Mangan of Tobergregan, Garristown; assisted by her vice-president, Mrs Ennis, and Miss Butler as treasurer, had presided over the proceedings. Other people present were the ‘Rev. John Byrne, Miss Baker, Mrs. Eccles, Miss Julia Ennis, Mrs. Finlay, Miss Segrave, Mrs. Rooney, Wyanstown; Mrs NJ Kelly, Miss Mangan, Miss Fanning, Mrs. M’Ardle, Miss may Rooney, Miss MT Russel, Miss Anne Monks, Miss Delia Murray, Mrs. M’Culloch, Miss Keogh, Miss Kane, Miss Manning, Miss Corway, Miss MK Warren, Rev. Arthur Griffin, and Mr. Ed. Adrien [Molly’s brother Ned]’.<sup>125</sup>

When it came to the female Volunteers at Lusk, Cal McCarthy made reference to there having been representatives at a National Convention of Cumann na mBan at 2 Dawson Street, Dublin, on 31 October 1915, from a branch of Inghinidhe na hÉireann based there then.<sup>126</sup> The National Library of Ireland in its online exhibition ‘The 1916 Rising: personalities and perspectives’ states that the aforementioned movement was absorbed into Cumann na mBan in 1914.<sup>127</sup> Interestingly, McCarthy pointed out that at the time of the so-called Redmondite-split that the Lusk branch of Inghinidhe na hÉireann decided to withdraw from Cumann na mBan and support Redmond’s Irish Parliamentary Party instead of MacNeill’s Irish Volunteers.<sup>128</sup> A majority of the National Volunteers at Lusk also opted to go with Redmond when they split on 30 September 1914.<sup>129</sup>

### **The Aims of the Cumann na mBan movement which had formed in April 1914**

As to the rationale for forming the Cumann na mBan organisation in the first place, Dr Nancy Wyse-power, gave details of its primary aims, one of which would have been to support the Irish Volunteer movement formed in November 1913, under Eoin MacNeill. Other aims were. (1), ‘to advance the cause of Irish freedom’. (2), ‘to organise Irishwomen in the furtherance of this object’ (3), ‘to assist in arming and equipping a body of Irishmen for the defence of

<sup>125</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 24 July 1915.

<sup>126</sup> *Irish Volunteer*, 23 Oct. 6 Nov. 1915; cited in, Cal McCarthy, *Cumann na mBan and the Irish revolution* (Cork, 2007), p. 31.

<sup>127</sup> NLI. [www.nli.ie/1916/pdf/3.2.3.pdf](http://www.nli.ie/1916/pdf/3.2.3.pdf) (Accessed Feb. 2015).

<sup>128</sup> *Irish Volunteer*, 23 Oct. 6 Nov. 1915; cited in, Cal McCarthy, *Cumann na mBan and the Irish revolution*, pp 31, 37.

<sup>129</sup> Peter F. Whearity, *The Easter Rising of 1916 in north County Dublin: a Skerries perspective* (Dublin, 2013), p. 18.

Ireland’. And (4), ‘to form a fund for those purposes to be called the defence of Ireland fund’.<sup>130</sup> However laudable the above aims were, it nevertheless soon became apparent that some within the movement did not like the idea of female Volunteers being in any way subservient to their male counterparts. Therefore, it was subsequently made clear that their leaders would make their own decisions while at the same time endeavouring to assist the Irish Volunteer movement as a whole in any way they could.

Details of the actual situation on the ground in north County Dublin (Fingal) prior to the 1916 Rising, according to Col. Joseph Lawless, was that:

The Irish Volunteers of Fingal were organised as the Fifth Battalion of the Dublin Brigade, and consisted of four companies located at Swords, Lusk, Skerries and St Margaret’s, each with a nominal roll of about thirty men. Some weeks before the Rising, the command of the battalion was assumed by Commandant Thomas Ashe, in succession to Doctor R. Hayes, who became battalion adjutant. The position of the battalion quartermaster was held ... by Frank Lawless.<sup>131</sup>

### Extract 2: Molly’s sworn statement

[Extract from] Sworn Statement of Miss Mary Adrien (File No. 152) made before Advisory Committee on 4 <sup>th</sup> December, 1936. <sup>132</sup> [Military Archives, Dublin]	
In the Easter Week Rising did you take part?	Yes, I was Tom Ashe’s scout. I was mobilised from the Central Branch, Cumann na mBan—they sent me the usual notice and put at the end of it “We are having a little party on Monday, and probably you will have a similar one”. I was mobilised on Saturday for Sunday—then the counter [manding] order came.
Did you turn out on Sunday?	I did, and found it was countermanded.
Where did you go?	Into Dublin.
From Oldtown?	Yes, Mrs Tuohy said the thing was countermanded and I went back home again.
But in fact, you were mobilised for Sunday?	Yes, I was mobilised for Sunday—got the notice on Saturday, and then when I came in, I found it was not taking place.
You went back to Oldtown?	Yes.

Molly gave more information on her application form which she submitted in a quest for a military service pension from the Department of Defence lodged on 22 November 1934. It

<sup>130</sup> Nancy Wyse-Power (Dr), statement to Military History Bureau; W.S. 541, p. 9.

<sup>131</sup> Joseph Lawless ‘Fight at Ashbourne’ in, *Capuchin Annual*, 33 (1966), p. 307.

<sup>132</sup> Military Archives, Dublin.

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stated that her military service was from Tuesday 25 April at 8 a.m., with the unit Fingal Company, to Sunday 30 April 1916; in the Fingal area and in the G.P.O., every day except on Saturday 29 April. The officer commanding in each instance was ‘Thomas Ashe’, where [I] acted as servant and despatch carrier.<sup>133</sup> Further information about that Tuesday, came from Charles Weston who wrote that ‘Miss Adrien, who was acting as a runner into the city with a report of the position, numbers, armaments, etc. ... returned about 11 a.m., with instruction to send 40 men into the city to the G.P.O. Twenty men were detailed by Ashe and under Dick Coleman preceded to the city’. Molly was ‘in and out of the city up to Thursday’.<sup>134</sup>

The countermanding order issued on the Saturday evening by Eoin MacNeill caused turmoil. Joseph Lawless again had the following to say on the matter:

On Sunday, the battalion, as ordered, mobilised at Rathbeale Cross, almost to a man, only to get the Sunday paper containing the official cancellation of the general mobilization. I was sent with a despatch to James Connolly at Liberty Hall asking for instructions and returned with the verbal message, “All is off for the present,” but also with instructions to hold everyone in readiness to act at any moment. The men dispersed that evening, but at seven o’clock the next morning I was awakened by the voice of my aunt, who had cycled from Dublin with a dispatch for my father, which read: Strike at one today---signed, P.H. Pearse. I was dispatched on Ashe’s motor cycle to notify Ashe who sent me to bring the word to the Saint Margaret’s Company. They mustered at Knocksedan, but not in such strength as on the previous day.<sup>135</sup>

In his B.M.H., witness statement (1043), Joseph Lawless told of the joy expressed by his father, Frank, on his bringing the news upstairs to his son’s room. Joseph read the note and saw that ‘Pearse’s peculiar backhand writing was unmistakable’.<sup>136</sup>

Before moving on, it should be noted here that several authors had given the credit to Molly Adrien for having brought that important news to Frank Lawless’s home on that Easter Monday morning. Two examples should suffice to make the point, i.e., Sineád McCoole’s 1997 work, *Guns & Chiffon: women revolutionaries and Kilmainham Gaol, 1916-1923*; and

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<sup>133</sup> Military Service Pensions Collection. Mary Adrien file, MSP34REF152. & associated files in MSPA. 34E113; DP14100. <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx> (Accessed 16 Mar. 2014). Hereafter cited as Military Archives, MSPC. M. Adrien file, MSP34REF152; & 34E113; DP14100.

<sup>134</sup> B.M.H., W.S. 149. (Charles Weston). Sean O’Brien, *Field of fire: the battle of Ashbourne, 1916* (Dublin, 2012), 16.

<sup>135</sup> Joseph Lawless (Col.) ‘Fight at Ashbourne’ in, *Capuchin Annual*, Vol.33 (1966), p. 308.

<sup>136</sup> Joseph Lawless. B.M.H. W.S., 1043.

Charles Townshend's 2006 work, *Easter 1916: the Irish Rebellion*.<sup>137</sup> In McCoolle's work, she put it under a heading 'Enniscorthy--Ashbourne' that:

As a result of MacNeill's countermanding order few of the Battalions outside of Dublin were active in Easter Week. However, there was action at Enniscorthy, and the local Cumann na mBan under the command of Mary White took part in the fight. But the women at Ashbourne received word of the Rebellion going ahead from a Miss Adrian [sic] who cycled from Dublin with a message from Pearse. Miss Adrian [sic], a middle-aged woman, made this journey several times during the week of the Rising and managed to evade arrest.<sup>138</sup>

The author of this paper also made the mistake (in his MA Thesis titled, *The Irish Volunteers in north Co. Dublin, 1913-17*, submitted to NUI Maynooth in 2011) of apportioning the credit for bringing that important message to the leaders of the Fifth Battalion, on the Easter Monday, to Molly Adrien, when instead it was Mary Lawless who had brought it to her brother, Frank Lawless at Saucerstown, Swords, and it was his son Joseph who carried it to Lusk for the attention of Thomas Ashe who was staying at the home of Dr Richard Hayes on that particular morning. Molly herself stated that she was not involved in anything of a military nature on Easter Monday (see extract 3, below).

### Extract 3: Molly's sworn statement

[Extract from] Sworn Statement of Miss Mary Adrien (File No. 152) made before Advisory Committee on 4 <sup>th</sup> December, 1936. <sup>139</sup> [Military Archives, Dublin]	
Can you recall what happened on the second day?	Nothing happened on Sunday, I was at home all day on Monday and until the people came back from Fairyhouse I knew nothing whatever. When they came back from Fairyhouse they said the Volunteers had taken the Post Office, and I waited until I would hear something official. No word came so the next morning at 6 o'clock I went into Swords to see what was going on as there was a centre there and I got in touch with someone and was told the Volunteers were out and the General Post Office taken—they told me wait. I went to Finglas from Swords and I got into camp there and I saw Dr. Hayes and Tom Ashe and told them I got no word. I told them I got word on the Sunday that there was nothing on and they said they sent word from Headquarters that they wanted men and that 10 had gone into

<sup>137</sup> Charles Townshend, *Easter 1916: the Irish Rebellion* (London, 2006), p. 216.

<sup>138</sup> Sineád McCoolle, *Guns & Chiffon: women revolutionaries and Kilmainham Gaol, 1916-1923* (Dublin, 1997), p. 23.

<sup>139</sup> Military Archives, Dublin.

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	the G.P.O. I went into H.Qrs., and I again called at Mrs Tuohy's—she told me the firing was going on.
Did you go into the Post Office?	Not direct. I went to Foley's first and they told me come to the side door and there was a Volunteer there and I was let in.
Had you a despatch from Tom Ashe?	No. I had a verbal instruction to go in and post out what was happening. Then I saw some of our own Company that had been in there.
Do you mean Cumann na mBan?	No, some of the Volunteers. We all had plenty to do. I remained there for an hour, and then I was told to scout the Coast line going back to Oldtown.
Who told you this?	We all talked together—Dr. Hayes, Tom Ashe.
You went back to Finglas?	Yes.
And you had a consultation?	Yes. I told them I came to be of use. I scouted around Malahide, Balbriggan etc. Then I came back.
After scouting you returned back to Finglas?	Yes.
You returned to Finglas—it must have been late?	It was about 2 o'clock. And I went back to Lusk to Dr. Hayes' house from Finglas and saw some of the friends in Lusk whose sons were out, and I left word that all was well. I was not to say where they were. I got instructions not to say where they were but to say they were well.
You spent that night at home?	I got home, rested for a couple of hours and at 3 o'clock I heard a whistle and I got up and I got word from a boy who said "I want you to tell Tom Ashe they wanted instructions as to where the stuff at Blackhills, Skerries was to be sent. I went and got to Finglas [sic] and they were just moving—I gave him the word I got".
Who did you tell?	Tom Ashe. Then I went into H.Qrs., again—I spent some hours in the G.P.O., working with the Cumann na mBan there. I met 2 or 3 who had been cut off at Cabra Road and we began talking casually and they asked me if I knew anything about the Volunteers and I said they were out anyway. Dick Mulcahy was one of them [and], I billeted these in each camp. One of the boys came to me and asked me to keep money for him. My house was the headquarters for messages and cloths for their relatives. I kept messages behind the pictures. This boy told me he had £35 in gold on him. I took the money for him and asked a priest to keep it for him.

On the Wednesday of Easter Week, 1916, the Fifth Battalion had dealt with the RIC barracks firstly at Swords and then at Donabate. For further information about events in Skerries in that week, see the authors work, *The Easter Rising of 1916 in north County Dublin: a Skerries perspective* published by Four Courts Press in 2013,



<https://www.fourcourtspress.ie/books/2013/the-easter-rising-of-1916-in-north-co-dublin/>

#### Extract 4: Molly's sworn statement

[Extract from] Sworn Statement of Miss Mary Adrien (File No. 152) made before Advisory Committee on 4 <sup>th</sup> December, 1936. <sup>140</sup> [Military Archives, Dublin]	
Did this camp remain in Coolock the whole of the week?	No. they moved on to Ballyedwardstown, and I billeted a lot. We took a vacated Police barracks.
When was this?	Wednesday, and on Wednesday night we moved to Ballyedwardstown.
How many were in this camp?	There were about 35—27 in action and the rest were guarding the camp.
This was something like one of the later columns?	Yes.

Joseph Lawless stated that:

[At] our camp at Killeek ... after 3 0'clock ... Miss Molly Adrian of Oldtown, who was an enthusiastic supporter of the Volunteers, had just arrived in camp from the G.P.O., and bore with her a copy of the "Proclamation of the Republic" and a copy of "The War News", as well as her personal story of the fighting in Dublin. She had ridden her bicycle through the deserted Dublin streets, argued her way through barricades manned by British troops, and on to Knocksedan to find our camp, bringing also quantities of concentrated food such as Oxo cubes, tied to her bicycle, which she distributed to the Volunteers. This was the first authentic account we had of the fighting in Dublin, and perhaps for the first time we, that is the younger ones of us, began to realise that all was not going well, and that there was no sign of the rest of the country rising in arms.<sup>141</sup>

#### Extract 5: Molly's sworn statement

[Extract from] Sworn Statement of Miss Mary Adrien (File No. 152) made before Advisory Committee on 4 <sup>th</sup> December, 1936. <sup>142</sup> [Military Archives, Dublin]	
You went every day to the Post Office?	Yes.
On Thursday you were there again?	Yes. I was there when the Linen Hall was blown up, and I was there when James Connolly was brought in wounded.
Were you engaged all day on Thursday at this?	Yes, the whole day and then I went home.

<sup>140</sup> Military Archives, Dublin.

WMSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

<sup>141</sup> Joseph Lawless (Col.). B.M.H. W.S. 1043. Sean O'Brien, *Field of fire: the battle of Ashbourne, 1916* (Dublin, 2012), 24. Peter F. Whearity, *The Easter Rising of 1916 in north County Dublin: a Skerries perspective* (Dublin, 2013), pp 31-2.

<sup>142</sup> Military Archives, Dublin.

WMSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

On that morning some grousing arose due to two issues which had caused a few men to leave the ranks of the battalion altogether and these issues centred on the stark realisation that the country as a whole had not risen to participate in the fight, and along with disappointment that an attack on the RIC barracks at Garristown earlier that morning had produced little in the way of arms or ammunition to augment the meagre supplies they already had. However, in a Bureau of Military History Witness Statement by Volunteer, Gerry Golden, who gave the state of the battalion's leadership as it was on the morning of the next day, is informative:

On the [Friday] 28<sup>th</sup> [April] the Fingal Battalion consisted of four officers namely, Commdt. Tom Ashe, Vice Commdt. Frank Lawless, Capt. James V. Lawless and Capt. Dr Richard Hayes, with about 35 men of the Swords, Lusk, Skerries and St Margaret's Companies, together with Lieut. (afterwards General) Dick Mulcahy and Tom Maxwell and Paddy Grant, members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Batt. Dublin Brigade and 5 members of "B" Coy. 1<sup>st</sup> Batt. Dublin Brigade, namely Paddy Holohan, Peadar Blanchfield, his brother Tom, Arthur O'Reilly and myself together with one of the Liverpool Irish known as Willie Walsh, with Miss Mollie Adrien of Oldtown, of the Cumann na mBan.<sup>143</sup>

#### Extract 6: Molly's sworn statement

[Extract from] Sworn Statement of Miss Mary Adrien (File No. 152) made before Advisory Committee on 4 <sup>th</sup> December, 1936. <sup>144</sup> [Military Archives, Dublin]	
Were you in the Ashbourne affair?	On Friday morning I did scouting and came in at 11.40 and waited. We had an arrangement with the Cumann na mBan to walk in and leave their messages, and at 12.50 a knock came and it was a boy who lived opposite and he told me great shooting was going on and then I went off on my bicycle.

The 'Ashbourne affair' as was put in a question to Molly was the now famous battle of Ashbourne. It was there that the Fifth Battalion Volunteers came in contact with a numerically superior and better armed force of the RIC, firstly at their barracks situated near to the Rath Crossroads, near Ashbourne, and secondly, a major engagement occurred around the crossroads itself. At the end of the fight which went on for over four hours, there were the

<sup>143</sup> Gerry Golden. B.M.H. W.S. 177. for further reading on the Irish in Britain who came home to fight as Irish Volunteers in 1916; see, Ann Matthews, *The Kimmage Garrison, 1916: making billy-can bombs at Larkfield* (Dublin, 2010).

<sup>144</sup> Military Archives, Dublin.

WMSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

inevitable dead and injured on both sides, along with three civilians caught in the cross-fire. While Ashe lost two men, Thomas Rafferty and John Crenigan, the losses on the RIC side were larger.<sup>145</sup> The official response to the events at Ashbourne came from General J.G. Maxwell, commander-in-chief of the military forces in Ireland, who stated that RIC constabulary inspectors Gray, Smith, and eight constables, had lost their lives and 14 were wounded. Those who died were: District Inspector Henry Smyth, Sergeant John Young, Sergeant John Shanagher, Constables James Hickey, James Gormley, Richard McHale and James Cleary. Along with these, three civilians killed were J.J. Carroll, J. Hogan and a Mr Kepp, the chauffeur of the Marquis Conyngham, at Slane Castle. It is likely that the last participant to die was Inspector Gray, who despite suffering terrible injuries as the result of a ‘close range shotgun blast’ lived until 10 May 1916.<sup>146</sup> In any event, all the injured at Ashbourne received treatment from Dr Hayes, with the able assistance by Molly Adrien, who was, as seen earlier, a former instructor in first aid with the Cumann na mBan Central Branch in Dublin City. She gave her actions on that day in her sworn statement below.

#### **Extract 7: Molly’s sworn statement**

[Extract from] Sworn Statement of Miss Mary Adrien (File No. 152) made before Advisory Committee on 4 <sup>th</sup> December, 1936. <sup>147</sup> [Military Archives, Dublin]	
Had you anything to do with this Ashbourne affair?	I did the dressings and was behind the lines.
And you rendered First Aid?	Yes.
Were there any other women there—were you in charge of any others?	No. In fact I had no orders to be there, only when I heard the firing from the camp, I went in.
Then during Easter Week, you were the sole messenger?	Yes.
And you were at this Ashbourne attack and rendered first aid?	Yes. In fact, I attended to both sides—both friend and enemy.
This Ashbourne fight lasted until Saturday—did it?	No. It was over in a few hours—it started at 12 and was over at 4.
What did you do after that?	I went back to camp after the dressings, and we had some superficial dressing to do.

<sup>145</sup> Sean Ó Mahony, *The first hunger striker: Thomas Ashe, 1917* (Dublin, 2001), p. 10.

<sup>146</sup> *Irish Times*, 4 May 1916. Terence Dooley ‘Alexander ‘Baby’ Gray’ in *Riocht na Midhe*, Vol. XIV (2003), 217-18. Noel Tier ‘The 5th Battalion, Irish Volunteers, in Ashbourne Co. Meath and surrounding areas, Monday 24 April to Sunday 30 April 1916’ in *Riocht na Midhe*, Vol. XXI (2010), 186-7. *Whearity, The Easter Rising of 1916 in north County Dublin: a Skerries perspective* (Dublin, 2013), pp 35-6.

<sup>147</sup> Military Archives, Dublin.

WMSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

Charles Weston told about the Murray girls from Garristown who had come on the scene and offered their assistance as helpers to the wounded being cared for by Dr Hayes.<sup>148</sup> After the dead bodies had been taken away and the casualties had been seen to and made as comfortable as was possible, Ashe brought his men back to their Borranstown camp arriving just as dusk was setting in. On the next day, Saturday, the battalion was relocated to New Barn, near Kilsallaghan, where old sheds and straw were available to provide a relatively comfortable billet for the men.<sup>149</sup> Joseph Lawless remembered that Molly had arrived in the evening with ‘despatches’ from which was learned or surmised that a cavalry force of the 5<sup>th</sup> Lancers was on its way to attack the column. It was felt, however, that such an event would be unlikely to occur during the hours of darkness.<sup>150</sup> What happened to Molly can be seen below.

### Extract 8: Molly’s sworn statement

[Extract from] Sworn Statement of Miss Mary Adrien (File No. 152) made before Advisory Committee on 4 <sup>th</sup> December, 1936. <sup>151</sup> [Military Archives, Dublin]	
On Saturday morning you got a dispatch from Tom Ashe?	Yes, and I went into Finglas. Belton advised me not to go into the city and I wheeled back to camp and told Tom Ashe that three lorries of soldiers had gone to look for the Ashbourne crowd.
Did you get back to Ashe with this information?	I did.
What did you do on Saturday?	On Saturday I went back and he told me scout and I scouted. On Sunday I was in camp early. I passed the sentry all right. I was told they had surrendered in Dublin. Dick Mulcahy was sent in to get the news and we went back to camp.

Whatever about the threat of an attack on their camp it was the case that a general surrender had been declared by Patrick Pearse on that Saturday afternoon after the forced evacuation of the G.P.O., in Sackville Street, Dublin, on the previous day. That news when it came to those at New Barn, was not well received by Ashe and those under him. Nevertheless, after an investigation which concluded that the order applied to all Irish Volunteer commanders in the field, no matter where in Ireland they operated from and the Fifth Battalion had little choice but to reluctantly lay down their arms and await their being taken into custody. However, some

<sup>148</sup> Charles Weston. B.M.H. W.S. 149. Sean O’Brien, *Field of fire: the battle of Ashbourne, 1916* (Dublin, 2012), p. 56.

<sup>149</sup> Charles Weston. B.M.H. W.S. 149.

<sup>150</sup> Lawless. B.M.H. W.S. 1043. Sean O’Brien, *Field of fire: the battle of Ashbourne, 1916* (Dublin, 2012), p. 61.

<sup>151</sup> Military Archives, Dublin.

WMSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://msearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

volunteers received permission from Ashe to leave the camp and take their chances of being apprehended in the weeks and months ahead.

The events of the aftermath of the collapse of the rebellion which included court-martials leading to executions, imprisonments, and internments in Britain, are well documented elsewhere and therefore only the briefest accounts of it will be gone into here, apart that is where Molly Adrien is concerned. While several of the Fingal leaders received death sentences, an example being Thomas Ashe, these were all commuted to terms of imprisonment with some getting hard labour for life. However, as is well-known, that along with the two Fingal Volunteers whose lives were extinguished at Ashbourne, and another, Peter Wilson, who had given his life at the Mendicity Institute in the city of Dublin. As to what Molly was doing afterwards, is seen below.

#### **Extract 9: Molly's sworn statement**

[Extract from] Sworn Statement of Miss Mary Adrien (File No. 152) made before Advisory Committee on 4 <sup>th</sup> December, 1936. <sup>152</sup> [Military Archives, Dublin]	
Did they round xxxx you up?	No.
They raided for you?	Yes.
Do you claim for any further time? Or only for Easter Week?	I was active the whole time.
The remainder of 1916 were you performing any duties in Cumann na mBan?	I was on the National Aid Collection for dependents fund—I was local representative for the National Aid.
I suppose the same thing was going on in subsequent years?	Yes, until the Truce.

The next information came from her work as a poor law guardian at the Balrothery Union. It concerned two men who had employment connections with the Balrothery Union workhouse were its medical officer Dr Hayes, and Wardmaster Joseph Kelly. In May 1916 both were suspended from their jobs due to their participation in the insurrection. The issue of their posts being kept open was discussed in May and again in October without anything being resolved.<sup>153</sup> When recourse was made to the minutes of the board for the period after the rising it appears that the censor had prevented their publication for several weeks.

While Molly Adrien has been the centre of attention up to this point in the story, it nevertheless behoves us to look at what other women in the area were up to when supporting the Fifth Battalion at the time of the battle of Ashbourne. Information extracted from an article

<sup>152</sup> Military Archives, Dublin.

WMSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

<sup>153</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 27 May 1916: *ibid*, 28 Oct. 1916.

by Hubert Murphy, editor of *the Fingal Independent*, under a heading of ‘Women of Fingal who played their part in 1916’ proved informative:

It was Easter, 1916 and the four-hour Battle of Ashbourne had just ended. ... But now it was the time to care for the wounded—no matter they be friend or foe. Dr. Richard Hayes was in charge but standing with him was Miss Molly Adrian [sic], one of the women who played her part in the Fingal fight for freedom. She rendered any assistance she could to the wounded on both sides, her distinction in battle recognised in the years after that. But Molly, who organised the Lusk Branch of the Cumann na mBan, was just one of the great women that helped prepare for 1916. It is said that Mary Lawless, a sister of Frank, was the one that started the drive amongst the women of Fingal. She built a strong garrison of helpers and allies, people like Miss Branagan, Ryan and Duff from Swords, and others, the Dukes and McDonnells of St. Margaret’s and Miss Josie Ennis of Naul, the Misses Coleman, Doyle, Mahoney and the sisters Weston and Miss Adrian of Oldtown. With the arrival of the Fingal Volunteers, so came the Cumann na mBan and Mary Lawless joined, later her nieces, Kathleen and Evelyn who attend training in Parnell Square [Dublin]. They had to get organised locally and branches were formed in Lusk, Balbriggan and Swords. The training was not of the military variety, instead they would act as back up in terms of medical assistance and the transportation of vital messages.

The 1916 Ashbourne memorial book gives a unique account. In Holy Week 1916 the Swords area particularly was stirred into action. The volunteer battalion quartermaster had his headquarters there and on Holy Thursday the Lawless butcher van in charge of Edward Stafford arrived at the shop in Swords two doors from the R.I.C. barracks, to be safely deposited in the outbuildings with its cargo of arms, ammunition gelignite and medical equipment. Here the arms were retained and looked after for a couple of days by Mrs. Kathleen McAllister (then Miss Kathleen Lawless) and later at Saucerstown (Frank Lawless’s farm-house) by the quartermaster and his staff to await Sunday’s outbreak. At Saucerstown on Easter Sunday the battalion then at full strength was fed and looked after by a busy band of Cumann na mBan members including Mrs. B. McAllister (nee, Lawless) Mrs. Joseph Lawless (nee, Dot Fleming) Mrs. Cullen (nee, Grimes) and Miss Evelyn Lawless until demobilised at midnight. Joe O’Reilly, subsequently Michael Collins’ Aide-de-camp arrived about ten o’clock on Monday morning with the message from Pearse calling for action at one o’clock. The quarter-master (Frank Lawless) then de-tailed Kathleen Lawless to the Swords house instructing her to collect messages and despatches, mobilise men who could not be found (Fairyhouse Races were on) and direct them to the camping area. Dot Fleming and Evelyn Lawless were detailed to Saucerstown and the Weston girls to Lusk where the Misses McNally and Devine stood by.

Miss Connolly left some messages on her way to the North and Miss T. Weston arrived with messages from Lusk and Skerries for the battalion. These were safely delivered to the battalion at Finglas by the Misses Weston and Lawless after which they returned to stand by for the attack on Swords barracks but the early surrender of the forces there left no cause for attention. Meantime messages came in from the battalion asking for food, clothing and some minor matters. These were obtained from Lawless' butcher shop, Taylor's stores and some miscellaneous small stores from other shops. Later, the women of Fingal would aid the Prisoners' Dependants Fund including Miss May Derham of Balbriggan, the Misses Shields of Skerries and Miss Collins of Santry, amongst others.<sup>154</sup>

### **A surcharge on Molly as a poor-law guardian**

At a meeting of the Balrothery Guardians on 28 April 1919, where the Chairman, T.L. Smyth, J.P., spoke about a surcharge which applied to himself, Miss Adrien, and Mr [Frank] Lawless, M.P., for salary paid to Dr Hayes. Apparently, that issue had caused a district inspector, sergeants and constabulary of police and a force of military to pay an unwelcome visit to his [Smyth's] house shortly after eight o'clock on a recent morning where they extracted a payment from him. However, having told his story to the guardians he wondered if each would pay their own share of the surcharge, but there was resistance from some members in the room. One such person was Molly Adrien, who while having been one of the surcharge members, said that she would pay nothing on her own or on anyone else's behalf. Guardian, P. Mathews said he would resign before he would pay a penny to M'Carron or the Local Government Board. He wasn't going to be blinked by a shabby lot from Dublin Castle. It was stated that previous to visiting Mr Smyth's place at Beaverstown, Donabate, that the party had gone to the residence of Mr [Frank] Lawless, and seized a piano in connection with the surcharge.<sup>155</sup> When it came to Molly's experience at that time, albeit, a little later than the above persons, a press report on Saturday 17 May, gave it that:

Our Balbriggan correspondent writes: On Wednesday morning, a military wagon arrived at the residence of Miss Mary Adrien, D.C., Oldtown, carrying a large company of military and a number of police also arrived on bicycles from the surrounding stations, and seized a bicycle, sewing machine, and a hall-stand belonging to her in connection with a surcharge by the L.G.B.,

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<sup>154</sup> *Fingal Independent*, 26 Aug. 2005.

