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## Abbreviations

UIL; United Irish League

IPP; Irish Parliamentary Party

IGCMR; Inspector general's confidential monthly report

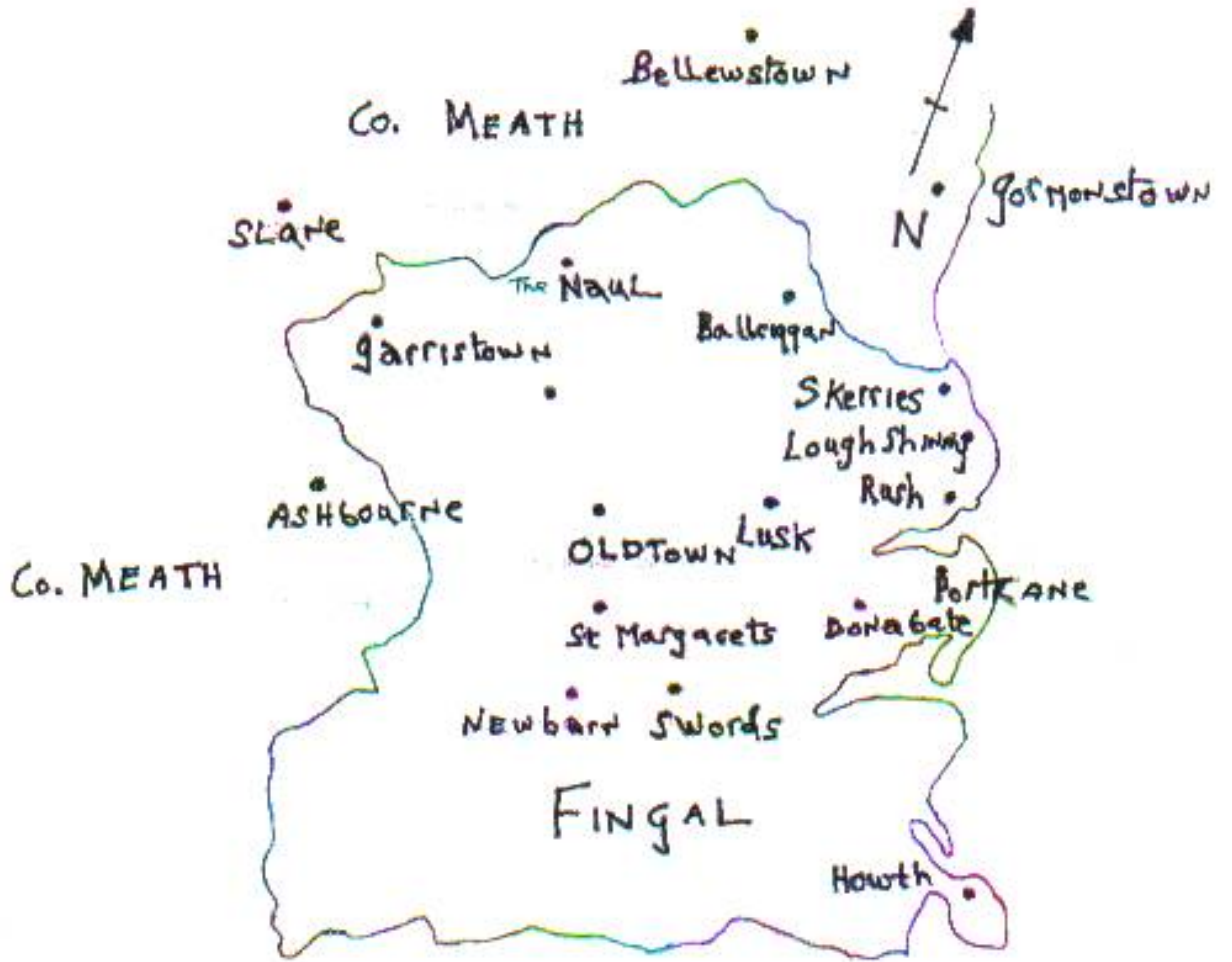
CICMR; County inspector's confidential monthly report

R.D.C; Rural District Council

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Map1: North County Dublin (hereafter referred to as Fingal)



Map of proposed study area as drawn by author (not to scale)

