



Mary Ellen 'Molly' Adrien (1873-1949): Cumann na mBan volunteer 1916

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Mary Ellen ‘Molly’ Adrien (1873-1949): Cumann na mBan volunteer 1916.

Frank Whearity

Based on a talk given to the Old Dublin Society 23 March 2016

Molly Adrien was born on 21 September 1873 at Micknansstown, County Meath. She came from a prosperous middle class Roman Catholic professional family whose menfolk had a propensity to become medical doctor-surgeons of some repute. Sir Charles Cameron wrote that the Dublin city Adriens were of Huguenot extraction.¹ As is well known, the Huguenots were Protestants who fled persecution in France after the terms of the Edict of Nantes were abolished by King Louis XIV in 1685. The surname Adrien is rare, with the nearest variant being Adrian. They seemingly came to Ireland from England via Carrickfergus, County Antrim.² While the latter variant is at times seen used with regard to those of Molly’s family, she herself used the former spelling exclusively. Along the way some of the Adriens became Roman Catholics through inter-marriage as was the case with Molly’s forebears in the lineage from the William Adrien discussed below.

William was Molly’s great-great-grandfather and was married to Mary Betagh. One of their sons was John Adrien (Adreen) who 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 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 R.I.A. [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. Dr Adrien married Mrs Derrick, a widow. His eldest son, John Thomas, was born in Eustace Street, on the 17th 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 1807.⁴

When it came to Molly’s paternal grandparents these were Dr William Edward Adrien (referred to above), of Oldtown, County Dublin, and Maria Teresa Kelly, of the parish of Donymore, County Meath. The couple married there on 18 July 1836.⁵ A press report in September 1871, said that he had been the medical officer



Figure 1 *The Dublin Directory* showed that William Adrien was a tallow-chandler at 42 Thomas Street, Dublin, c.1783³

at the Balrothery workhouse for the previous thirty-years.⁶ Sinéad Collins gave its actual opening as 1839.⁷

Molly's grandmother was born c.1816 and died on 28 May 1853, and was buried at Crickstown cemetery, Curraha, County Meath.⁹ After Molly's grandfather retired from the Balrothery Union in November 1879, at a

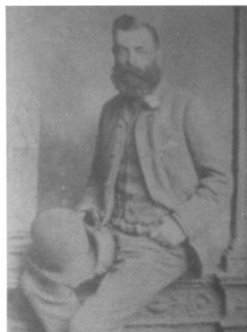
meeting in mid-December it was proposed by Lord Talbot de Malahide, seconded by Charles Cobbe, Donabate, and the chairman, Henry Baker, J.P., that his son (Molly's father) Dr Edward would be appointed to the vacant post.¹⁰ When her grandfather died a decade later, an obituary on 24 September 1889, said that:

On Saturday last there died at his residence, Oldtown, Balbriggan, in the 88th 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, 16th 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) [to Crickstown cemetery, Curragha].¹¹

As William was born in c. 1801, he could not have been born, as Cameron had put it, in the Dawson Street house, because his parents lease on that property only began on 9 June 1810. In any case, two of their sons became doctor-surgeons, with



Figure 2 Molly's grandparents home (& later hers) 'Garden-View cottage' a second-class dwelling held 'in fee'.⁸



Figures 3 & 4 Edward Adrien & Kate McCullagh¹⁶



Figures 5 & 6 Micknanstown House, County Meath, & wall plaque¹⁸

one being Dr John (Molly's uncle), born in 1838, and who practised at Drogheda, County Louth; while the other was Dr Edward (Molly's father), born in 1846, and who lived at Micknanstown House, Micknanstown, County Meath, and practised in that district for a time. Edward Adrien married Maria Catherine 'Kate' McCullagh, from Dublin City, at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Marlborough, Street, Dublin, on 26 November 1870.¹² Kate was the 'only surviving child of the late Patrick McCullagh, Esq., of D'Olier Street, Dublin'.¹³ He held a lease on a house and yard on that street in *c.* 1854.¹⁴ Kate often stayed with her relatives, the Rooney family who farmed near Lusk. It is thought that she met Edward at a function at 'Skidoo Stud' near Roganstown, Swords.¹⁵

The couple lived at Micknanstown (see figure five), and their children were: William Edward, born 1871, Patrick (1872), Mary Ellen 'Molly' (1873), Edward Joseph (1874), John (1876), Christina Mary 'Eva' (1877), Kate (1879). Those born at Balbriggan were: Edward 'Ned' (1882), Elizabeth Maria (1884) and William Ignatius (1885).¹⁷