<sup>155</sup> *Irish Independent*, 29 Apr. 1919.

as to Dr. Hayes' payment while acting M.O., [medical officer] of the union, and for which a seizure recently took place at the house of Mr. Frank Lawless, M.P., when a piano was taken.<sup>156</sup>

With regard to the surcharge on that occasion it was the case that in January 1917, the issue of Dr. Richard Hayes and Wardmaster Kelly, of the Balrothery Poor-law Union, came before the board again when Kelly requested his job back. However, all the members of the board were not in full agreement on the matter, and a Mr Sweetman thought that the former wardmaster should not be reinstated, but a decision was put off for another week. Then, when they did get around to it, a somewhat heated discussion followed during which Molly asked Sweetman why he was going behind their backs regarding Kelly's reinstatement, to which he replied that he did not want the matter reported by the press. However, Sweetman buckled under the pressure from Molly and other guardians who did not share his views and Kelly got his job back after a show of hands.<sup>157</sup> With regard to Dr Hayes, it was to be September 1917 before he too was reinstated when he was appointed as medical officer to Lusk Dispensary district.<sup>158</sup>

### **Molly was no shrinking violet**

It would seem to be fair, from the narrative thus far, to suggest that Molly was no shrinking violet, seemingly in any circumstances and certainly not when it came to her fellow members on the Balrothery Board of Guardians. And, in that regard, she was again on the attack at a board meeting on or before 18 October 1919, but this time she picked an argument with Col. Woods, the owner of the Milverton Estate, Skerries, where his transgression, in her opinion, had been to describe the republican prisoners then held at Cork jail, as murderers. Molly's immediate response caused him to retract his remarks and apologise for having uttered them in the first place.<sup>159</sup> Whatever about being on the receiving end of her ire, the question might nevertheless be asked whether Hayes and Kelly would have gotten their jobs back had she not been so vociferous in their defence? Maybe, or then again, maybe not. In regard to assisting the Sinn Fein Party whose candidate was Frank Lawless, of Saucerstown, Molly Adrien and Miss Begley had, on 3 January 1919, gone to Garristown by motorcar with bundles of election

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<sup>156</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 17 May 1919.

<sup>157</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 27 Jan. 1917.

<sup>158</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 17 Sept. 1917.

<sup>159</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 18 Oct. 1919.



literature for distribution ostensibly among the members of the Sinn Fein Club in that village and its wider hinterland.<sup>160</sup>

The year 1920 was to be a traumatic one because among other things there had arrived in Ireland in March, an auxiliary police force which subsequently became known and despised as the ‘Black and Tans’. A large number of these were to be stationed at Gormanston Military Camp in County Meath. Meanwhile, at a guardian’s meeting in the March-April period, Molly, spoke about the terrible conditions that hunger-striking prisoners were then enduring at Mountjoy prison. It was the case, that while she had wanted to speak further on that matter, she nevertheless hesitated because of her fear of saying too much.<sup>161</sup> Perhaps it had to do with the fact that because everything was recorded by a *Drogheda Independent* reporter that she did not want to leave herself open to a later charge of sedition!

### **Molly Adrien & Miss Lily Fogarty, MA, team-up as chair & vice-chair guardians in June 1920**

At an ordinary meeting of the Balrothery Board of guardian’s on Monday 21 June 1920, Molly Adrien was in the chair. Those also present were, L. Fogarty, Messrs. Wm. Ganly, M. Derham, C. Brown, F.J. Lawless, M.P., P. Kelly, G. Brennan, Jas. Woods, T. Fulham, P. Carr, and M.J. Derham. Molly had the following things to say at the meeting:

It was the first meeting of the Balrothery Board of guardians under the republican flag and she thought it well that before opening business the members should all realise their responsibility, and the better to do so she thought they should place themselves under the protection of God Almighty. “Thank God!” ... “We are all of the same religious belief and can ask the divine Lord to direct us in our work. There was a time when religion was banned from meetings of the board but, thank God! Now it is not so and the Blessed Virgin to help us and say a ‘Hail Mary’ with that object”. All the members standing then joined in the recitation of the “Hail Mary”.<sup>162</sup>

There was also a discussion about a surcharge arising from the payment of a salary paid to Dr. Richard Hayes. Molly, for one had set herself against paying it. In the event, after a proposal was put forward to not pay it the motion was passed unanimously by those present. A few

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<sup>160</sup> Róisín Durham, Derek Neylon, Maura O’Connor and Billy Reynolds (eds), *Olden Times in Garristown* (Garristown Historical Society, 2000), p. 93.

<sup>161</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 6 Mar. 17 Apr. 1920.

<sup>162</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 26 June 1920.

days later, on Thursday 17 June 1920, the annual meeting of the Balrothery board of guardians, and the Balrothery Rural District Council (RDC) met, and those in attendance were, Wm. Ganly (chairman), Miss L. Fogarty, M.A.; Messrs. D. Brophy, M. Derham, P. Mathews, T. Monks, M.J. Derham, C. Brown, F.J. Lawless, M.P.; M. Brady, J. Woods, G. Brennan, T. Fulham and P. Kelly. The last-mentioned was elected to the RDC chairmanship, while on a proposal by P. Mathews, seconded by Brown, Molly Adrien became the chairman of the Balrothery Board of guardian's, a decision which was unanimous. While it was the case that Molly had been the first and only female guardian on the board, that situation changed on that same day when Lily Fogarty was elected as Molly's second in command as vice-chairman. On welcoming Lily, Molly said she believed that both of them would work well together, promising that 'Gods poor would be well looked after'. When she said that two women would do the work of two, or even ten men any day, her words were received by applause and laughter in equal measure'. In turn, Fogarty proposed a resolution that the board should give its 'allegiance to Dail Eireann' and she did so in the Irish language before the motion was seconded by Lawless and was then unanimously carried. Another proposal was put forward by M.J. Derham, that the meetings of the RDC should be held at two o'clock and to henceforth be followed by the Balrothery guardian's meetings at the same place, i.e., the workhouse office.<sup>163</sup>

In the month of August 1920, an aeroplane had flown low over the Balrothery Union's workhouse and dropped a package for the British Army officer in charge there. The drop was so precise that the object landed on the boardroom roof necessitating a climb by someone to retrieve it.<sup>164</sup> The business in hand at a meeting in that month centred upon a request from the Local Government Board for access to the Union's books which then had to be decided upon. Molly was against it and explained that as they had sworn an oath of allegiance to Dáil Éireann that they should not be beholding to any other authority even the LGB.<sup>165</sup> There followed a bit of ribaldry whereby the character of the president of the aforementioned board [Sir Hamar Greenwood, Bart., Irish Chief Secretary, Apr. 1920-Oct.1922, born, Ontario], a Canadian, was torn to shreds. When it was said that he was a former showman, Molly implied that he should have stuck at that job. He was not even a good clown said another, Molly retorted 'that we will treat him as a clown when speaking of him here'.<sup>166</sup> Other business dealt with at that meeting included the Belfast pogroms, and after a discussion, Molly said that it was clearly

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<sup>163</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 26 June 1920.

<sup>164</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 7 Aug. 1920.

<sup>165</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 30 Oct. 1920.

<sup>166</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 14 Aug., 30 Oct. 1920. *Thom's Directory*, 1920 (the chief secretary is ex-officio president of local government board), p. 756.

incongruous for a nationalist board like theirs to have its financial accounts in the hands of the Northern Bank, Balbriggan, which in turn had its headquarters in Belfast. Therefore, it was decided that a four-member delegation led by her should meet the bank manager with a view to closing the account forthwith.<sup>167</sup>

In September 1920, the Balrothery Guardians discovered that ‘all the financial and other books belonging to the Balrothery Guardians and District Council had been removed from the strong room without any discernible authorisation having been given. No one seemed to have any idea what had happened to them until, at another meeting, whereupon Molly informed those present that the papers were in safe custody in an unknown destination’.<sup>168</sup> It appeared that the board was satisfied with that explanation and other issues were then discussed instead. However, the question arises as to how Molly knew that the materials were safe? Unless, that is, she had been implicit in making the papers conveniently disappear for a while so that the LGB would not get them. It seems to have been a case of ask no questions and you will be told no lies situation. During that time, the military had occupied the workhouse from 5 July to 18 September 1920, which equated to a total of two and a half months.<sup>169</sup>

### **Molly’s response as chairman following the ‘Sack of Balbriggan’ in September 1920**

The town of Balbriggan was ransacked by the auxiliary police force known as the Black and Tans, in a reprisal for the killing of a Detective Bourke in a public house in the town on the evening of Monday 20 September 1920. In the hours that followed, the Tans ran amok and laid waste to parts of the town and many ordinary dwellings, and commercial buildings, and a hosiery factory which employed many townspeople were destroyed in an orgy of destruction. In the first light of the next day it was discovered that two local men, John Gibbons and James Lawless, the former a single man and the latter married with eight children had been brutally done to death and their maimed bodies had been left strewn across the street for others to find them in the morning. A press report on Friday 24 September, gave a summation of what had happened under a number of headings, i.e., ‘Balbriggan ruined’ and ‘Military inquest on victims’ and reported that ‘after the terrible disorder in Balbriggan on Monday night and Tuesday morning, when a police officer and two civilians lost their lives, the town was

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<sup>167</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 28 Aug. 1920.

<sup>168</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 18 Sept. 1920.

<sup>169</sup> National Archives of Ireland, BG 40 A. 147, MS Book, Balrothery Board of Guardians (Minute book, Apr. to Oct. 1920, pp 227, 403).

comparatively quiet on the Wednesday. However, business was completely at a standstill and few establishments were open to the townspeople who suffered deprivation as a result.<sup>170</sup>

A 'Balbriggan Relief Committee' got the old flour mill (Walshe's) on Dublin Street, set up to act as a temporary hostel for the town's refugees. Molly, as chairman of the Balrothery Board of Guardians, agreed to a request from the above-mentioned committee, for any surplus beds and bedding materials from the union's workhouse to be made available for use in the mill, where it was estimated that up to fifty homeless and destitute people needed to be catered for after the 'terrible calamity' which had befallen the town.<sup>171</sup>

### **Oath of allegiance to Dail Eireann**

At a guardian's meeting in late October, Molly, as chairman, in a discussion said that now 'we have taken an oath of allegiance to Dail Eireann that we should refer all matters to them for sanction'. However, other board members thought that it would not be practicable to do that and put it to Molly that the board should decide on such matters in its own way as was the usual procedure in the past.<sup>172</sup> Clearly, Molly, despite her strong position as chair of the meeting, did not get her way on that particular occasion.

In December 1920, after arriving for a meeting, Molly, the union's clerk and two pressmen were in attendance when a motor lorry laden with soldiers pulled up outside the union's office and quickly made their way into the building to secure it. After posting armed guards on the stairs to the boardroom, two officers burst in the room and under gunpoint, ordered all to place their hands on the table. They questioned the clerk as to the whereabouts of a member (Frank Lawless T.D., who was on the 'run' at that time) but when convinced that he knew nothing the soldiers left as quickly as they came.<sup>173</sup> Another guardian, William Ganly, writing in October 1930, related his experiences when attending meetings of the Balrothery Guardians and the Rural District Council, the following story:

In June 1920, the first day I entered the portals of the Union as a representative of the people, I was suddenly surrounded by about a dozen human monsters with blood-thirst beaming from their hideous faces and armed with fixed bayonets, and wearing the British King's uniform, whose vulgar so-called N.C.O. hissed out in very bad English what I interpreted to be "What the b----- h----- brings you here?" When told, corroborated by my agenda, he remained silently

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<sup>170</sup> *Derry Journal*, 24 Sept. 1920.

<sup>171</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 2 Oct. 1920. *Weekly Freeman's Journal*, 2 Oct. 1920.

<sup>172</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 30 Oct. 1920.

<sup>173</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 18 Dec. 1920.

ruminating, and carefully reading for about fifteen minutes, considering no doubt, which would be the best for his own safety or profit to allow me into the boardroom or send me to a better world. Finally, he ordered the retreat of his Majesty's forces leaving the enemy free to continue his march towards the boardroom. The work of our hardworking clerks were interrupted almost daily at that time by those stupid incidents. Not alone Balrothery Union, but the whole country is now in the hands of the Irish people I trust they will rise to the occasion. —W.G.<sup>174</sup>

William Ganly lived at Skerries, County Dublin. He took over the chairmanship of the Balrothery Board of Guardians in 1925, after Molly Adrien had resigned as a guardian in order to take up another job in the Garristown area. Ganly continued in the position of chairman until a meeting on Monday 13 October 1930, when the board of guardians and the Rural District Council ceased to exist in its former political structure. It was recorded in a press report that the rural councils and boards of guardians in County Dublin were the last to close in the Irish Free State.<sup>175</sup>

Returning to 1921, when one of the leading Cumann Na mBan Volunteers in Fingal was Miss Bridie Connolly, from Artane, County Dublin, kept records of the Cumann na mBan branches in north County Dublin, along with lists of their members in that year and in 1922 as well. These branches were at Portrane, Howth, Finglas, St. Margaret's, Skerries, Balbriggan, Blanchardstown and Artane. The situation, according to Connolly, remained more or less the same in 1922. With regard to Molly Adrien, though her name did not feature on the lists of members of the individual branches, it was nevertheless the case that she was alluded to in a letter sent by James Derham, then a member of Dail Eireann, and a member of 'F' Company IRA, whereby he requested that she accomplish some tasks for him, one of which was to 'clear off the Swords crowd including Miss A'.<sup>176</sup> Whatever was awry between Derham, the Swords 'crowd' and Molly Adrien, it was not made clear in his message and so it is difficult now, at this remove in time, to make any suggestion as to what was going on between them then. For her part, Molly remained staunchly republican and an active member of the Cumann na mBan right through the War of Independence and the Civil War period too. Her home is said to have served as a refuge for men on the run from the authorities where they received hospitality until they were ready to move on.<sup>177</sup> With respect to the Cumann na mBan organisation nationally, it was the case that it by and large its membership had chosen to support the anti-treaty side in

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<sup>174</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 18 Oct. 1930.

<sup>175</sup> *Irish Independent*, 12 Feb. 1930.

<sup>176</sup> Bridie Connolly Papers; Fingal archive; ref. AB 28766; letter of 2 May 1921.

<sup>177</sup> *Evening Herald*, 20 July 1949; *Drogheda Independent*, 2 May 1959.

the Civil War period, and continued to offer support to the irregular IRA fighters, especially those on the flying columns. In the case of Molly's support to those in the area where she lived, James Crenigan, in his B.M.H. W.S., 148, provided details which demonstrate that she was in his, and those others involved, thoughts when it came to who they could trust when seeking help on occasions such as the one described below. The time period was around April 1921:

An R.I.C., party was in the habit of traveling to the Naul and Finglas and other places in a motor car. It was believed that this party brought the pay of the Tans, if not the R.I.C., who were quartered in the local stations. It was decided to ambush the car and capture the arms and money. Information was received from Balbriggan, which was a good source for information and nearly always reliable, that the car would be proceeding to the Naul via Garristown on a certain day. We got a party together consisting of twelve men, armed with rifles, and spent a day in an ambush position at a place called the 'Yellow Furze' which was a good position and gave a good field of fire on to the road, the ground affording facilities for a quick retirement if necessary. The rifles we had in this operation and in the previous one, on the troop train, were those that had been captured in Collinstown Aerodrome. On this occasion, the enemy did not oblige us either.