## Introduction

Before beginning the process of researching on the subject of the United Irish League (UIL) in Fingal, it is necessary to carry out a review of work that has already been done. A good place to begin would be the bibliographical site 'Irish History Online'. However, in the case of new work not yet listed on the above, it is prudent to access a search-engine site such as 'Google'. One must then broaden the search by means of a 'double historiography' of the local and national aspects of the theme. A guide to sources by Terence Dooley, *The big houses and landed estates of Ireland: a research guide*,<sup>1</sup> proved an invaluable starting place in regard to published works on the UIL. Beginning with the works in the guide, in no particular order, the work of Clare C. Murphy, 'Conflict in the west, the ranch war continues, 1911-1912, part one; in *Cathair Na Mart*, vol. 15 (1995) and part two, in vol. 16 (1996) were informative.<sup>2</sup> The 1999, journal provides an article by Conal Thomas 'The land for the people: the United Irish League and land reform in North Galway and West Mayo, 1898-1912'.<sup>3</sup> This work gives a useful account of the establishment of the UIL in Westport in 1898 by William O'Brien. The work of Philip Bull 'The significance of the nationalist response to the Irish land act of 1903' gives a national flavour of the situation at that time.<sup>4</sup> Fergus Campbell also deals with the national situation in his 'Irish popular politics and the making of the Wyndham Land Act, 1901-1903'.<sup>5</sup> However, to get a proper balance the following works should be looked at too; Paul Bew, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland, 1890-1910: Parnellites and radical agrarians*;<sup>6</sup> F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland since the famine*;<sup>7</sup> W.E. Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in Ireland, 1848-1904*.<sup>8</sup> While all the above works are essential reading, nevertheless, they provide information on the national rather than the local, and as such are only one part of the historiography.

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<sup>1</sup> Terence Dooley, *The big houses and landed estates of Ireland: a research guide* (Dublin, 2007), pp 48-52.

<sup>2</sup> Clare C. Murphy, 'Conflict in the west, the ranch war continues, 1911-1912', part 1 in *Cathair Na Mart*, no. 15 (1995), pp 84-105; See also part 2, no. 16 (1996), pp 112-139.

<sup>3</sup> Conal Thomas, 'The land for the people: the United Irish League and land reform in North Galway and West Mayo, 1898-1912' in *Cathair Na Mart*, no. 19 (1999), pp 167-170.

<sup>4</sup> Philip, J. Bull, 'The significance of the nationalist response to the Irish land act of 1903' in J. 1. McGuire, Keith Jeffery and Ciaran Brady (eds), *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. xxv111 (1992-3), pp 283-305.

<sup>5</sup> Fergus Campbell, 'Irish popular politics and the making of the Wyndham Land Act, 1901-1903' in the *Historical Journal*, vol. 45, (4) (2002), pp 755-774.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Bew, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland, 1890-1910: Parnellites and radical agrarians* (Oxford, 1987).

<sup>7</sup> F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland since the famine* (London, 1978), pp 216-17, 260-2, 265, 267.

<sup>8</sup> W.E. Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in Ireland, 1848-1904* (Dundalk, 1994).

It has been observed here that though, Bew, in the bibliography to his work as discussed earlier, included the *Drogheda Independent*, a weekly newspaper as a source. However, curiously, no reference to that source was found in the footnotes of his work. Does this indicate that he uncovered nothing worth including in his work from that source? In the case of this 'local study' the aforementioned newspaper will be one of the most important primary sources. This is because it covered the entire period of interest here and reported on the establishment, meetings, and activities of the UIL branches not only in North County Dublin, but also counties Meath and Louth. An important aspect too, is that because the circulation of the newspaper was restricted to the northern part of County Dublin, this allows a distinction to be made between those branches within the study area and in the remainder of the same county. Another newspaper of interest will be the UILs official organ, the *Irish People*.

When it comes to the local level as within Fingal, what, if any, works are available? A work which had an element of UIL history within it and which dealt with the relevant area was an article by Eugene Coyle 'Larkinism and the 1913 Co. Dublin farm labourers' dispute' in *Dublin Historical Journal*.<sup>9</sup> However, this work relates to a later period outside the scope of this work. In addition, the above work suffers from poor citation and contains an error which points to the formation of the UIL four years earlier than was actually the case. Though the latter may have been a simple error to which all writers are prone, nevertheless, the former issue is of more damaging impact to the work.