Death of Molly's parents

On 5 November 1886, Molly's mother, Maria Catherine, died from tuberculosis at the relatively young age of thirty-seven years. She left a number of young children, the eldest of whom 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 stated that her remains would be interred on the next Sunday, at Clonalvy cemetery, in County Meath.¹⁹

Having lost her mother, Molly then had to witness the slow death of her father only four years later. He had reached the age of forty-four years when on 11 July 1890, after a year-long illness from epithelioma of the pharynx, finally succumbed at Balbriggan. His children were then bereft of both parents and were effectively orphaned. When his will was examined it stated that he left only sixteen shillings and ten pence.²⁰

The Balrothery Board of Guardians, at their next meeting, proposed a vote of sympathy on his passing. However, such things would have been far from the minds of his children whose main concern was the immediate future. In that regard, little is known, other than that their home was to be rented, or 'let' out by private treaty by order of the executors and its contents were to be sold at auction.

In 1901, we find Molly as head of the household at 62.2 Drumcondra Road, Dublin. She was twenty-six years old, while Eva was twenty-two years; Katie, twenty-



Figure 7 & 8 Patrick Griffin & Eva Adrien; & Rowlestown House, Rowlestown, Kilsallaghan, Co. Dublin²³

one years, and Edward ‘Ned’ was seventeen years. All were single and derived their income from land.²¹ At some point soon after, Molly’s boyfriend Patrick Griffin, a farmer from Oldtown, left her to marry her sister Eva. Margaret Griffin (née Savage), Rowlestown House, Kilsallaghan, Swords, told the author that such an event was deemed ‘to cut another girls bush’. Apparently, Molly was so hurt by the experience that she became estranged from the pair for the remainder of her life.²² Eva and Patrick and their marital home are shown at figures seven and eight.

The breakup with Patrick caused Molly much emotional pain and heartache, but more than that, it changed the direction of her subsequent life at a time before she had become a guardian at the Balrothery Poor Law Union, or had joined Cumann na mBan and therefore, the probable implications for her participation in the 1916 Rising come into question too.

Molly Adrien as a Balrothery Union Poor-Law Guardian

In May 1914, at the age of forty-one years, Molly ran for election as a poor law guardian in the Balrothery Union local elections for the district of Clonmethan, and was successful.²⁴ She then made history in the local sense by becoming the first female to join the board of guardians there in July 1914. On entering the boardroom, Molly was roundly cheered, and the Chairman, T.L. Smyth, said that he was honoured to welcome the board’s first lady guardian. Furthermore, he had long thought that the board had suffered from a lack of female participation, and regretted that other districts had not acted similarly in bringing women onto their boards. He told the gathering that Molly was no stranger among them as her family was one of the most respected in the area and had long and honoured associations with the board members.²⁵ As it turned out, Molly was a dedicated guardian and the minutes of the union show that she hardly ever missed a meeting from 1914 up to the end of 1925. In addition, she was the chairman from 1920 onwards.²⁶ She then resigned in order to take up the post of school attendance officer in the Garristown district.

Cumann na mBan Volunteer

Figure 9, Mary ‘Molly’ Adrien, centre, wearing a Cumann na mBan uniform. The image came courtesy of *An Phoblacht*,²⁷ but she was not identified in that source. However, since the photograph appeared in an article in March 2014, about Marion Steenson, who lived at Fairview Park, Dublin, there has been a developing consensus that the lady in the centre is Molly Adrien. The author is happy to support that consensus following confirmation from Eva Murdoch (nee Griffin, who is



Fig. 9 Mary Ellen ‘Molly’ Adrien (1873-1949): Cumann na mBan volunteer 1916.

Molly's great-niece), that she and her relatives believe it is Molly.²⁸ The image is also shown as being Molly on the website, 'Roll of Honour Ire.:'²⁹ and in Noel French's work, *1916, Meath and more*.³⁰

When it came to Molly's participation as a Cumann na mBan volunteer, it is fortunate that she has told much of the story herself in a sworn statement given to a government appointed advisory board. Subsequently a document dated 4 March 1936 was produced, which dealt with her military activity from 1914 to c.1921. Extracts from it will be interspersed in this story beginning with that shown below:

Sworn statement (Military Archives, Dublin, file WMSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf), 4th December, 1936.³¹ [Hereafter cited as 'Molly's sworn statement'].