On another occasion, we received information from Balbriggan again that the same car would be traveling to the Naul from Balbriggan, and we mobilised a party for the purpose of ambushing it at Ballyboughal. We had about twelve men from our area and a few men from the Naul to assist us, all armed with rifles and some revolvers and bombs. While still in position at Ballyboughal, word came that the car was not traveling, and we disbanded again. ... at about five o'clock that evening, Paddy Hamilton arrived and informed me that there had been a shooting affair in Ballyboughal and that Peter White was wounded. I immediately proceeded to Ballyboughal, but could not contact any of our men. I remained on the bridge, on the south side of the village, for some time, keeping the village under observation. After some time, Jack Shield, vice commandant of 2<sup>nd</sup> Fingal Battalion, and Thomas Murphy of Oldtown, and a Mrs O'Neill arrived. They informed me that White had gone into a public house in the village after we had demobilised that morning, and while he was there, a carload of R.I.C., the one we had been waiting for, pulled up at the door of the public house. An R.I.C. Sergeant, who had been stationed in Garristown and would recognise White, jumped down and rushed into the public house. White immediately pulled his gun, or revolver, from his pocket and shot the Sergeant dead. In making his escape with two other volunteers subsequently, the remainder of the police opened fire on them, and white was badly wounded. The R.I.C., dragged the body of the Sergeant out to the car and, having put it aboard, left the village immediately without finding

White. White was now lying, badly wounded, in the post office where some of the local folk had taken him when the police departed.

Our immediate concern was to get white away before a large force of Tans and R.I.C., would return, as we expected. Mrs O'Neill, who lived only a short distance away, volunteered to get a pony and trap and bring him to her father's place at Wyanstown, near Oldtown. White had been attended by a doctor and priest. I said that this method would be too slow, that we would have to get a car and that we would commandeer Mr Counihan's car for the job. The late Mr Counihan, afterwards a senator in the Irish Government, lived only a short distance away. My suggestion was agreed to, and we set out for Counihan's. On the way, we met Mr Counihan, he was on foot, and told him that we wanted his car. He said that he thought we were too late and that the R.I.C., and Tans would be back in the village before we would be back in his car. He stated that he had volunteered to give the car earlier in the day but could not get anyone to take it. He advised us to out of the area with all speed. We had other ideas, however. Shields, who had no coat, would go home for it, and would decide in the meantime what to do. I accompanied him. We dumped our bicycles where we were, and proceeded on foot to Shield's house. When we arrived there, the place was locked up, as Shield's mother was in the village attending to the wounded White. We went around to the back of the house to try and get in through a window, when we heard footsteps on the road outside. Next thing, we heard the noise of rifle butts battering down the door, and we immediately drew our guns and took to the fields.

The fields around here are fairly big and open, and we had not gone far when the enemy spotted us and opened fire on us. Shield's, who knew the place well, headed one way while Murphy, who was also with us, and I headed in the other direction. The enemy kept firing at us all the time, but their aim at running men was not good enough to hit us. Murphy and I jumped over a small stream and bank, and we lay down behind the bank. We observed that the Tans were following Shield's and seemed to be ignoring us. Shield's had no coat on, and was more easily kept in view. I had a parabellum pistol and Murphy a .45 revolver. We opened fire on them, which stopped them momentarily and gave Shield's a better chance of escaping. When we stopped firing, the enemy took up the chase of Shield's again. Between walking and crawling, we managed to get across the main road north of the village. The village and road were swarming with Tans, and it was miraculous how we got through. We got safely away across country towards the east. Shield's kept running until he became exhausted and could go no further. He threw himself into a dyke which was heavily covered with briars. The Tans searched this dyke up and down several times and fired volleys of shots into it, but Shield's was not hit. The Tans did not find him in the dyke.

Murphy and I proceed to Oldtown where we contacted the brigade intelligence officer, Tom Peppard, now living at Tallaght. We went to Miss Mollie Adrian [sic] and asked her, if she did not get word from us in the meantime, to go to Ballyboughal in the morning and find

out what had happened there, and to Shield's especially. We had given up hope of White escaping as he was incapable of moving owing to his wounds. Miss Adrain [sic] wanted to go there and then, but we restrained her from doing so. She had been with us, or rather the Fingal Brigade, under the late Tom Ashe during the 1916 Rebellion, when she acted as despatch rider and kept communications between the brigade and the G.P.O., in Dublin, as long as it was humanly possible to do so. She loved taking risks, doing what seemed impossible and always game for any adventure. About an hour after we had been with Miss Adrain [sic], Shield's arrived in the village of Oldtown, and we were glad to see him! He had remained concealed in the dyke until the Tans took their departure. White was captured by the Tans, but only lived until the following morning.<sup>178</sup>

### Extract 10: Molly's sworn statement

[Extract from] Sworn Statement of Miss Mary Adrien (File No. 152) made before Advisory Committee on 4 <sup>th</sup> December, 1936. <sup>179</sup> [Military Archives, Dublin]	
Would you get these messages from the O/C., or whom?	Mostly from the Captain.
What Company would this be?	Fingal. I refused a pension in 1922. I told James Derham that I did not want a pension when I had sufficient to live on as I had my job at the time. I said pension the boys who have been disabled and the dependents of those who fell in the fight. (Miss Adrien produces inscription of a bicycle presented to her in recognition of her work as despatch rider. Also, a letter sent her by Thomas Ashe).

<sup>178</sup> Military Archives, Dublin. B.M.H. W.S. 148, James Crenigan.

<sup>179</sup> Military Archives, Dublin.

WMSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>



**Fig. 6: Molly's image in 1929, taken by Dr. Brian A. Cusack, former dispensary doctor for Kilsallaghan and Oldtown** <sup>180</sup>



This photograph of Molly Adrien taken by Dr. Cusack, in *c.* 1929, outside her home 'Garden-view' in Oldtown, when she was about fifty-six years old. Dr. Cusack, whose Bureau of Military History statement No.736, gave it that 'he was a Galway T.D., before he took up the position as medical officer at Oldtown, in *c.* 1920. He had been a member of the I.R.B., at London, in 1903, and a member of the Irish Volunteers at Galway, in 1913'. The boys in the photograph were his sons, Brian, Pearse (Fr Aidan O.C.S.O.), and Michael. The first child's godfather had been Cathal Brugha. The Cusack's had married in Dublin in 1916, before going to live at Bath, England. <sup>181</sup> The

photograph was provided to the author by Dr Cusack's daughter Catherine Cusack, who lived at Rush, County Dublin, where her father later practiced medicine.

### **Molly's brother, Patrick, died in South America in September 1929**

Patrick was Molly's older brother who had been born at Micknanstown, County Meath, on 11 September 1872, the year before her birth. He had been educated at Ampleforth College in

<sup>180</sup> Thanks are due to Tom Byrne, Wyanstown, Oldtown, for pointing the author towards the photograph of Molly Adrien in a publication by the Parents Association, *Souvenir Booklet commemorating the golden jubilee of St. Mary's National School, Oldtown*, (Apr. 1997), p, 13. The boys in the photograph were the Cusack brothers, Brian, Pearse (Fr. Aidan O.C.S.O.), and Michael (all were sons of Dr. Cusack). Cusack was medical doctor at Oldtown Dispensary for a time too.

<sup>181</sup> Military Archives, Dublin. B.M.H. W.S. 736, Brian A. Cusack, Dr.

England, in 1889. The remainder of his life is a mystery but a press report gave it that ‘Adrien (Buenos Aires)—December 22, 1929, ... Patrick, son of Doctor Edward Adrien, late of Balbriggan; fortified by rites of the Catholic Church’.<sup>182</sup>

### Molly & the Dublin County Council elections in 1930

With regard to Molly, it was the case that in September 1930, her name was among the fifty-eight candidates nominated for one of the 24 seats on the Dublin County Council, where contests were to be held in each of the four areas into which the county is divided. Her name is shown in table 4 below.

**Table 3: The four areas in 1930 election for Dublin Co. Council**<sup>183</sup>

No.1 area	Finglas, Balbriggan; 7 seats; 10,600 votes.
No.2 area	Blanchardstown, Castleknock, Celbridge; 4 seats; 4,800 votes.
No.3 area	Rathdown No.1, Whitechurch, Tallaght; 5 seats; 7,035 votes.
No.4 area	Dun Laoghaire, Blackrock, Killiney [sic], and Dalkey; 8 seats; 12,593 votes, or total of 35,028.

**Table 4: Candidates & political affiliations for 1930 election for Dublin Co. Council**<sup>184</sup>

Fianna Fail	<b>Mary Adrien</b> , Oldtown, formerly chairman of Balrothery guardian’s; J. Richardson, Skerries; Jim Tunney, Tolka, Finglas; and C. Murray, Skerries. (4 seats)
Labour	P.J. Curran, Balbriggan; and H.J. McCormick, Malahide. (2 seats)
No party ticket	C. Murray, Skerries; H. Dardis, (do.); Wm. Ganley [sic], (do.). (3 seats)
Independent	A. Williams, insurance agent, Skerries. (1 seat)
Agricultural League	P.J. Kettle, Swords; A. Mooney, Garristown; J. Monks, Rush; P. Belton, Belfield Park; J. Kennedy, Malahide. (5 seats)
Farmers Union	J. Dickie, Swords; Wm. Butler, (do.). (2 seats)
W.U.I.	J. Kelly, vice-chairman, North Dublin RDC, Ballymun; P. McLoughlin, Swords. (2 seats)
Others	P.J. Fogarty, clerk, Swords; J.T. Ennis, farmer, Curragh, Naul; Ml. Lawlor, labourer, Finglas; A. William, insurance agent, Skerries. (4 seats)
-----	Total No. seats, 23.

The above nominations were listed in the press on 17 September 1930, however, on the 19<sup>th</sup> instant, another press insertion gave it that Molly had withdrawn her nomination. Her action

<sup>182</sup> Irish Genealogy online. [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Civil record for the birth of Patrick Adrien, in 1872. Group registration No. 11879790, SR district/reg. area, Drogheda. (Accessed 16 July 2015). Catholic Parish Registers at the NLI. [registers.nli.ie](http://registers.nli.ie) Ardcaith baptism for Patrick Adrien on microfilm 04180/03. (Accessed 18 Sept. 2015). Ampleforth College, north Yorkshire, England. [www.monlib.org.uk/students/list1866.hlm](http://www.monlib.org.uk/students/list1866.hlm) (Accessed 21 Sept. 2015). *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 13 Sept. 1872. *Irish Independent*, 5 Feb. 1930. *Weekly Irish Times*, 5 Feb. 1930.

<sup>183</sup> *Irish Independent*, 17 Sept. 1930.

<sup>184</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 13 Sept. 1930. *Irish Independent*, 17 Sept. 1930.

saw the only lady candidate in the contest for a Dublin County Council seat removed in one fell swoop. There was no explanation provided for her decision and so it must remain a mystery for now. In any case, for those who had continued on as candidates in the election they would learn their fate when the votes were counted on 1 October 1930.<sup>185</sup>

### **The closures of the Balrothery Board of Guardians & Rural District Council in October 1930**

The closure of the RDC, prompted Molly to write a letter to the editor of the *Drogheda Independent*, on 25 October, which went thus:

Dear Sir. Having seen the report in our last issue of the final meeting of the Balrothery District Council, and all the nice things said by members and tributes paid to staff, etc., all, I must say, very well deserved (and I have good reason to know, having been eleven years a member of said board and council, and during all that time was never absent from a meeting, even when, as chairman, it fell to my lot to preside, on several occasions, bayonets, tin hats, and Webley's, for protection (??) during the numerous raids on the board room), so my knowledge of the work done, and the efficiency of the staff, is by no means cursory, still while heartily endorsing, every word that was said in praise of every individual official, I feel prompted, by the merest justice, to say, that, in my humble opinion there was one who deserved (what I feel was quite inadvertently and unintentionally withheld from him) more than passing comment for the fifty-one and a half years that he held the office of clerk to Balrothery, and helped by his advice and ability to bring the reputation of Balrothery to the pinnacle of local government administration, for after all, the membership varied very much during that lengthened period, but the man at the helm' Mr. James Stack, steered throughout a straight and even course, and to him, more than to any individual official in Ireland, is due the thanks of every ratepayer in the district, for few outsiders could realise how wholeheartedly and conscientiously he toiled, day in, day out, at his post, always with the interest of the public at heart and the watchword of economy beside him. I must apologise to Mr. Stack (who, I am glad to say, is still with us, enjoying a well-earned rest) for using his name in this connection without consulting him, but I knew if I did, that he would probably veto any allusion to his great work in the past, and, to me, who was so conversant with that work, a tribute to him was the only thing lacking or over-estimated in the report. I am, dear Sir, yours truly, Mary Adrien.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> *Evening Herald*, 19 Sept. 1930. *Drogheda Independent*, 27 Sept. 1930.

<sup>186</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 25 Oct. 1930.

#### **Chapter four: Molly's long-drawn-out quest for a Military Service Pension**

By 1934, Molly had made an application to the Department of Defence, submitted on 22 November, seeking a Military Service Pension Certificate. Her pension details, along with many other men and women who gave military service during the so-called troubled times, encompassing the 1916 Rising, the War of Independence, and the Civil War, have recently become available to view online from the Military Archives, Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin. In Molly's case her personal details were accessed from that source and where three tranches of scanned documents on her history were made into PDF digital format, i.e., WMSP34REF152; and, W34E311; and, WDP14100. On the website, an introductory page gave it that her file reference was MSP34REF152. In it were details to the effect that her 'Civilian occupation' was as 'Secretary on [the] Balrothery Old Age Pensions Committee'. Her military service in 1916 was at the 'General Post Office, O'Connell [Sackville] Street, Dublin; Finglas, County Dublin; Coolock, County Dublin; Ballyedwardstown, Ashbourne, County Meath'. Her service was with 'Cumann na mBan with the Fifth Battalion, commanded by Thomas Ashe'.