An excellent source on the UIL is police returns provided by the British Public Record Office (PRO) as Colonial Office Class material, available on microfilm as CO 904 British in Ireland Series 1. The material can be found in the National Library of Ireland (NLI) and also at the John Paul 11 library, NUI Maynooth. Another important work is the memoirs of the Earl of Dunraven, published in *Past times and pastimes*,<sup>10</sup> related by a participant of the 1902-1903, Land Conference and thus provides a contemporary account of events at that time. Two sources which disappointed in this instance were; the National Archive of Ireland (NAI), and the British Enhanced Parliamentary Papers for Ireland (EPPI). These were searched

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<sup>9</sup> Eugene Coyle, 'Larkinism and the 1913 Co. Dublin farm labourers dispute' in *Dublin Historical Record*, vol. LV111, no. 2 (autumn, 2005), pp 176-190.

<sup>10</sup> Earl of Dunraven, *Past times and pastimes* (London, 1922).



online and though the sources did provide a few hits, nevertheless, nothing came forth which was of any relevance here.<sup>11</sup> Finally, a work by Raymond Gillespie and Myrtle Hill (eds), *Doing Irish local history; pursuit and practice*, points to a way of looking at people involved in the league (or any other group), by seeing them as a ‘community of interest’ and their place within the humanised landscape.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, what are the aims of this study? It is proposed through research into both primary and secondary sources to chronicle the story of the United Irish League in that part of North County Dublin long known as ‘Fingal’. The study will be cognisant of the context within which the area fits both in the wider local area of north-east Leinster, and also nationally within the context of the country as a whole. This can best be achieved by recourse to the double historiography on the subject of the UIL. Some pertinent questions which might be asked, in an effort to further the aims of the study are as follows; when did the UIL arrive in Fingal? How were the UILs aims and objectives received by the tenants and labourers in Fingal? What did the UIL have to offer tenants and labourers in Fingal? Did the aims of the UIL change as it moved eastwards and how did these changes manifest themselves within the study area? What evidence is there of agrarian agitation in Fingal? Was the electoral success of the UIL in local government elections in 1902, replicated in Fingal?

The story will be told over two parts, with the first part looking at the chronological period 1900-1901; while the second part will deal with the year 1902. Before moving onto the next part of the study, perhaps one should remember the timely advice given by Terence Dooley to his students and of which this author was one, in relation to the examination of sources, is to, ‘always be sceptical but never cynical’.

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<sup>11</sup> Enhanced British Parliamentary Papers on Ireland, 1801-1922; [http://www.eppi.ac.uk/eppi/digbib/doasearch?sa1=Collection&sv1=\\* &sa8=EPPI-Available&sv8=&so8=%3Alall&sa4=Fulltext&so4=%3Alall&sv4=united+irish+league&sa5=Title&so5=%3Alall&sv5=&sa6=PaperNumber&so6=%3Alall&sv6=&sa7=LCSUBJECTHEADINGS&sv7=&so7=%3Alall&submit=Advanced+search](http://www.eppi.ac.uk/eppi/digbib/doasearch?sa1=Collection&sv1=* &sa8=EPPI-Available&sv8=&so8=%3Alall&sa4=Fulltext&so4=%3Alall&sv4=united+irish+league&sa5=Title&so5=%3Alall&sv5=&sa6=PaperNumber&so6=%3Alall&sv6=&sa7=LCSUBJECTHEADINGS&sv7=&so7=%3Alall&submit=Advanced+search) (14 May, 2009). See also [www.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.nationalarchives.ie)

<sup>12</sup> Raymond Gillespie and Myrtle Hill, *Doing Irish local history; pursuit and practice* (Belfast, 1999), p. 13.

## Part one

## The UIL in Fingal, 1900-1901

A brief look at the background of the UIL might be informative here. Fergus Campbell's work 'Irish popular politics and the making of the Wyndham Land Act, 1901-1903'<sup>13</sup> provides such a background, as does the work of several other writers. One must look backwards to the land acts of the period 1880-1896, and in particular to the 1881 Act, which brought about the system of dual ownership of land between landlords and tenants in Ireland. While the act gave tenants welcome rights to their tenancy, however, contentment did not come along with it. The landowners feared the right of tenants to have regular rent reviews, which decreased their rental income. By 1900, there had been two such reviews and another was due in 1912. Meanwhile, tenants still remained on inadequate land holdings and were as poor as ever. They required either a supplementary income or extra land, or both. However, no relief was forthcoming at that time and thus small holders, particularly those in the congested western counties remained as unhappy as ever.<sup>14</sup> The Irish Chief Secretary George Wyndham, said, in 1900, on the issue of land;