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.

Séamus Kavanagh wrote:

At this time [July 1914] I was assistant instructor with Volunteer 'Mocky' Comerford to the 1st 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 ... Mrs. Reddin ... Miss McMahan ... Mrs. Sorcha Rodgers ... the Misses Ryan (Mrs. S.T. O'Kelly, Mrs. Mulcahy and Mrs McCullough), the two Misses Hanrahan ... Mrs. Joe McGuinness ... Miss Leslie Price ... The Central branch of Cumann na mBan was 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.³²

Mrs Áine Heron, a Cumann na mBan colleague, recalled:

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. ...³³

On 7 May 1915, a 'deserving tribute' was paid at Lusk to Molly Adrien, and Dr Richard Hayes, M.D., of that village, who were given '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., who assisted, was

given a pair of silver table lamps as a token of gratitude and esteem'. The Secretary, Miss Eileen Morgan, was also the recipient of a massive silver Tara brooch.³⁴

Further information came when Mrs Kathleen McAllister, of North Street, Swords, and Miss Mary J. Weston, of Donabate, formed a committee on 9 January 1940, at Swords, to highlight the cases of a number of females who had given service with the Cumann na mBan in the Fingal area; the following text was informative:

Upon the formation of a branch in Lusk in 1915, there was a fairly substantial membership operating through Headquarters, but as the critical days of 1916 approached, the number dwindled and the loyal members of the Cumann found themselves moving closer towards the local Volunteers until in the early months of 1916, they were included as Volunteers for all purposes: except the actual carrying of arms for action (as distinct from the carrying of arms from place to place., ... The duties assigned to them upon mobilisation on Easter Sunday, by Commandant Ashe, [were] as (a) Accompanying specific units. (b) Carrying despatches, (C) Observing movements of hostile units of the enemy (R.I.C., & C.). (d) Carrying arms from Swords to camp at Finglas and to Killeek. (e) Assisting wounded and dead members of the unit.³⁵

In September 1915, some sixty-four women had enrolled in the 'ladies section of the Volunteers' in that area by handing their names to the Secretary J. Clarke.³⁶ When it came to male activists in north County Dublin, (Col.) Joseph Lawless wrote that:

Prior to the 1916 Rising 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.³⁷

Molly's sworn statement.³⁸

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 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.

When Molly submitted an application for a military service pension from the Department of Defence on 22 November 1934, she wrote 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 [she] acted as servant and despatch carrier.³⁹ Charles Weston told that on the Tuesday 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 instructions to send 40 men into the city to the G.P.O. Twenty men were detailed by Ashe and under Dick Coleman proceeded to the city'. Molly was 'in and out of the city up to Thursday'.⁴⁰

Molly's sworn statement.⁴¹

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 [horse races] 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 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 Foleys 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 Gínglas [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 clothes 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.
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 gave it that:

[At] our camp at Killeek ... after 3 o'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 onto 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.⁴²

Molly's sworn statement.⁴³

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.

Gerry Golden recorded that:

On the [Friday] 28th [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 2nd Batt. Dublin Brigade and 5 members of "B" Co. 1st 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.⁴⁴

Molly's sworn statement.⁴⁵

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.
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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, in a major engagement which occurred around the crossroads itself. At the end of the nearly five hours of fighting, there were the inevitable dead and injured on both sides, along with three civilians caught in the cross fire.

Molly's sworn statement.⁴⁶

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.

Molly had assisted Dr Hayes with aiding the injured on both sides of the conflict.⁴⁷ That evening 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 billet the men.⁴⁸

Molly's sworn statement.⁴⁹

On Saturday morning you got a dispatch from Tom Ashe?	Yes, and I went into Finglas. [Patrick] 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.

Joseph Lawless recalled that Molly had arrived that evening with 'despatches' from which was learned or surmised that a cavalry force of the 5th 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.⁵⁰ 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. That news, when it came to those at New Barn, was not well received. Nevertheless, after an investigation, it was concluded that the order applied to those operating under the command of Thomas Ashe, as it did to all other commanders in the field no matter where in Ireland they operated. The Fifth Battalion were taken into custody on Sunday 30 April.

In the aftermath of the rebellion, there ensued a process of military courts-martial and executions of the leading figures. Others, like Ashe, got death sentences which afterwards were commuted to various terms of imprisonment. Many more were charged with no crimes but deported to places of detention in Britain under the terms of the Defence of the Realm Act (14B).