She had made a claim for a Military Service Pension and was subsequently awarded same on 21 February 1938, at grade E. However, the original award of '3 and 16/21 years' service' was appealed against and was subsequently raised to '3 and 3/7 years' service'. Molly's file had to do with the period from '12 December 1934-13 June 1950'. Further information from the same page went:

File relates to Mary Adrien's service with Cumann na mBan during the week of 23 to 29 April 1916 and her subsequent service with that organisation from 1919 to 1921 during the War of Independence. During the Easter Rising Mary Adrien as well as serving in north County Dublin and County Meath carried despatches between Thomas Ashe and the Irish Volunteers General Headquarters in the GPO. File includes: signed typed and handwritten letters/statements regarding Mary Adrien's service and pension application from Margaret M. Pearse, Vera MacDonnell (writing on behalf of the Minister of Finance), Richard Hayes, Mícheál Ó Loinsigh (Michael Lynch), W.A. Honohan, Rúnaí Aire (Private Secretary), Minister for Finance—writing on behalf of the Minister for Finance, John Shields, Joseph Kelly and Brian A. Cusack; typed transcript of sworn statement made by Mary Adrien on 4 December 1936 before the Advisory Committee, Military Service Pensions Act, 1934; handwritten notes of evidence given regarding Mary Adrien by Loo Kennedy and unnamed Fingal Brigade officers; material

relating to subject's receipt of a Special Allowance under the Army Pensions Acts; and reference to claimant's brother.<sup>187</sup>

Molly submitted her application for an award of a Military Service Pension Certificate to the Minister for Defence on 21 November 1934, which was close to the department's deadline of 31 December 1934. The form encompasses some nineteen pages for the entry of applicant's details, however, in Molly's case, many pages remained blank. In any event, the details which were inserted by her were deemed sufficient. The salient information was set out in a question and answer format on the document. The proviso set out at the beginning was that 'applicants whose qualifying service in the forces was Pre-Truce only'. Molly put her military service 'in the week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1916' had begun on 'Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> April, at 8 a.m. to Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April 1916'. She had rendered it in the 'Fingal area and in the G.P.O., every day except on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>'. She had been under the command of 'Thomas Ashe' when 'acting as servant and despatch carrier'. In addition, Molly put it that 'my military services outside above and assisting our M.O., with attending to the wounded, were NIL'. When asked about any absence from service and if so, what was the cause? She stated that her answer was 'None (thank God)'. When it came to those who could verify her statement up to that point in time, she gave the name of 'Dr Richard Francis Hayes, Sandymount (Rings End dispensary district)'. Hayes was 'Batt. M.O., Easter Week 1916'. Under the heading general information, Molly put it that 'for the first critical date [the] Rank E' [applied]. The person testifying for that input was 'John Shields, Ballyboughal (late O.C. Oldtown Camp, County Dublin). She had made it clear on the document that 'I made no application whatever before now, but I refused to allow my name to be submitted for pension under the 1923 Act'. When asked about being in receipt of any payments 'under the Unemployment Assistance Act, 1933' her reply was 'I have been registered at [the unemployment] Bureau in Balbriggan, since December 1932 but have not got employment, nor received assistance from any source'. And neither had she received any income from any pension up till then and her answer was No. As to income from other sources she wrote that there were 'no details to furnish'. Before completing the document, she entered in a space allocated for additional information that 'subsequent to Easter Week 1916, I was in constant touch with, and at the service of the Fingal Brigade unit encamped here at Oldtown, for messages, despatches, up to the 11<sup>th</sup> July 1921'. At the documents end, her signature was

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<sup>187</sup> Military Archives, Dublin. MSP34REF152. <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

witnessed by ‘Brian A. Cusack, M.D., Clonmethan Lodge, Oldtown’ who countersigned and dated it on 21 Nov. 1934’.<sup>188</sup>

As already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter it was pointed out that Molly was unhappy with the terms of the first pension awarded to her and her letter below, sent on 12 December 1934 provided an indication of her feelings on the matter. She engaged with the Department of Defence, as per the following:

A Cara. Re. to my claim to service certificate (duly acknowledged by you by today’s post) I beg to state that it has been represented to me that, representation and service on public boards during the term of office of first and second Dail are included in the [pension] act of 1934. In that connection I beg to state that I was elected to the Balrothery Board of guardians and District Council in June 1920, in the republican interest, took the oath of allegiance to Dail Eireann, and despite military occupation of the former workhouse on the premises of which all meetings were held, (frequently to the accompaniment of steel helmets and Webley’s, fixed bayonets, etc.). I never missed a meeting, as the minutes of that period can prove, but carried on the duties imposed on me as chairman up to June 1925. I did not stand for election that year owing to the fact that in 1921, I had been appointed as School Attendance Officer for this (Garristown) area (which post was abolished in 1926) but which rendered me ineligible to stand in 1925. I may add that although the distance to & from Balrothery was 14 miles, no traveling nor other expenses were allowed during the period under which I allude and make claim (if such is included in the act!). Mise, Maire Ni Dreain (Mary Adrien).<sup>189</sup>

The matter rested there until September 1935, when a piece of correspondence from Margaret Mary Pearse (sister of Patrick and Willie who were executed after the Easter Rising), went:

A Bhean Usal, I am desired by Mr. Aiken to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13<sup>th</sup> instant, in connection with the applications of Messrs, Nicholas Jackman [St Enda’s, Rathfarnham], and, and John Hynes [Lusk], and Miss Adrien [Oldtown], under the Military Service Pensions Act, 1934, and to state that all three applications have been referred for report to the referee and Advisory Committee appointed under the act. I am to add that the circumstances of the applicants have been brought to the notice of the referee with a view to

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<sup>188</sup> Military Archives, Dublin.

WMSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

<sup>189</sup> Military Archives, Dublin.

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having their claims dealt with at as early a date as possible. Mise, le meas, Rúnaí Aire. Rúnaí Aire.<sup>190</sup>

In connection with the above but on a separate page in the same file it was stated that ‘Hynes is in very poor circumstances. Margaret Pearse was again active on Molly’s case on 13 September, where she wrote ‘as to Miss Adrien, I do hope her case is not to be left till all the men have been settled with. She is a most refined lady, just eking out a bare existence, & using every spare moment to work for the good of Co. Dublin. She certainly saw & did real military work & I fear her health is beginning to fail. Sincerely M. M. Pearse’.<sup>191</sup> Further details about Margaret Pearse can be had from the ‘Centre for advancement of women’s politics’.<sup>192</sup> Over the period of years where Molly fought for an improved pension award, there were several persons who wrote letters of reference for her cause. These will be examined in chronological sequence. In the meantime, when Vera MacDonnell, wrote to Éamon de Burca, at the Department of Defence, on 25 Samhain [Nov.] 1936. She wrote:

Dear Éamon, the minister has written to the Minister for Defence asking that the claim of Miss Adrien of Garden-view, Oldtown, Co. Dublin, under the Military Service Pensions Act, 1934, should be expedited, and he has asked me to send a note to you in the case. Miss Adrien is in difficulties at present as regards payment of Rates. The only income she has is her salary as secretary of the Old Age Pension Committee. Could you possibly bring forward her claim and have it fixed up? Yours sincerely, Vera MacDonnell’.<sup>193</sup>

With regard to the surname Pearse, it was the case that in February 1934, Molly Adrien was the honorary secretary of a Fianna Fail Cumann at Oldtown, which was named after William Pearse, who had been a brother of Patrick, and who like him, had been executed after the 1916 rebellion. She had acted in that capacity at the annual meeting where Dr. Brian Cusack, who was the cumann president and had been involved in one way or another for the fourteen years that he had lived in that village. He had tendered his resignation as he was being transferred to the Lusk Dispensary district.<sup>194</sup>

<sup>190</sup> Military Archives, Dublin. W34E131MARYADRIEN.pdf. <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

<sup>191</sup> Military Archives, Dublin. MSP34REF152. <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx> & 34E113; DP14100). (Letter, from Vera MacDonnell, dated 25 Nov. 1936).

<sup>192</sup> Centre for the advancement of women in politics.

[http://www.gub.ac.uk/cawp/Irish%20bios/TDs\\_2.htm#mmpearse](http://www.gub.ac.uk/cawp/Irish%20bios/TDs_2.htm#mmpearse) (Accessed, 16 Aug. 2014)

<sup>193</sup> Military Archives, Dublin. MSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

<sup>194</sup> *Irish Press*, 12 Feb. 1934.

Another plea came from Richard Hayes, who wrote on 1 December 1936, that ‘I wish to state that Miss M. Adrien, Oldtown, Co. Dublin, acted as a daily emissary between the headquarters of the Fifth Batt. (Dublin Brigade I.V.), and General H-Quarters at the G.P.O., during Easter Week 1916. In that capacity she was instrumental in keeping up communications between the 2 headquarters. She also acted as director [smudged word] of Cumann na mBan activities locally at that time’.<sup>195</sup> Another man, the former officer commanding of the Fingal Brigade, Michael Lynch, whose address was then 136 North Circular Road, Dublin, wrote to the secretary of the Military Service Pensions Board in support of Molly on 3 December 1936. He wished ‘to certify’ that Miss M Adrien, Oldtown, Co. Dublin, was a member of Cumann na mBan in Fingal throughout the entire period from 1917 until July 1921, and was always available for duty with the I.R.A., when called upon. During the strenuous days of the conscription crisis early in 1918, she devoted all her energies and the greater part of her time in helping the I.R.A., in its preparations to resist that measure. I know from personal experience that during the two periods when I commanded that area (1917-18 and 1920-21) she was a most active member. I have been assured, and can testify that her service during the entire period 1917-21 was unbroken. Míchéal Ó Loinsigh, ex o/c Fingal Brigade.<sup>196</sup>

As to what effect these interventions had, a clue came in a letter dated 8 December 1936 which showed that the Departments point of view was explained by this letter headed ‘Rúnaí Aire, Oifig an Aire Airgid. I am desired by Mr. Aiken to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25<sup>th</sup> ultimo in connection with the application of Miss Mary Adrien, Garden-view, Oldtown, for a Service Certificate under the terms of the Military Service Pensions Act, 1934, and to state that the referee, to whom this claim was transmitted, has not as yet issued a report on the case, Your minister’s representations have, however, been transmitted to the referee for whatever action is possible. Rúnaí Aire. Rúnaí, Oifig an Réiteóra. The representations of the minister for finance are transmitted herewith. Rúnaí Aire’.<sup>197</sup> More time elapsed before Dr Brian A. Cusack, of Lusk House, Lusk, put pen to paper on 26 May 1937, and wrote that ‘Miss Molly Adrien gave continual service to the Irish Republican Army until the outbreak of the Civil War. I have personal knowledge of this from November 1920 until the outbreak of the Civil War. Not only did she give personal service but her home was also made use of also throughout this period. [signed] Brian A. Cusack, formerly M.O., of Kilsallaghan’.<sup>198</sup> Three

<sup>195</sup> Military Archive, Dublin. MSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://msearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

<sup>196</sup> Military Archive, Dublin. MSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://msearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

<sup>197</sup> Military Archives, Dublin. MSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://msearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

<sup>198</sup> Military Archives, MSPC. M. Adrien file, MSP34REF152; & 34E113; DP14100).



days later, Joseph P. Kelly, of Lusk, wrote ‘This is to certify that Miss. Adrien, Oldtown, Co. Dublin, rendered continuous service from Easter Week 1916 to July 1921. During the period 1919/20 in my capacity as Adjutant, Fingal Brigade, I had personal knowledge of her carrying despatches & messages relative to I.R.A., activity within the area and that her house was open to us at any time’.<sup>199</sup> John Shields, Commandant 11 [2<sup>nd</sup>] Battalion, 8<sup>th</sup> Fingal Brigade whose address was Ballyboughal, wrote on 31 May 1937, that ‘I, the undersigned can certify that Miss Mary Adrien was at the service of the I.R.A., from its formation, as despatch rider, her services were always available in that capacity, and her house for the use & accommodation of the members when required’.<sup>200</sup>

A response from the Department of Defence dated 11 June 1937, went ‘A Chara, I am desired by Mr. Aiken to acknowledged receipt of your letter of 1<sup>st</sup> instance, in connection with the appeal of Miss Mary Adrien, Garden-view, Oldtown, Co. Dublin, against the findings of the referee on her application under the Military Service Pensions Act, 1934, and to state that the matter has been brought to the notice of the referee who is primarily concerned. Mise, le meas, Rúnáí Aire. [Attached was] Miss Margaret M. Pearse, T.D., Tigh Laighean, Baile Átha Cliath. Rúnáí do’n Réiteóir. Cuirtear Chughat. Issued on 11 June 1937, by Rúnáí Aire’.<sup>201</sup> However, Molly was clearly unhappy with the pace of her appeal and she wrote again on 18 February 1938, as follows and where she underlined some words:

A Chara, the enclosed attached speaks for themselves. My sole source of income to feed, clothe and keep house for my brother and self, is what is paid to me as secretary to Balrothery Old Age Pension Committee, i.e., £32-7s-6d per annum, and you will see how impossible it is for me to meet this liability (much as I should wish to), out of that, the increased cost of essentials this winter has barely given us an existence, which cannot be called living & this was the only course open to me to avoid the additional costs of going to court, so, please, pardon the (apparent) liberty I have taken on the grounds that necessity needs no law. With many apologies and thanks for former interest in my pension claim. Mise Mollie Ni Dreain [Adrien]. [Her letter was] received on 21 Feb. 1938.<sup>202</sup>

<sup>199</sup> [www.militaryarchives.ie](http://www.militaryarchives.ie) M. Adrien file, MSP34REF152; & 34E113; DP14100). (Letter, from Joseph P. Kelly, dated 29 May 1937).

<sup>200</sup> [www.militaryarchives.ie](http://www.militaryarchives.ie) M. Adrien file, MSP34REF152; & 34E113; DP14100). (Letter, from John Shields, Ballyboughal, dated 31 May 1937).

<sup>201</sup> Military Archives, Dublin. W34E131MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://msearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

<sup>202</sup> Military Archives, Dublin. W34E1311MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://msearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

On this occasion the reply was quickly dispatched on 26 February which told Molly ‘A Chara, I am directed by the Minister for Defence to acknowledge the receipt of your further letter of the 18<sup>th</sup> instant and enclosures in connection with your application for a Service Certificate under the Military Service Pension, Act, 1934, and to state that the referee, to whom your claim was transmitted, has not as yet issued a report on your case. I am to add that pending the issue of a favorable report from the referee no action can be taken towards payment of pension. The enclosures to your letter are returned herewith. Mise, le meas ... Rúnáidhe’.<sup>203</sup> Further news came on 4 March 1938, from the Department of Defence in a letter stating that ‘I am directed by the Minister for Defence to state that a service certificate under section 10 (2) of the act has been granted to ---Mary Adrien, Garden-view, Oldtown, Co. Dublin’. This was based on the findings of the referee, as contained in his report which is attached. The Minister now proposes, with the sanction of the Minister of Finance, and in accordance with the terms of section 11 of the act, to grant Mary Adrien, a pension. The details were that ‘total service for pension purposes as defined by the second schedule of the act, and certified by the referee—3 years and 16/21 parts of a further year. Grade of rank for pension purposes as defined by section 4 (1) and the first schedule of the act, and certified by the referee-- rate of pension per year of service as defined by section 11 (4) and the second schedule of the act £5. Total pension payable per annum as from the 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1934-- £18-16-2. Rúnáí.’<sup>204</sup>

**Table 5: Molly’s Military Service Pension application**

Military Service Pensions Act, 1934 Service certificate		
In the matter of the application of... Mary Adrien, Garden-view, Oldtown, Co. Dublin... for a Service Certificate in accordance with the terms of the Military Service Pensions Act, 1934, and the Regulations made thereunder, Whereas the Minister for Defence has taken into consideration the report of the referee appointed under the Act on the application. This is to certify that the said... Mary Adrien... has tendered service in the Forces and during the periods as set out as follows: --		
Service period prescribed in the Act	Forces in which Active Service was rendered	Duration of Active Service during each of the prescribed periods as established to the satisfaction of the referee
1. The week commencing on the 23rd day of April, 1916.	Cumann na mBan	6/7 of entire period
2. The period comprising: -- (a) the period commencing on the 1 <sup>st</sup> day of April, 1916, and ending on the 22 <sup>nd</sup> day of April, 1916, and (b)	Cumann na mBan	

<sup>203</sup> Military Archives, Dublin. W34E131MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

<sup>204</sup> [www.militaryarchive.ie](http://www.militaryarchive.ie) W34E131MARYADRIEN.pdf. (Form, M.SP.34/7, & 34SP/131, dated 4 Mar. 1938).

the period commencing on the 30 <sup>th</sup> day of April, 1916, and ending on the 31 <sup>st</sup> day of March, 1917.		
3. The period commencing on the 1 <sup>st</sup> day of April, 1917, and ending on the 31 <sup>st</sup> day of March, 1918.	Cumann na mBan	
4. The period commencing on the 1 <sup>st</sup> day of April, 1918, and ending on 31 <sup>st</sup> day of March, 1919.	Cumann na mBan	
5. The period commencing on the 1 <sup>st</sup> day of April, 1919, and ending on 31 <sup>st</sup> day of March, 1920.	Cumann na mBan	I/12 entire period
6. The period commencing on the 1 <sup>st</sup> day of April, 1920, and ending on 31 <sup>st</sup> day of March, 1921.	Cumann na mBan	I/12 entire period
7. The period commencing on the 1 <sup>st</sup> day of April, 1921, and ending on the 11 <sup>th</sup> day of July, 1921.	Cumann na mBan	I/12 entire period
8. The period commencing on the 12 <sup>th</sup> day July, 1921, and ending on the 30 <sup>th</sup> day of June, 1922.		
9. The period commencing on the 1 <sup>st</sup> day of July, 1922, and ending on 31 <sup>st</sup> day of March, 1923.		
10. The period commencing on the 1 <sup>st</sup> day of April, 1923, and ending on the 30 <sup>th</sup> day of September, 1923.		
And that for the purpose of the Act the grade of rank of the said applicant is grade---E---dated this 9 <sup>th</sup> day of March, 1938. Rúnáí, Roinn Cosanta. <sup>205</sup>		

Another communication arrived on 11 March which went ‘a Chara, I am directed by the minister for Defence to refer to your application under the provisions of the Mil. Ser. Pen. Act, 1934, for a service certificate and to forward herewith the certificate granted as a result of that application. You are requested to acknowledge its receipt in the enclosed form and to return the form as soon as possible. An addressed envelope, which need not be stamped, is enclosed for the purpose. This certificate should very carefully be preserved, and in this connection your attention is directed to the terms of section 14 of the act printed overleaf. A communication will be sent you at an early date regarding the granting of a Military Service Pension. Mise, le meas, Rúnáí’.<sup>206</sup> Molly wasted no time in following the above advice and on 12 March 1938, she told them that ‘I hereby acknowledge the receipt of the service certificate granted in my case by the Minister for Defence under the provisions of the Military Service Pensions Act, 1934. Signed by Mary Adrien ... with grateful thanks’.<sup>207</sup> The confirmation of her award after

<sup>205</sup> Military Archives, Dublin. W34E131MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>

<sup>206</sup> [www.militaryarchive.ie](http://www.militaryarchive.ie) W34E131MARYADRIEN.pdf. (Forms, 34SP/131, & M.S.P.34/6).