In spite of...some 40 Acts of Parliament, the [Irish] land question is not progressing towards a solution...Landlordism and political economy were banished from Ireland by the Act of 1881. As a consequence, Ireland...is fixed for ever in the deplorable conditions of land tenure which obtained there 30 years ago.<sup>15</sup>

Wyndham's words demonstrate the magnitude of the land question in Ireland at that time. Importantly too, in the period 1880-1887, many landlords consolidated their holdings after thousands of tenants had suffered eviction. Such consolidated land was in turn leased out by landlords to those who wished to use it for grazing purposes. However, such leases, in order to deprive the lessee of the rights which applied to full tenants, was let on what became known as the 'eleventh month system'.<sup>16</sup> Small land-holders could not compete with graziers for the purchase of

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<sup>13</sup> Fergus Campbell, 'Irish popular politics and the making of the Wyndham Land Act, 1901-1903' in the *Historical Journal*, vol. 45, (4) (2002).

<sup>14</sup> Fergus Campbell, 'Irish popular politics and the making of the Wyndham Land Act, 1901-1903' in the *Historical Journal*, vol. 45, (4) (2002), pp 755-9.

<sup>15</sup> George Wyndham, 'The Irish land question and the need for legislation', 1901, London, Public Record Office (PRO) Cab 37/59/147; Fergus Campbell, 'Irish popular politics and the making of the Wyndham Land Act, 1901-1903' in the *Historical Journal*, vol. 45, (4) (2002), p. 755.

<sup>16</sup> Terence Dooley, *The big houses and landed estates of Ireland; a research guide* (Dublin, 2007), pp 49-50.

such land and this locked them into their then inadequate holdings with no hope to improve their situation. The forgoing predicament applied especially in the western counties. Wyndham described such congested farms as ‘holdings which are too small to support a family’.<sup>17</sup> It was the situation in the west which brought about the formation by William O’Brien, MP; in January 1898, of the United Irish League (UIL). At the same time in Ulster, further pressure emanated through T.W. Russell’s campaign for compulsory land purchase.<sup>18</sup>

What were the UILs main objectives? Was it a purely agrarian movement or had it a political constituent, or a mixture of both? Paul Bew suggests that the question is controversial and points to O’Brien’s 1899 diaries, published in 1907 in the *Irish People*. The diaries appear to show that O’Brien had harboured, along with the desire to help congested tenants, a political objective of bringing about a healing of the Parnellite and anti-Parnellite division within the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP).<sup>19</sup> Fergus Campbell in his work ‘Irish popular politics and the making of the Wyndham Land Act, 1901-1903’, suggests that after September, 1901, that the two main aims of the UIL were; boycotting to undermine the law; and to increase the political pressure at Westminster for compulsory land purchase.<sup>20</sup> It could be said that O’Brien’s objectives, in whatever guise, would be more likely to succeed if the IPP rift were healed. In any event it appears that the party became as one again in January, 1900.<sup>21</sup> However, were the divisions and cracks within the party only papered over with a view to present a united front? Perhaps.

Meanwhile, when did the league reach Fingal? From the source, the British in Ireland series CO 904, which provides a summary of counties which had UIL branches from 1898-1921, it is stated that County Dublin, had two branches by the end of May 1900, with a combined membership of seventy-two.<sup>22</sup> However, no information is given as to the geographical situation of the branches within the

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<sup>17</sup> George Wyndham, PRO Cab 37/59.147; Fergus Campbell, ‘Irish popular politics and the making of the Wyndham Land Act, 1901-1903’ in *The Historical Journal*, vol. 45, (4) (2002), pp 758-9.

<sup>18</sup> Terence Dooley, *The big houses and landed estates of Ireland; a research guide* (Dublin, 2007), p. 50.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Bew, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland, 1890-1910; Parnellites and radical agrarians* (Oxford, 1987), p. 46; Philip, J. Bull, ‘The reconstruction of the Irish Parliamentary movement 1895-1903’ (University of Cambridge Ph.D., 1973), pp 140-3.