Molly's sworn statement.⁵¹

Did they round 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.

<p>Would you get these messages from the O/C., or whom?</p>	<p>Mostly from the Captain.</p>
<p>What Company would this be?</p>	<p>Fingal. I refused a pension in 1922. I told James Derham [Balbriggan, TD] 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 dispatch rider. Also a letter sent her by Thomas Ashe).</p>

A very fine artistic impression of Molly's facial features is seen in Jimmy Wren's recent work, *The GPO Garrison Easter Week 1916: a biographical dictionary*.⁵³ This alleviates in no small measure the poor quality of the image available for use here.

Molly's military exploits as a Cumann na mBan Volunteer in 1916 have been applauded in several published works. In 1944, while she was still alive, *The Fingal Fingerpost*, declared that Miss Adrien, 'is one of the most outstanding women in Fingal'.⁵⁴ In 1970, Sean Ó Luing wrote that she was, 'a heroine ranking with the bravest';⁵⁵ and in 2005, Charles Townshend thought of her as, 'the redoubtable Miss Adrian'.⁵⁶

For her own part, Molly signed her name (signature No.313) on a 1916 roll of honour for the GPO Garrison which is now held by the National Museum of Ireland.⁵⁷ Perhaps uniquely, Molly's participation in Easter Week ensured that she is remembered in some sources for both the GPO Garrison and with the Fifth Battalion in north County Dublin, an example being the work of Joseph E.A. Connell, *Who's who in the Dublin rising 1916*.⁵⁸

Molly's life ended on Sunday 17 July 1949, when she was seventy-six years old. On the following day at Crickstown cemetery, she received military honours and a speech was read by PJ Burke, TD.⁵⁹ A wall plaque was erected in her memory in April 1969.⁶⁰ It was paid for by local subscriptions and supported by the Fingal Old IRA [Welfare] Commemorative Society, 1916-1921, which saw the project through to completion on a bridge near her former home, 'Garden View Cottage' in Oldtown.⁶¹ While there is more that could be written about Molly's later life, nevertheless, the author is thankful for the opportunity to chronicle her story thus far on this particular occasion.



Figure 10 Molly as photographed c.1927 by Dr Brian Cusack. She was then about fifty-three years old. The original photograph is held by Miss Catherine Cusack and is reproduced here with her permission⁵²



Molly Adrien's 1916 medal (courtesy of Miriam and Gerard Griffin)

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Endnotes

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- 3 Samuel Watson (comp. ed.), 'The Dublin Directory; merchants and traders' in *The gentleman's and citizen's almanack* (Dublin, 1783), p. 14. Accessed from <https://getoutofthatgarden.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/merchant-traders-of-dublin.pdf>
- 4 Cameron, *History of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland*, p. 458. For more details about the Adrien's lease of the Dawson Street House, see the research papers of Peter F. Byrne, in the R.I.A. Dawson Street (file SR/16/1/D/ Academy Archives/History/box 1/Adrien).
- 5 Catholic Parish Registers. <http://registers.nli.ie> Noel French, *1916, Meath and more* (Trim, Co. Meath, 2016), p. 79.
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- 7 Sin ad Collins, *Balrothery Poor Law Union, County Dublin, 1839-1851* (Dublin, 2005).
- 8 Census of Ireland, 1901. Photograph taken by the author in 2005.
- 9 Details from Adrien grave headstone at Crickstown cemetery, Curraha, County Meath, as viewed by author in 2005.
- 10 *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Nov.; 19 Dec. 1879.
- 11 *Irish Times*, 24 Sept. 1889.
- 12 Irish Genealogy online. www.Irishgenealogy.ie
- 13 Un-identified newspaper. www.limerickcity.ie/Ewart.pdf
- 14 Ask about Ireland. www.askaboutireland.ie/griffiths-valuation/index
- 15 Interview by the author with Margaret and Declan Griffin, at Rowlestown House, Kilsallaghan, Swords, on Monday 10 Oct. 2005.
- 16 Photographs taken by the author at Rowlestown House, Rowlestown, Kilsallaghan, Swords, on 10 Oct. 2005.
- 17 Irish Genealogy online. www.irishgenealogy.ie Catholic Parish Registers at the NLI. registers.nli.ie
- 18 Photographs by courtesy of Eva Murdoch (nee Griffin), Malahide.
- 19 Irish Genealogy online. www.irishgenealogy.ie civil record for the death of William Adrien, in the 3rd quarter of 1890. Group registration ID, N/R, SR district/reg. area Balrothery, Vol. No. 2, page, 247. (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.
- 20 NAI. Calendar of wills & administrations, 1858-1922. Will of Edward William Adrien, proved on 13 Dec. 1890. www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie (Accessed 15 Nov. 2015).
- 21 Census of Ireland, 1901.
- 22 Interview by the author with Margaret and Declan Griffin, at Rowlestown House, Kilsallaghan, on 10 Oct. 2005.
- 23 Photograph taken by author on 10 Oct. 2005. Eva Murdoch named the children as, front row, left to right, Patrick, William, Malachy and Eva. Back row, left to right, Thomas, Marjorie, Clare, & Stephen. The boy sitting on Patrick's knee was her father William Griffin.