<sup>207</sup> [www.militaryarchive.ie](http://www.militaryarchive.ie) W34E131MARYADRIEN.pdf. (Forms, M.P.S.34/6A, & 34sp/131).

her successful appeal came on 18 March 1938, where further details provided was ‘Rúnaí, I am directed by the Minister of Finance to refer to your minute of the 9<sup>th</sup> instant (No.34SP/131), intimating that a certificate of military service has been granted pursuant to section 10 (2) of the military service pensions act, 1934, to Mary Adrien, ... I am to state that the Minister sanctions the grant under section 11 of the act of a pension at the rate of eighteen pounds, sixteen shillings and two pence a year, to Mary Adrien, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1934, inclusive. The return of the referee is returned forthwith’.<sup>208</sup>

After a time, Molly received under the Army Pensions Acts, 1923 to 1937, a sum of between £13 and £14 per annum and to be spread over the period from 27 April 1943 to 1 April 1945. However, such figures are meaningless to the reader of today, but clearly it was insufficient in 1943, because of the difficulty in making ends meet, she applied for a ‘special allowance’ from the Department of Defence and subsequently got a small additional amount to her income from her job as secretary of the Balrothery Old Age Pensions Committee from which work she was paid £32-7-4 per annum. On 10 September 1945, P.J. Burke, Esq., T.D., received a letter at his home at 88 Portrane Avenue, Donabate, from the Fingal Old I.R.A. Men’s Welfare Society, Executive Committee, at Swords, which went:

A Cara, I have been requested to bring to your notice the case of Miss M. Adrain [sic] of Oldtown, who is a member of this society. From information supplied to us Miss Adrain’s (sole income is £17 odd, plus whatever honorarium she may receive as secretary to the [Balrothery] Old Age pensions Committee. She lives with her brother who, apparently, has no income whatsoever. Miss Adrian’s service was rendered during Easter Week 1916, and this society feels that she is entitled to further consideration of her case by the Department of Defence within the terms of recent legislation. I shall be glad, therefore, if the Minister of Defence, with a view to granting to Miss Adrain the maximum allowance to which she may be entitled. Mise le meas, Rúnaí.<sup>209</sup>

Burke, in turn wrote to Oscar Traynor, Minister for Defence, saying that:

I am enclosing a letter I received from Mr C. McGough, Hon. Sec. Fingal Brigade Old I.R.A. Welfare Society, (Swords Branch) regarding Miss M. Adrian [sic], Oldtown, Co. Dublin, and

<sup>208</sup> [www.militaryarchive.ie](http://www.militaryarchive.ie) W34E131MARYADRIEN.pdf. (Form, P.20/298/38, date 18 Mar. 1938).

<sup>209</sup> [www.militaryarchive.ie](http://www.militaryarchive.ie) W34E131MARYADRIEN.pdf.

I would be obliged if you would investigate the matter with a view to having Miss Adrian's pension increased. Thanking you in anticipation. I remain, yours faithfully, PJ Burke.<sup>210</sup>

A reply to the above came from PJ. Furlong, Rúnaí Príobháideach, on 9 October 1945, to the effect that:

A Cara, I am desired by the Minister for Defence to refer to your recent representations and to the letter forwarded by you from Mr. C. McGough, Hon. Secretary, Fingal Old I.R.A. Men's Welfare Society, Swords, in connection with the pension under the Military Service Pensions Act, 1934, of Miss M. Adrien, Oldtown, Co. Dublin, and to say that the report of the referee as shown on Miss Adrien's Service Certificate is, in accordance with the terms of the Act, final, conclusive and binding. It is regretted, in the circumstances, that the certificate cannot be altered. I am to add, however, that a form to enable Miss Adrien to submit an application for a Special Allowance under Section 7 of the Army Pensions Act, 1943, was issued to her on 4<sup>th</sup> instant. On receipt of the duly completed form the case will receive immediate attention.<sup>211</sup>

**Table 6: Molly's Special Allowance pension application form completed**

Army Pensions Act, 1943. Application for a Special Allowance, under Section 7 of the act by a person who served in Easter Week. <sup>212</sup>	
Name of applicant, Mary Adrien. Address, Garden-view, Oldtown, Co. Dublin.	
(1) Were you granted in respect of Service in Easter Week—(a), a certificate of military service under the Military Service Pensions Act, 1924.	No, did not apply.
Or, (b), a service certificate under the Military Service Pensions Act, 1934.	Yes, No. 34E3113.
Or, (c), a wound or disability pension under the Army Pensions Acts, in respect of a wound or injury received, or a disability contracted during Easter Week.	No.
(2). Are you incapable of self-support by reason of age, or permanent infirmity of body or mind.	Age.
If by reason of age, attach birth certificate.	Attached.
If by reason of infirmity, state nature of infirmity.	-----
(3). In the case of a man or woman married before the 1 <sup>st</sup> October, 1942, state.	
(a), the date of marriage.	-----
(b), the names and dates of birth of any children living.	-----

<sup>210</sup> [www.militaryarchive.ie](http://www.militaryarchive.ie) W34E131MARYADRIEN.pdf.

<sup>211</sup> [www.militaryarchive.ie](http://www.militaryarchive.ie) W34E131MARYADRIEN.pdf.

<sup>212</sup> [www.militaryarchive.ie](http://www.militaryarchive.ie) WDP14100MARTADRIEN.pdf.

(c), yearly means from all sources.	As sec. O.A. Pens. Com. £32-7-4, per a. [plus] a military pension £17-17-4, per a. Total £50-4-8, per a.
Date 25-10-1945.	

The attached birth details gave it that Mary Ellen [Molly] had been born on 21 September 1873, at Micknanstown, in County Meath. The birth document was registered as numbered 161, and the registrar at Stamullen, was her father Dr E.W. Adrien. Her mother was Mary Kate Adrien (nee, McCullagh), who had been assisted at the birth by Nurse, Julia Bunberry, who had made her mark on the document. Molly had gotten a copy of the original birth certificate on 18 September 1945, from the County Home, Trim, County Meath.<sup>213</sup>

The month of October 1945 saw more correspondence exchanged. That on 29<sup>th</sup> was written by Molly stating that her situation was:

A Cara, with reference to [smudged word] as Secretary to Balrothery Old Age Pension Committee I beg to say that at the moment [I] am finding it very difficult to carry on the work, owing to failing eyesight, and I have made up my mind that it being so, to retire at the end of the financial year (D.V.). No service pension is payable on retirement, that is why I have tried to hold on over the allotted span of 70 years, but now the right eye is quite blind & a specialist has said nothing can be done, so there is no choice but to face up to it & hope for the best while God leaves me here. Mise Maire Ni DRAIN.<sup>214</sup>

On 8 January 1946, that day saw good news arrive at Molly's door in that she had been granted her claim for a Special Allowance.

### Table 7: Molly was awarded a Special Allowance

Department of Defence (No. D.P. 14100). I am directed to inform you that your claim for a Special Allowance under Section 7 of the Army Pensions Act, 1943, has been considered, and to state that the Minister for Defence has granted Miss Mary Adrian, Garden-view, Oldtown, Co. Dublin. Dated 8 January 1946. <sup>215</sup>
The applicant is eligible for an allowance ... as follows: (1) £14 per annum for the period from 27 <sup>th</sup> April 1943 to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 1945 and (2) £13 per annum for the period from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 1945 to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1946. The proposed grant is recommended.

<sup>213</sup> [www.militaryarchive.ie](http://www.militaryarchive.ie) WDP14100MARTADRIEN.pdf.

<sup>214</sup> [www.militaryarchive.ie](http://www.militaryarchive.ie) WDP14100MARTADRIEN.pdf.

<sup>215</sup> [www.militaryarchive.ie](http://www.militaryarchive.ie) WDP14100MARTADRIEN.pdf.

Molly was clearly delighted and acknowledged her feeling by letter on 9 January 1946, where she thanked the department for the ‘windfall which will be very acceptable (D.V.) when it comes’.

Moving on to January 1947 to where Molly’s Special Allowance was £14-10s to be inclusive up to 31 December of that year. On 12 December it was decided that her Special Allowance would be increased to £15-10s on the 1 January 1948 and to be inclusive until 31 December of that year. More developments came about when Molly wrote a letter outlining her personal situation. The letter was sent on 4 April and went:

A Cara. As I have been obliged (owing to advancing years and failing eyesight) to resign the post of secretary to Balrothery Old Age Pension Sub Committee as from 31<sup>st</sup> ult., I beg to make application for an increase of military pension now being paid, I have a delicate brother to keep and provide for and feel sure your board will realise the necessity of this application & that it would not be possible for both to exist on present scale of Military Service award, and we have no investments whatever merely a deposit receipt for fifty seven pounds in National City Bank. Thanking your board in anticipation. Mise Maire Ni Drean.<sup>216</sup>

A reply came on 24 April, but it told Molly that a review of a Special Allowance could not be carried out more than once per year and therefore her case could not be dealt with until after her current allowance expired on 31 December 1948.<sup>217</sup> On 4 November Molly had to fill out a form sent by a social welfare officer, with an address at Malahide. The document gave an insight into her circumstances then. In essence she and her brother had a cottage sub-let at seven shillings, but their only other income was her military pension and her special allowance. She did however, have £43 in a National Bank account. Her age was stated as having been seventy-five years while her brother Edward was sixty-eight years.

### **Molly’s eye disease worsened & she was unable to read or write**

It was noticed in early 1949 that Molly was ascribing her mark on official forms in place of her signature. That led to a situation where upon on 28 February it was stated that Molly’s sister had been interviewed that day about her furnishing a medical certificate stating what her sister’s condition was at that time. That in turn led an eye specialist based at 54 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, to provide a certificate to the effect that Molly’s ‘visual acuity is so low that she is

<sup>216</sup> [www.militaryarchive.ie](http://www.militaryarchive.ie) WDP14100MARTADRIEN.pdf.

<sup>217</sup> [www.militaryarchive.ie](http://www.militaryarchive.ie) WDP14100MARTADRIEN.pdf.

unable to write. He gave the cause as Iridocyclitis'. Nowadays that condition is called Heterchromic ureitis or severe inflammation of the Iris of the eye.

On 13 April a letter came stating that Molly's Special Allowance and Military Pension were to cease with immediate effect. While this was a dramatic turn of events, on 4 May, it was made known that in future Molly's mark would be accepted provided it was witnessed and signed by that person and who gave their full postal address.<sup>218</sup> Then, in a memo dated 7 July 1949, it was stated that Molly's sister Mary Christina 'Eva' had called into some un-identified office [the document was headed, Leatán Miontuairisce] on that day, where she explained that Molly had been admitted as a patient to Grangegorman Mental Hospital. 'It was pointed out that a direction would be sought from the registrar, office of Wards of Court, regarding the future disposal of the [special] allowance'.<sup>219</sup> On 15 July 1949, the secretary of the hospital wrote:

A Cara, I am directed by the Minister for Defence to state that it is understood that Miss Mary Adrien, Garden-view, Oldtown, ... who is entitled to a special allowance and pension under, the army, and military services pensions acts, was recently admitted a patient to Grangegorman Mental Hospital. In order that a direction may be sought from the registrar, office of wards of court, as to the future disposal of the pension and allowances, I am to request that you will be good enough to indicate whether there is any likelihood of the patient's early recovery. Rúnaí, the R.M.S. Mental Hospital, Grangegorman, Dublin.<sup>220</sup>

By the time that the above letter had been written both Molly and Edward had passed away, he on Sunday 19 June, and she on 17 July 1949. When his remains were conveyed to Crickstown cemetery the hearse took a route via the village of Ratoath in County Meath.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> [www.militaryarchive.ie](http://www.militaryarchive.ie) WDP14100MARTADRIEN.pdf. D.P. 14100, N60.

<sup>219</sup> [www.militaryarchive.ie](http://www.militaryarchive.ie) WDP14100MARTADRIEN.pdf. D.P. 14100, N60.

<sup>220</sup> [www.militaryarchive.ie](http://www.militaryarchive.ie) WDP14100MARTADRIEN.pdf. N60. W.3113.

<sup>221</sup> *Irish Press*, 20 June 1949.



### Chapter five. Molly's last year on earth, 1949

The year 1949 proved eventful in that both Molly and her lifelong companion, her brother, Edward 'Ned' had both reached the end of their lives. His death, described in the press as 'suddenly' happened at his shared home, Garden-view cottage, on Sunday 19 June 1949. When his remains were conveyed to Crickstown cemetery, Curragha, County Meath, on the following day, the hearse took a route via the nearby village of Ratoath, in County Meath.<sup>222</sup> In the weeks or months before his passing, Molly had been away from their home having been hospitalised at Grange-gorman Hospital [later known as St Brendan's] in Phibsborough, Dublin, where she died on Sunday 17 July 1949. When it came to the amount of time that she was there, Margaret Griffin believed that it was a relatively short space of time from when she had become ill and was hospitalised and subsequently had died. In any case it can be seen that only a month had separated the deaths of Edward, and Molly, but for the former, that separation from his beloved sister and lifelong companion might have proved too much for him to bear, as he had relied on her greatly.

#### Adrien grave & headstone at Crickstown cemetery, Curragha, County Meath

The Adrien headstone at Crickstown cemetery at Curraha, in County Meath, when visited in 2005, by the author and his friend, Tom Byrne from nearby Wyanstown, in County Dublin (who acted as a local guide on that day), was found to have only a small amount of details inscribed upon it, and this was as follows 'William Edward Adrien M.D. Oldtown, Co. Dublin. In loving memory of his beloved wife Mary Teresa who departed this life 28 May 1853, aged 37 years. Also, of his daughter Bessie Josephine who departed this life on March 19th 1874 aged 23 years'.<sup>223</sup> It was the case, that Molly's mother, Maria Catherine, who died on 5 November 1886, was not buried at Crickstown, but instead her remains went to Clonalvy cemetery, County Meath, instead.<sup>224</sup> It is likely, but not confirmed, that Molly's brother, William Edward who died aged five years in 1890, was interred in his mother's grave.