<sup>20</sup> Fergus Campbell, ‘Irish popular politics and the making of the Wyndham Land Act, 1901-1903’ in *The Historical Journal*, vol. 45, (4) (2002), p. 761.

<sup>21</sup> Philip, J. Bull, ‘The significance of the nationalist response to the Irish land act of 1903’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxviii, no. 111 (1993), p. 285.

<sup>22</sup> CO 904/ 20, part 2; police returns, summary of branches of the UIL in the quarter ending 31 May, 1900, pp 457, 458.

county. Therein lies a difficulty as to how to differentiate between those branches which were situated within Fingal, and those found elsewhere in County Dublin. The same source demonstrates a rapidly developing situation with another two branches formed by the end of December, 1900, and a total membership of 107. Meanwhile, in the adjacent County Meath, there were then twenty branches of the league with a combined membership of 846.<sup>23</sup> The question arises as to whether any of the aforementioned four County Dublin branches lay within Fingal? In this regard information from an editorial in the *Drogheda Independent* proved informative for the period in January, 1901;

The earnestness with which people everywhere are interesting themselves in the spread of the national organisation is one of the most encouraging signs of the time. In every province of the country, even in Ulster, reports are forthcoming of the hold which the United Irish League is taking on the masses of the people. Not a week goes by but new branches are added to the parent tree, and if the rate of progress so far maintained continues, and there is no reason to doubt that it will, a not very long period will elapse until the Irish people, north and south, east and west, are found banded together once more in a brotherhood of virile and determined nationality. In Meath the organisation has made a steady advance, and soon we may expect to see a branch of the organisation existing in every district of the royal county. The people of the Metropolitan [Dublin] County, too, have begun to move in the matter. A couple of weeks ago Garristown [County Dublin] led the way, and on Sunday last [6 Jan. 1901] the good example thus shown was followed at Naul [County Dublin] where a vigorous branch of the league was established. Now that the people of these historic centres have shown a good example, we have no doubt that their neighbours throughout North Dublin will hasten to emulate it, and, by spreading the national organisation, help to lend strength and force to the movement for the redress of the wrongs to which our country has been so long subjected.<sup>24</sup>

It appears from the above that at least one of the four branches referred to in the police returns was situated in the north-western part of Fingal (see Map1). Further information from the same source as above, described the Naul meeting as a 'splendid' event. Those invited to address the gathering were; James Ennis (chairman), Naul; P. White, MP; W.D. Harbison, and county councillor Thomas McIvor. J.J. Clancy, MP; could not attend due to illness.<sup>25</sup> The report lists the names of seventy men, several of whom shared the same surnames, suggesting the involvement of extended families in the league. Meanwhile, Ennis, in speaking, harked back to the days when the Naul boasted successful branches of the National League and the Land League. Now, he said that we have a branch of the UIL, it would

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<sup>23</sup> CO 904/ 20, part 2; police returns, summary of branches of the UIL in the quarter ending 31 May, 1900, p. 443.

<sup>24</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 12 Jan. 1901.

<sup>25</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 12 Jan. 1901.

be 'run on the old lines'.<sup>26</sup> Was he perhaps harking after a return to the agitation of the old days too? Meanwhile, several resolutions were adopted and these were; to continue the struggle for self-government; to push for compulsory land purchase whose terms applied to labourers and artisans for the purchase of their homes and plots; to accept the necessity for organisation and agitation.<sup>27</sup> When W. D. Harbison spoke, he pointed to the large attendance, as evidence, if such were needed, of the commitment of the 'nationalists of North County Dublin'.<sup>28</sup> However, the evidence gathered by this study thus far suggests that such commitment as referred to by Harbison, was at that time of the rather weak variety.