- 24 *Irish Times*, 6 May 1914
- 25 *Drogheda Independent*, 11 July 1914.
- 26 NAI, BG 40 A, MS Book, Balrothery Board of Guardians.
- 27 Trevor Ó Clochartaigh (Senator), John Hedges (ed.), 'Marion Steenson - laoch I measc na mBan' in, *An Phoblacht*, 30 Mar. 2014. Mark Moloney took the photograph for the article. Accessed from, <http://www.anphoblacht.com/contents/23870>
- 28 Eva Murdock represented the Griffin family's view that the central figure in the photograph was Molly and related it to the author by email on 30 Mar. Apr. 2016. She said that Molly had black hair while Eva's was red.
- 29 Roll of honour Ire. <http://www.rollofhonourirl.com/info.php>
- 30 Noel French, *1916, Meath and more*, p. 78.
- 31 Military Archives, Dublin. WMSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf <http://msearch.militaryarchives.ie/brief.aspx>
- 32 Séamus Kavanagh. BMH. WS. 1670; cited in, Ray Bateson, *Memorials of the Easter Rising* (Dublin, 2013), p. 252.
- 33 Áine Heron, Mrs. BMH. WS. 0293; cited in, Bateson, *Memorials of the Easter Rising*, p. 252.
- 34 *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.
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- 41 Military Archives, Dublin. WMSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf
- 42 Joseph Lawless (Col.). BMH. WS. 1043. Sean O'Brien, *Field of fire ...*, p. 24. Peter F. Whearity, *The Easter Rising of 1916 in north County Dublin: a Skerries perspective* (Dublin, 2013), pp 31-2.
- 43 Military Archives, Dublin. WMSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf
- 44 Gerry Golden. BMH. WS. 177.
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- 46 Ibid.
- 47 Tom Seaver, *A 1916 Fingallian Rebel* (Murroe, Co. Limerick), p. 366.
- 48 Charles Weston. BMH. WS. 149.
- 49 Military Archives, Dublin. WMSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf
- 50 Lawless. BMH. WS. 1043. Sean O'Brien, *Field of fire*, p. 61.
- 51 Military Archives, Dublin. WMSP34REF152MARYADRIEN.pdf
- 52 *Souvenir Booklet commemorating the golden jubilee of St. Mary's National School, Oldtown*, (Apr. 1997), p. 13. The boys 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 the Oldtown Dispensary from 1919.
- 53 Jimmy Wren, *The GPO Garrison Easter Week 1916: a biographical dictionary* (Dublin, 2015), p. 1.
- 54 *Fingal Fingerpost: organ of the Donabate Parish Council*, Vol. 3 (Mar. 1944), p. 7.
- 55 Ó Luing, *I Die in a Good Cause, A study of Thomas Ashe, idealist and revolutionary* (Tralee, 1970), p. 81.
- 56 Charles Townshend, *Easter 1916, the Irish Rebellion* (London, 2005), p. 218. Charles Weston, BMH WS. 149.
- 57 National Museum of Ireland. <http://microsites.museum.ie/rollofhonour1916/roleofwomen.aspx>
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- 59 *Irish Press*, 20 July 1949.
- 60 *Irish Press*, 7 Apr. 1969. Ray Bateson, *Memorials of the Easter Rising* (Dublin, 2013).
- 61 Interview by the author with Margaret and Declan Griffin, at Rowlestown House, on 10 Oct. 2005. The author in conversation with the then secretary of the society, Matt McCormack, Swords, on 10 Aug. 2006.