When it comes to who else among the Adrien family was buried in the Crickstown grave, but whose name, or names, were not inscribed on the headstone, a press obituary gave it that 'Adrien—December 30, at the residence of her niece [Molly Adrien, at], Eileen Villas, Drumcondra, Mary, eldest daughter of the late Dr. William Adrien, of Oldtown, Co. Dublin.

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<sup>222</sup> *Irish Press*, 20 June 1949.

<sup>223</sup> Adrien grave headstone inscription at Crickstown cemetery as recorded by the author.

<sup>224</sup> *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 6 Nov. 1866.

R.I.P. Funeral will leave St. Joseph's Church, Berkeley Street, on this (Tuesday) morning immediately after 10 o'clock Mass for Crickstown (via Ashbourne).<sup>225</sup>

In June 1949, when Edward 'Ned' Adrien, died, his remains also went to Crickstown cemetery, to join his beloved family already there.

**Figs. 7 & 8: The Adrien headstone at Crickstown cemetery & a view of a ruined church in the background**<sup>226</sup>



Following Molly's death, there were several obituaries in the press, two national and one regional, and these not only provided details about her demise, but also gave insights into her past life as told by people who had known her. However, there was probably an inevitability that these would provide overlapping information in one guise or another. Therefore, in order to overcome that situation only extracts from the individual obituaries will be used here. The earliest came from the *Irish Press* on 18 July 1949, and it told that Molly had died on [Sunday] 17 July, at a Dublin nursing home. Her remains were to be removed on the next day at 6.30 pm to Oldtown Church, and thence on the Tuesday, after 10 o'clock mass to the family burial ground at Crickstown.<sup>227</sup>

A more fulsome report in the *Irish Press*, on 20 July, stated that Molly had a distinguished record of service with Cumann na mBan in 1916 and during the subsequent struggle for Irish Independence. She joined Cumann na mBan on its foundation, and during

<sup>225</sup> *Irish Times*, 1;2 Jan. 1906.

<sup>226</sup> Adrien grave headstone at Crickstown cemetery, Curraha, Ashbourne, County Meath (images taken by the author in 2005).

<sup>227</sup> *Irish Press*, 18 July 1949.

Easter 1916, carried despatches from the GPO to Thomas Ashe at Ashbourne. After the battle of Ashbourne, when she was attached to the Fingal Battalion, she assisted Dr. Richard Hayes in attending to the wounded. Following the Rising, Miss Adrien was prominent in service with Cumann na mBan and also in the Civil War, where she took the republican side. She was a past chairman of the old Balrothery Board of Guardians and was secretary of the Balrothery Old Age Pensions Committee. An IRA firing party under Lieutenant Patrick Puttner rendered military honours at the funeral and an oration was delivered by Mr P.J. Burke, TD. The Rev. Fr Purfield, PP., assisted by Rev Fr Nix, PP., officiated at the graveside.<sup>228</sup>

The *Evening Herald* on 20 July recorded that ... ‘Miss Molly Adrien was a daughter of the late Dr Adrien, who practiced in Balbriggan for many years before his appointment as medical officer ... for Oldtown. For a lengthy period, Miss Adrien was a prominent figure in public life. ... She took an active part in the independence movement and many men on the run experienced the hospitality of her home’.<sup>229</sup>

The *Drogheda Independent*, on 23 July 1949, reported that, at the monthly meeting held in the [Dublin] Council’s offices, a vote of sympathy was proposed by P.J. Burke TD., and seconded by John Kennedy. They went further by declaring ‘that we, the members of Balrothery Old Age Pensions Committee beg to tender to the relatives of the late Miss Mary Adrien, their former and esteemed clerk, their deepest sympathy to which the following members wish to be associated with, Eamonn Rooney TD., Sean Dunne TD., James Andrews CC., Miss M.C. Ennis CC., Joseph Dignam CC., Mrs. K. Cusack CC., and John Monks, chairman’.<sup>230</sup>

### **A letter from Molly’s sister Eva in December 1949**

The situation up to the death of Molly had been, from the submittance of her pension application in November 1934, until near her death in July 1949, had been fraught with difficulties and with inordinate delays. A letter written by her sister Eva, on 7 December 1949, to the Department of Defence, is informative:

Dear Sir, I was surprised and more annoyed at [your] serving me another letter from Grangegorman demanding the payment of £8-12-2, due for my sister’s keep. I had already got

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<sup>228</sup> *Irish Press*, 20 July 1949.

<sup>229</sup> *Evening Herald*, 20 July 1949.

<sup>230</sup> *Irish Press*, 20 July 1949. *Drogheda Independent*, 23 July 1949.

one and replied telling you there was money due to her when my sister went to hospital. I secured a cheque from I.R.A., pension office for £ 4-8-0 for the month of May, I presented it to the manager of Grangegorman and he told me to settle with the minister of Defence which I did and asked them to pay to Grangegorman. She did not receive one penny while there. Now my poor sister foolishly enough left herself and her brother penniless by her squandering her and his money during the troubled times. She kept and entertained men on the run, etc., etc., there were very few like her [but], what did she get?? She got a pension a few years before she died which was not enough to keep her and her brother in any comfort. I think the least the I.R.A., should do is to pay what was due to her. My son [Malachy] payed the funeral expenses. It is all summed up by ingratitude and [might] teach others a lesson. Yours sincerely Mrs E. Griffin.<sup>231</sup>

Eva also wrote on the same date but on a separate page the following, the name of my sister was Mary Adrian of Garden-view, Oldtown. 'There are many members sitting in [the] Dail today that did not do half as much for their country as poor Mary Adrian [sic]. R.I.P.<sup>232</sup>

Following Molly's death, it might have been assumed that the correspondence coming from the various government departments would have ceased, but that was not the case. Correspondence was still arriving to Molly's next of kin, Eva Griffin. One such letter dated 9 February 1950, informed her that her request to have the Department of Defence pay the outstanding bill owed to Grangegorman Mental Hospital could not be done as there was no provision in the army pension's act for the payment of such expenses. However, it appeared that Molly had some pension payments owed to her and that this money £9-18s-3d, could be paid into her estate by the department. In addition, if it was the case that Mrs Griffin's son, Malachy had already paid the funeral expenses for Molly's removal and interment [which he did], then, if the receipts for it, along with a death certificate, and that the deceased estate did not go over £100 in total value, and provided that a form of Statutory Declaration was completed and returned along with the rest of the materials, then a sum of money would be released to Eva's son, Malachy Griffin.<sup>233</sup>

In September 1959, Eva, as administratrix of Molly's estate, sought possession of Garden-view Cottage from Mrs Jane Corcoran who had been living there for about two years before Molly's death in July 1949. The case went to court at Balbriggan, where it became

<sup>231</sup> [www.militaryarchives.ie](http://www.militaryarchives.ie) WDP14100MARYADRIEN.pdf.

<sup>232</sup> [www.militaryarchives.ie](http://www.militaryarchives.ie) WDP14100MARYADRIEN.pdf.

<sup>233</sup> [www.militaryarchive.ie](http://www.militaryarchive.ie) W34E131MARYADRIEN.pdf.

known that Molly had owned the cottage in her lifetime and that it was to be sold in order that ‘certain charities were to benefit from the proceeds of the sale’. Eva made it known to the court that ‘Mrs Corcoran, in common with many of the neighbours, had acted very kindly towards her sister, and gave voluntary help to her when she became ill. When her sister died, Mrs Corcoran was asked to stay on as a caretaker to mind the furniture. That was ten years ago’. Mrs Corcoran had lived with Molly for two years before her death, and it appears that she had been promised that she would receive ten shillings per week while there, but in fact no money was ever handed over. Furthermore, during the ten-year period after Molly’s passing, no rent was ever required from Mrs Corcoran as caretaker occupant. It was understood by Mrs Corcoran that ‘she was to have the house after Miss Adrian’s death’. The case was adjourned for a month and the judge implied that some compensation would have to be paid to Mrs Corcoran.<sup>234</sup>

More information came from a press report on 31 October 1959, where under a heading:

Loses house—to get £10. Mrs. Eva Griffin, Rolestown House, Kilsallaghan, was, at Balbriggan Court, given decree for possession of a house called Garden-view, Oldtown, occupied by Mrs. Jane Corcoran. The evidence had been heard at a previous court when it was stated that Mrs. Corcoran had attended to Mrs. Griffin’s deceased sister, Miss M. Adrian, and had remained in the house after Miss Adrian’s death. The justice had suggested that compensation should be paid to Mrs. Corcoran’. [another heading] Probate dispute. Mr. R. McGonagle, solr., said the small estate did not allow for any ex gratia payment. There had been a probate dispute and most of the assets would be swallowed up in costs. It was eventually agreed that a sum of £10 would be paid to Mrs. Corcoran’.<sup>235</sup>

With regard to Eva Griffin, according to Margaret Griffin, Eva died in 1970 at the age of ninety-three years.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 26 Sept. 1959.

<sup>235</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 31 Oct. 1959.

<sup>236</sup> Author in conversation with Margaret Griffin at Rowlestown House on 10 Oct. 2005.

**Fig. 9: Memorial plaque at Oldtown, County Dublin** <sup>237</sup>



**Fig. 10: Details from *Drogheda Independent* on 4 April 1969**

**Cumann Cabarta Sean Oglac Fine-Gall**  
(Fingal Old I.R.A. Men's Welfare Society)

Arrangements for

## **ANNUAL MEMORIAL MASS AND UNVEILING OF PLAQUE**

**Will take place AT OLDTOWN**

**ON EASTER SUNDAY, 6th APRIL, 1969**

Order of Parade—1. 10.30 a.m., Members of Fingal Old I.R.A. with colour party and Lusk Black Raven Pipe Band

The advertisement shown on the left provided details as follows:

Cumann Cabarta Sean Oglac Fine-Gall (Fingal Old I.R.A. Men's Welfare Society)

arrangements for annual memorial Mass and unveiling of plaque will take place at Oldtown, on Easter Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1969. Order of parade—1. 10.30 a.m., members of Fingal Old I.R.A., with colour party and Lusk Black Raven Pipe Band will assemble at old church. 2. 10.40 a.m., parade will march to new church for memorial Mass, honours will be paid by colour party and bugler. 3. After Mass parade will reform outside new church and march to bridge for the unveiling of plaque to late Miss Adrian. 4. Unveiling of plaque by Dr. B. Cusack. 5. Blessing and decade of rosary. 6. Last post revile. Raising of flag by J. Crenigan. 7. Reading of proclamation by T. Keenan, sec. 8. Short address by Dr. Cusack—Mr. P. Burke, president of

<sup>237</sup> Photograph taken by the author in Oct. 2005.

the society. 9. Parade will march to old church. 10. National Anthem. 11. March of colours—  
Dismiss.<sup>238</sup>

Further information came the *Drogheda Independent* on 11 April 1969, under a heading of ‘A heroine is remembered’:

The parish of Oldtown honoured the memory of a local Cumann na mBan heroine when a plaque was unveiled to the late Miss Mary Adrian [sic] at a ceremony on Sunday morning last [6<sup>th</sup> instant]. Miss Adrian tended the wounded men of the Fingal I.R.A. Brigade in Ashbourne during the Easter Rebellion. Hundreds of people attended the 24<sup>th</sup> anniversary Mass of the North Dublin I.R.A. Welfare Society, celebrated in Our Lady Queen of Peace Church, Oldtown, by Rev. J. Neville, C.C.

A parade of Old I.R.A. members then took place, led by the Black Raven Pipe Band, Lusk, to Oldtown Bridge, where the plaque was unveiled by Dr. Brian Cusack, [then living at Lusk, Co. Dublin] himself a 1916 veteran, a member of the first Dail and a former medical doctor in the Oldtown area. Tributes to Miss Adrian and the men and women of her time were paid by Mr. Andy Doyle, Mr. Terry White, [P.C., and] chairman of the local committee who organised the ceremony; Mr. P.J. Burke, T.D.; Senator Eamonn Rooney, and other speakers.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 4 Apr. 1969.

<sup>239</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 11 July 1969. The author wishes to thank Ray Bateson for pointing out this source following an email inquiry sent to him on the matter.

## Conclusion

Mary Ellen ‘Molly’ Adrien (1873-1949), had been born at Micknanstown, County Meath, into a relatively well-off Roman Catholic family whose male members, including her father, Edward, were medical doctor-surgeons of some renown. It was her great grandfather, John Adrien (Adreen) who had gone to the assistance of Lord Fitzgerald following his capture by Captain Sirr following the 1798 Rebellion. Molly’s grandfather, born in 1881 was a proud supporter of the ideals espoused by those who participated in that momentous event in Ireland’s long struggle against British oppression in this country. It was the case too, that Molly carried on that struggle through her own efforts in the 1916-1923 period where she was prominent as a Cumann na mBan Volunteer in the area of north County Dublin, and in the GPO Garrison in Easter Week 1916.

While Molly and her brothers and sisters had been relatively well off during the early years of their upbringing at their home in the townland of Micknanstown (the nearest large town being Balbriggan, a place they oft used in their postal address), they nevertheless began to suffer from the vicissitudes of life when their mother, Maria, died young from the effects of Tuberculosis when she was only thirty-five years old. This loss was further compounded when four years later, their father also died, in 1890, at the age of forty-four years and thus Molly and her younger siblings were left as orphans.

In later years Molly suffered further personal trauma when her boyfriend and potential marriage partner, Patrick Griffin, a farmer of Oldtown, County Dublin, forsook her for her younger sister, Eva, whom he married in 1905. Molly, then about twenty-seven years old, never found a replacement for the love of her life, and thereafter she shared a home known as ‘Garden-view cottage’ in Oldtown, with her brother Edward ‘Ned’. The home had passed down to her aunt, Mary Adrien, who was a spinster. Subsequent to the Griffin-Adrien marriage, Molly became estranged from the pair, a situation which did not alter much with the passage of time, though Edward was able to transcend the rancour between his sisters and had a normal relationship with both throughout the entirety of his relatively long life.

In 1914, Molly, at the age of forty-one years, joined the women’s league of Volunteers known as the Cumann na mBan and was active with that organisation in Dublin City and in north County Dublin. It was in that same year that she made history in the local sense by becoming the first female to have joined the board of guardians of the Balrothery Poor-law Union, where she was to serve for the period up until 1925 when she left to take up a position



as a school attendance officer in the Garristown area near her home at Oldtown. Molly, in her time as a poor-law guardian, had also acted in the capacity of chairman for the years 1920 to 1925 when she retired. Likewise, her participation as a Cumann na mBan Volunteer was a long one extending as it did for the whole revolutionary period and beyond, and where it could be said that the highlight of her political life was in Easter Week 1916, when she carried despatches between Patrick Pearse and James Connolly, in the GPO, and the Fingal Battalion Commandant, Thomas Ashe, who was actively engaged with his small band of rebels in carrying out diversionary tactics in north County Dublin, following orders from James Connolly in the GPO.