When a UIL branch was formed at Swords on Sunday 31 March, a 'great national demonstration' took place in a 'harmonious and enthusiastic atmosphere'. The invited speakers were J.J. Clancy, MP; William Field, MP; P. White, MP; A. J. Kettle, W.D. Harbison, P.J. O'Neill, chairman of Dublin County Council; and others. The usual police presence and government note-taker were also present. The names of more than seventy men were listed<sup>29</sup> however, as before, space considerations precludes dealing with them here. While the chairman, P. J. Kettle, felt that the attendance was satisfactory, nevertheless, two other events drew people away on the day. One was a Jubilee procession in the town, while the other was the funeral of 'Fenian' James Stephens, in Dublin. Letters of apologies were read [perhaps as a consequence of these conflicting events] for the non-attendance of Rev. D.P. Mulcahy, PP, Swords; and the Rev. N. Russell, CC, Swords; also J.J. Clancy, MP, who remained ill; and A. J. Kettle, who was attending the funeral at Glasnevin.<sup>30</sup> No explanation was given for the absence of the clergy. Did they avoid the occasion or were they detained elsewhere, could one not have attended? Similar resolutions were adopted as at the Naul, and need not be gone into again. Meanwhile, the next speaker, Thomas Kettle, began by asking the gathering a question! Would they like to hear what was being said of Dublin, by people elsewhere in Ireland? 'Dublin is asleep or that the people have all gone away from it. They know that in other parts the British government is sending away the people and taking in bullocks in their stead'.<sup>31</sup> Was Dublin the only area which was slow to take to the league? It appears not to have been! An example

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<sup>26</sup>*Drogheda Independent*, 12 Jan. 1901.

<sup>27</sup>*Drogheda Independent*, 12 Jan. 1901.

<sup>28</sup>*Drogheda Independent*, 12 Jan. 1901.

<sup>29</sup>*Drogheda Independent*, 12 Jan. 1901.

<sup>30</sup>*Drogheda Independent*, 6 Apr. 1901.

<sup>31</sup>*Drogheda Independent*, 6 Apr. 1901.

was seen at a UIL meeting at Crossakeel, County Meath on 5 May, 1901, were the speaker scolded the attendance that while the rest of the country was fighting for self-government and the ‘expropriation of landlordism’, the farmers of Crossakeel were ‘apathetic, careless, and indifferent’.<sup>32</sup> It appears that the problem was more widespread than just County Dublin. On the national stage when the UIL National Directory met on 7 May, 1901, among information that disclosed the number of branches (eighty), which had formed since the previous December, it was also noted that one of them was at Naul.<sup>33</sup> An editorial in the *Drogheda Independent* shows that when the National Directory met again on 27 August, 1902, it was noted that out of the four provinces, Leinster, lagged behind the rest. The province had sixteen constituencies without a divisional executive and this figure included constituencies in South Meath and North Louth. In addition, North Dublin was without an executive to represent its seven branches then established. If the advancement of the UIL was looked on a national basis, all appeared to be in good order, however, such was not the case in Dublin and its surrounding counties.<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, the National Directory under the chairmanship of John Redmond (president of the UIL), saw fit to send the following letter to all IPP members;

At a meeting of the Directory of the United Irish League, held on 27<sup>th</sup> inst, [August, 1901] a resolution was unanimously adopted urging upon all members of the Irish party to take an active part in the agitation during the [parliamentary] recess in Ireland. I need not, I am sure, impress upon you the importance of this duty. The power of an Irish Party in Parliament depends entirely upon the strength of the National organisation at home in Ireland. The spread of the United Irish league and the promotion of a vigorous agitation all over the country constitute a duty quite as important and imperative as attendance at Westminster during the session. May I ask you to let me know whether I may hand your name to the Directory as one willing to attend the meetings which they are now organising?<sup>35</sup>

The above action seems to suggest that the UIL leadership was unhappy with the level of action undertaken by some branches in the country. However, no specific region was picked out. From 1 September, 1901, the pressure on landlords was ratcheted up a notch or two with the decision by J. Redmond and W. O’Brien, at a UIL meeting at Westport, to sanction the so-called winter campaign of boycotting and agitation in pursuit of compulsory land purchase and self-government. The following text related to O’Brien’s views on the matter;

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<sup>32</sup>*Drogheda Independent*, 11 May, 1901.

<sup>33</sup>*Drogheda Independent*, 20 Apr. 1901.

<sup>34</sup>*Drogheda Independent*, 31 Aug. 1901.

<sup>35</sup>*Drogheda Independent*, 7 Sept. 1901.

It is my solemn conviction that unless the people take the matter [the proposed land legislation] into their own hands this winter and open the eyes of the Government by very vigorous measures; ...the Government will come down next session with a Land Purchase Bill that might well be drafted in Lord Sligo's rent office ...I can see only one remedy, and that is, that every branch of the League in the West should take action in their own parish and ...[boycott] every obstructing landlord ...People may say to me that would be to throw half the country into a blaze. My answer is so much the better if the whole country were in a blaze. Will anybody tell me how otherwise anything has ever been won or will ever be won for Ireland?<sup>36</sup>

The above text appears to be restricting the agitation in the main to the western seaboard, though, if the situation should spread, then so much the better in O'Brien's view. Also in September, the organ of the UIL, the *Irish People*, in an editorial, stated 'that north and south, east and west, the winter campaign against landlordism is progressing'.<sup>37</sup> However, while no evidence has been forthcoming thus far to show any agitation occurring within Fingal, nevertheless, Philip Bull relates that agitation in some parts of the country was increasing daily. Such agitation would not reach its nadir until the summer of 1902.<sup>38</sup> In relation to the lack of agitation in Fingal or in the eastern region generally, it may have had to do with O'Brien's call for action in the western region while seemingly being ambiguous towards the situation elsewhere.

It has already been seen that the uptake of the UIL in Fingal was relatively slow, but such was the case elsewhere too. An example being seen at Slane, County Meath, in December, 1901, when Thomas Wall, R.D.C; while describing the backwardness of the district towards the league, said, 'if a stranger came amongst them, he [the stranger] would say they [the farmers and labourers] had no grievances, and needed no reforms', at that time. Afterwards, Patrick White, MP; stressed that the time for such apathetic inaction was over, and even though the clergy had yet to fully support the UIL, there was no other organisation like it. Support for the league was essential as otherwise he said that 'it was useless appealing to England's sense of justice for she would not yield unless to force'. Laurence Ginnell suggested that though the UIL was as potent a force as ever existed in Ireland, nevertheless, he felt that earlier movements were more forceful than the UIL appeared to be then. He also made a reference to 'sham agitation'.<sup>39</sup> Where the above negative comments related to the

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<sup>36</sup> *Irish People*, 7 Sept. 1901; Fergus Campbell, 'Irish popular politics and the making of the Wyndham Land Act, 1901-1903' in *The Historical Journal*, vol. 45, (4) (2002), p. 760.

<sup>37</sup> *Irish People*, 28 Sept. 1901.

<sup>38</sup> Philip, J. Bull, 'The significance of the nationalist response to the Irish land act of 1903' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxviii, no. 111 (1993), p. 285.

<sup>39</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 21 Dec. 1901.

eastern portion of Ireland? The lack of evidence of agitation in this area appears to suggest that it was.

Meanwhile branches continued to be formed in Fingal, and on 30 December, one such emerged at St. Margaret's. The business discussed the election of officers for the branch as well as the selection of delegates for the forthcoming Land Convention. The branch, though newly established, was said to have been in a flourishing condition and provided evidence that County Dublin was finally 'falling into line'.<sup>40</sup> What way would the above sentiments manifest themselves in the coming year? Part two of this study may hopefully provide some of the answers.

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<sup>40</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 4 Jan. 1902.



## Part two

## The UIL in Fingal, 1902

The Fingal branches continued to meet during the first months of the new year, however, apart from routine business, little of significance was reported in the sources utilised here.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, on the national stage, George Wyndham was bringing in his first land bill, however, its proposals led to disappointment, and UIL leader, William O'Brien saw it as a plan which was 'not one to abolish landlordism, but to reinforce it'.<sup>42</sup> At the end of March, police returns state that County Dublin had four UIL branches with a total of 162 members.<sup>43</sup> However, if such was the case, then all of the branches recorded by the police were within the Fingal area. The four branches, which were already dealt with in part one of this study, were at Garristown, Naul, Swords, and St. Margaret's. When it comes to the total membership of the four branches in Fingal, though no membership figures were provided from the sources used, apart that is of lists of names of those in attendance at meetings. However, when these are added together the resulting figure comes close to that found in the police report. Meanwhile, it might prove useful to compare the situation in County Dublin, with that of its neighbouring counties Meath, and Wicklow. The former had twenty-eight branches and a total UIL membership of 1,155 people, while the latter had twelve branches and a combined membership of 885.<sup>44</sup> If County Dublin as a whole is compared with the other two counties, then it fares badly. However, as it appears to have been the case that all of the branches were then within Fingal, then the comparison is more favourable. This aspect can be pushed even further when it is seen that all four branches were in one geographically defined corner of Fingal, then that particular part of Fingal compares much more favourably indeed (see Map1). The question is raised as to what brought about such a concentration of branches in that area, however, apart from suggesting that influences from County Meath held the key to understanding the situation there, and also, the fact that the two earliest branches which formed in Fingal, at Garristown and Naul, straddle the county boundary appears to bolster this hypothesis.