Molly's military endeavours, later drew acknowledgements from well-known authors Sean Ó Luing, Charles Townshend, and Joseph E.A. Connell, jnr., when the first mentioned referred to her as 'a heroine as brave as any other' and the latter pair as 'the redoubtable Miss Adrian [sic]'. Her deeds are remembered by a memorial on a bridge near her home at Oldtown, which was erected by the group known as the 'Fingal Old IRA Commemorative Society 1916-1921' (<https://www.facebook.com/pg/FINGAL5THBATT/posts/>) and was funded by local subscriptions. Molly had also been active as secretary of the Balrothery 'Old Age Pensions Committee' in her later life.

When it came to her military pension, she was initially one of those females offered a pension in 1922, but refused it on the belief that others were more deserving of the money as she was in gainful employment then. However, her financial circumstances changed dramatically when lost her job and by which time she found it problematical to re-engage with the body responsible for issuing military pension payments. Thereafter, there followed many years of correspondence and representation by those supporting her claim, i.e., Richard Mulcahy and Margaret Pearse, to name just two, it was the case that by the time that money was made available to her, she was in dire straits when it came to providing the bare necessities of life for herself and her brother Ned. By then too, her health had been failing principally through a medical condition to do with her eyes which made her progressively blind. It was while she was hospitalised that Ned passed away, and then, a short while later, she too came to the end of her road in life.

Her death in July 1949 brought many praiseworthy comments in the press and her subsequent burial at Crickstown cemetery saw rifle volleys over the grave followed by a speech by P.J. Burke T.D. Prior to her demise, and as already mentioned above, Molly's financial circumstances were insufficient to pay her debts, or indeed those of her brother Ned,

and despite the years of estrangement between Molly and her sister Eva, it nevertheless became necessary for the latter to step in and deal with the final arrangements on her sister's behalf. Eva had to carry out that task on her own as her husband Patrick Griffin (Molly's one-time boyfriend), had been dead since 14 May 1919, when a cerebral apoplexy over seven hours caused his death at the age of only fifty-one years. His wife, Eva was present at his death.<sup>240</sup> A press report on 24 May, gave the following information 'Regret is felt for the sudden death of Mr. Patrick Griffin, Rollerstown, which took place on Thursday last rather suddenly, of heart failure, at the early age of 53 years. A quarter of a century ago many a champion race he won with the bike. He leaves a young widow and seven children to mourn his loss. The funeral on Saturday to Rollerstown was very large. R.I.P.<sup>241</sup> The website, 'Glasnevin Trust' <https://www.glasnevintrust.ie/genealogy/results/> shows that both Patrick and Eva Griffin were interred in Glasnevin cemetery in County Dublin, he in 1919 and she in 1970.

While it is fortunate that there is a large amount of valuable correspondence relating to Molly's claim for a military pension from the Department of Defence, and accessible from the Military Archive's website <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/detail.aspx>, file reference, MSP34REF152, there was however a relative paucity of other material, like artefacts, photographs, and other things to be found when the author sought them out during the research period for this paper. One item in particular not found was a letter that Molly made reference to in her 'sworn statement' in c.1941, written by Commandant Thomas Ashe thanking her for her brave deeds as a Cumann na mBan Volunteer on behalf of the Fifth Battalion during Easter Week 1916 (see Extract 10). Fortunately, however, her two military medals awarded for her deeds during the revolutionary period have been safely kept by members of the Griffin family, and have been made available to be shown in the Appendices of this paper.

When it comes to Molly's signature, a good example is that which features on the National Museum of Ireland website to do with those who were active in the General Post Office Garrison in Easter Week 1916, and which is shown below.

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[https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths\\_returns/deaths\\_1919/05151/4420269.pdf](https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1919/05151/4420269.pdf)  
(10 May 2919)

<sup>241</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 24 May 1919.

**Fig. 11. Molly's signature as held by the National Museum of Ireland<sup>242</sup>**

312	Mary J. Mulcahy (Miss. Ryan)	—	C. 11a 6
313	Mary Adrien	—	C. 11a 6
314	Phyllis Ryan	—	C. 11a 6.

The idea that female volunteers did not receive their due credit was not a new one but it was felt primarily by women. Éilis Bean Ui Chonail, president of the Association of Old Cumann na mBan, in her article 'A Cumann na mBan recalls Easter Week' in the *Capuchin Annual* published in 1966, made reference to the fact that while 'The men were filling the jails in England and the women stepped into the bearna baoil. Cumann na mBan have not yet got the place their record deserves on screen or in any magazine'.<sup>243</sup> Another female author, writing in 1991, Margaret Ward, thought that females were deliberately written out of the textbooks by male writers in the past.<sup>244</sup> Later still, Deirdre Beddoe, in her 1998 work, asked in her introduction 'Why should we study women's history?' she went on to write that the above question had first crossed her mind in the 1970s, and she did so:

Against a background where some male academics seriously asked, "is there a history of women?" Others, while conceding that there might be such a thing, dismissed it as impossible to find out about: "there are no sources" they used to say. Women's history has come a long way since then'. You can study it in colleges, universities; the national curriculum has put it, albeit in a limited way, on the agenda in schools; a whole publishing industry has grown up around women's studies, of which women's history is a significant strand: television programmes, too, reflect the public appetite for knowledge about women's lives in earlier times. The subject has made great advances in a short time but there is still a long way to go.<sup>245</sup>

Beddoe wrote her book many years ago and currently there are many female authors writing about the female gender. Examples would be Sinead McCoolle, Ann Matthews, Liz Gillis, and

<sup>242</sup> National Museum Ireland, <https://microsites.museum.ie/rollofhonour1916/search.aspx?field1=313>

<sup>243</sup> Éilis Bean Ui Chonail 'A Cumann na mBan recalls Easter Week' in *Capuchin Annual*, Vol. 33 (Dublin, 1966), p. 271.

<sup>244</sup> Margaret Ward, *The missing sex: putting women into history* (Dublin, 1991).

<sup>245</sup> Deirdre Beddoe, *Discovering women's history: a practical guide to researching the lives of women since 1800* (London, 1998), foreword.

more besides. However, when it came to Molly Adrien, the question arises as to how did she fare within the broader generalisation that females who had been active in the revolutionary period were poorly portrayed in the historiography produced in the years since? The author suggests that Molly's story would have partly fitted into what Beddoe was writing, but then as against that, she had been paid a tribute at Lusk, in 1915, and then had a memorial wall plaque erected in her memory in April 1969 on a bridge near her home village of Oldtown.<sup>246</sup> It might be fair to suggest that not many ordinary members of the Cumann na mBan have been recognised in that way in their home places. Perhaps the community of Oldtown were more appreciative of their female heroes, as along with Molly's memorial there was another erected in that village to Molly Weston, remembered for her deeds in the 1798 Rebellion, where many Wexfordmen lost their lives in a bloody skirmish just outside the village in that year. Oldtown can therefore lay claim to two strong revolutionary women albeit within different time periods. Perhaps partly because of those monuments in the landscape, these courageous women are still remembered in their own locale right up to the present time. The group known as the 'Fingal Old IRA Commemorative Society 1916-1921' have played a staunch part over the decades by their participation in the erection of monuments to those who fought on the republican side during the revolutionary period, and by organising events in the towns and villages of Fingal in order to keep their memories alive there. An example of such a gathering for Molly Adrien at her wall-plaque in Oldtown, occurred on 1 October 2016.<sup>247</sup>

This story could not end without a mention of Molly's lifelong love of canines, she was reared at Micknanstown where greyhounds were always around. Then in 1913, she had Scots terriers and in her later years, in the photograph taken by Dr Cusack outside her home, there were two dogs, one in her arms and another at her feet. The aspect of a fondness for dogs, and for greyhounds in particular, it appears that the passion for breeding and racing that breed had passed down to Molly's granddaughter Marjorie (Eva and Patrick Griffin's eldest child) along with her husband, Pdraig A, Ó Siocháin.<sup>248</sup> In Molly's case, she wore her republicanism with pride throughout her life, Lusk historian, Paddy Weston, told the author that it was a common sight to see her cycling with her dog in a basket throughout the area with a tri-colour ribbon in

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<sup>246</sup> Ray Batson, *Memorials of the Easter Rising* (National Graves Association, 2013).

<sup>247</sup> *Fingal Independent*, 1 Oct. 2016.

<sup>248</sup> P.A. Ó Siocháin, Irish Author,

[https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/P.\\_A.\\_%C3%93\\_S%C3%ADoch%C3%A1in.html](https://ipfs.io/ipfs/QmXoypizjW3WknFiJnKLwHCnL72vedxjQkDDP1mXWo6uco/wiki/P._A._%C3%93_S%C3%ADoch%C3%A1in.html)

her hat. She had the iron railings around her home painted in the colours of the Irish flag. Such was her affection for them that an Oldtown resident, said that she gave them names of prominent Irish people she admired, an example being Dev., after Eamonn de Valera. At the of the death of Brian de Valera on Sunday 9 February, in a riding accident in the Phoenix Park, Dublin, Molly Adrien was among those who sent messages of sympathy to his parents on the tragic loss of their twenty-year-old son.<sup>249</sup> She had also written to the de Valera family in her role as secretary of the Oldtown Fianna Fail ‘William Pearse Cumann’ informing them of a recent silent expression of sympathy by the Cumann, and also that a Mass had been ordered at Oldtown Church for the 18<sup>th</sup> instant for the ‘happy repose of his soul and for the comfort and consolation of his parents and those who mourn his loss’. Molly had signed her name as ‘Maire’ Ni Dreain’.<sup>250</sup>

When it came to finding images of Molly at various stages in her life, it was the case that these were initially, when the authors research began in 2005, were not readily forthcoming from any sources. There was one exception, and that was the photograph taken in c.1929, by Dr Brian Cusack, of Molly standing outside her home ‘Garden-view cottage’ in Oldtown. The image appeared in a local publication but was of poor quality and grainy. It did not help that Molly chose to wear her hat which cast a shadow over her face at the time when the photographer took his shot.

A potential source of another image of Molly might have been fourth-coming from an April 14<sup>th</sup> 1966 edition of the Irish Press, which showed a photograph, taken in Croke Park, Dublin, in 1938, of an assemblage of the survivors of the GPO Garrison during Easter Week 1916. While that photograph can be viewed elsewhere and in better quality, it is nevertheless difficult to positively identify Molly from it, despite her name being mentioned by the photographer, W. Sparks of the ‘Central Studios’ Westmoreland Street, Dublin, in the press article.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> *Irish Press*, 12, 13 Feb. 1936.

<sup>250</sup> *Irish Press*, 22 Feb. 1936.

<sup>251</sup> *Irish Press*, 14 Apr. 1966.

**Fig. 12. Photograph of GPO Garrison 1916, taken by W. Sparks, of the ‘Central Studios’ in Croke Park, Dublin, in Apr. 1938. Molly is ostensibly among the female survivors of the garrison shown below, <https://www.gaa.ie/centenary/gaa-1916-commemorations/gpo-garrison-croke-park-1938/photo>**



## Appendices

**Figs. 13-16: Molly's 1916 Rising & War of Independence medals.** (Courtesy, Gerard Griffin, Oldtown, & Miriam McKeever (nee, Griffin), Delgany, County Wicklow)







**Fig. 17: Margaret & Declan Griffin (both deceased) as photographed by author at Rowlestown House, Rowlestown, Swords, on 10 Oct. 2005. The authors wife, Valerie, is related to Margaret through the Brogan family of Great Commons, Lusk. Margaret's mother was Ellen Savage (nee, Brogan), while Valerie's grandmother was Jane McEvoy (nee, Brogan).**



**Fig. 18: Below. An image of the author with Molly Adrien’s relative, Peter Byrne (on right-hand side), taken at Swords Local Studies Archive on Tuesday 19 January 2016, where the former gave a presentation. Also in the photograph is Chief Executive of Fingal County Council, Paul Reid; & Councillor & Lord Mayor of Fingal, David O’Connor. The image was featured in the *North County Leader*, 26 January 2016, & later on its online version too<sup>252</sup>**



Peter Byrne also attended the lecture on Molly’s life by the author at Dublin City Library and Archives Conference room for the presentation of Molly’s story to the members of the Old Dublin Society, on Wednesday, 23 March 2016.<sup>253</sup>

<sup>252</sup> *North County Leader*, [https://issuu.com/seanfitz09/docs/pages\\_75c0d98092794f](https://issuu.com/seanfitz09/docs/pages_75c0d98092794f)  
<http://www.fingalcoco.ie/events/event/default.aspx?guidStr=e1ec73ca-2b8d-e511-a3c0-0050569b0000> The author & Peter Byrne exchanged a number of emails during the period of the above-mentioned presentations.

<sup>253</sup> Old Dublin Society lecture on 23 Mar. 2016,  
[http://www.countywicklowheritage.org/documents/Programme\\_Old\\_Dublin\\_Soc.pdf](http://www.countywicklowheritage.org/documents/Programme_Old_Dublin_Soc.pdf)

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Peppard, Thomas, B.M.H. W.S. 1399

Rock, Michael, B.M.H. W.S. 1398

Wyse- Power, Nancy (Dr), B.M.H. W.S. 541

Weston, Charles, B.M.H. W.S. 149

### *Dublin*

*National Library Ireland, NLI.ie*

Catholic Parish Registers, <http://registers.nli.ie>

Online exhibition 'The 1916 Rising: personalities and perspectives',

[www.nli.ie/1916/pdf/3.2.3.pdf](http://www.nli.ie/1916/pdf/3.2.3.pdf)

Dublin

*National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, [www.museum.ie](http://www.museum.ie)*

Garrison Rolls of Honour, where Molly Adrien signed her name to the 1916 Roll of Honour.

Signature, No.313, <https://microsites.museum.ie/rollofhonour1916/search.aspx?field1=313>

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<https://catalogues.ria.ie/Presto/content/Detail.aspx?ctID=Yjc2NGM4ZGYtZjdjMS00Yzc3LTk2MDgtNTgwMGI5MTBhZjZj&rID=Njg0OTM=&qrs=RmFsc2U=&q=KGFkcmllbik=&qcf=Yjc2NGM4ZGYtZjdjMS00Yzc3LTk2MDgtNTgwMGI5MTBhZjZj&ph=VHJ1ZQ==&bckToL=VHJ1ZQ==&rrtc=VHJ1ZQ==>

Byrne, Peter. The file contains material compiled and donated to the RIA, by Peter Byrne in El Cerrito, California, who is a relative of the John Adrien who occupied the Dawson Street house in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. 19, Dawson St. [Academy House] [1999] SR/16/1/D/Academy Archives/ History box 1/Adrien file.

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[An image of the above-mentioned, Peter Byrne, is shown at fig. 17 in this paper].

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Margaret and Declan Griffin, at Rowlestown House, on 10 October 2005; Charlie Rooney, Oldtown, spoken to on the author's behalf at his home by Tom Byrne, on 1 October 2005; Fr John Carey, Oldtown, spoken to at his home, and also the house-keeper of Curragha Parochial House, Nancy Roach, where the author was accompanied on both occasions by Tom Byrne, on 11 September 2005; Tom and Barbra Byrne, at their home at Wyanstown, Oldtown, on the same date; Joe Brown, Oldtown, spoken to by the author at Oldtown Inn, on 13 September 2005; Paddy Weston, by phone, on 27 October 2005; Bernadette Marks, Fingal Genealogy and Heritage Centre, Swords, by phone, on 3 November 2005; Moira Kiernan, Ratoath Road, Ratoath, by phone, on 7 September 2005.

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