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<sup>41</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 29 Mar, 1902.

<sup>42</sup> Sally Warwick-Haller, *William O'Brien and the Irish land war* (Dublin, 1990), p. 216; Fergus Campbell, 'Irish popular politics and the making of the Wyndham Land Act, 1901-1903' in *The Historical Journal*, vol. 45, (4) (2002), p. 768.

<sup>43</sup> CO 904/20, part 2, police returns, a summary of UIL meetings, 1898-1921, p. 426.

<sup>44</sup> CO 904/20, part 2, police returns, a summary of UIL meetings, 1898-1921, p. 427.

There were several branch meetings during the early part of 1902, at St. Margaret's, Naul, and Swords, where issues such as; support for the IPP; concern over a proposed water scheme; funding for the Irish language; the disorganised state of County Dublin in regard to the coming local government elections; the need for people to purchase Irish manufactured goods; emigration; the censure by the UIL of nationalists associated with a presentation to constable O'Kane at Swords; priestly assistance in forming a UIL branch at St. Margaret's; among other things were discussed.<sup>45</sup> However, while the aforementioned issues were of great local importance at that time, nevertheless, one could be forgiven for wondering whether the UIL members had the slightest interest in what was happening on the land front, or indeed, on the issue of agitating for the compulsory purchase of land. Perhaps evidence will be found as the story progresses which will shed some light on the mindset of UIL members in Fingal at that time.

Moving on, a public demonstration took place at Lusk, on 23 March, 1902, for the purpose of forming a UIL branch. Around 200 people were in attendance, and were addressed by; D. Kilbride, J. A. O'Sullivan (UIL organisers), Laurence Ginnell, P. Matthews, among others.<sup>46</sup> Meanwhile, an editorial in the *Drogheda Independent* proved informative;

The sturdy men of that portion of the ancient territory of Fingal, cast in their lot with the vast majority of their fellow nationalists elsewhere, and gave their formal adhesion to the principles of the United Irish League. If the men of Lusk were not hitherto in the forefront of the present movement to win self-government and the land for the people under the aegis of the national organisation, their seeming tardiness was, we feel certain, in no way motivated by a want of sympathy with Irish national aspirations, or a want of a due appreciation of their own individual rights as agriculturalists. It was rather, we think, the effect of that slow but sure tendency which is a somewhat marked characteristic of the Fingalians, and which cause the men of that race to look round about and inside a question--to examine fully its claims upon its adhesion-- before making up their minds that their duty to their country and to themselves demands their pursuit of a definite line of action, the men of that territory are to be depended upon to see the matter through. They are not so volatile as our southern or western kinsfolk, nor so readily set going, but they are every whit as resolute when they set about a thing, and have, on the whole, far more staying powers. They don't enthuse so much, but the fire lasts longer once it is enkindled. That being the state of the case, we were not very much surprised that the men of ancient Fingal did not, once the banner of the UIL was thrown to the breeze, immediately declare their adhesion to its cause. But now that they have cast in their lot with the national organisation, we shall be much surprised if they do not show by their manly resoluteness that they are in earnest and mean business. Ireland's cause is

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<sup>45</sup>*Drogheda Independent*, 25 Jan., 8 Feb., 1, 8, 29, Mar., 3 May. 1902.

<sup>46</sup> CO 904/21, part 3, police returns, anti-government organisations and UIL meetings, 1882-1921, p. 18.

so much theirs as that of any other section of our countrymen. And, there are few portions of the country where the people's only remaining industry—that of agriculture—is more heavily handicapped than it is in North Dublin. There are no more industrious people in Ireland than the farmers of North Dublin—they toil early and late—for the privilege of being merely allowed to live, they have to pay a heavier impost of rent, than, we believe, the people of any other county in Ireland. Incentives then, national or personal, are not wanting to induce such a people to strive their utmost to gain for their country national self-government, for themselves, individual emancipation from the pressing burden of landlordism. The means to these ends, can only be found in Ireland, in her present circumstances, by the organised strength which comes from a great national organisation such as the United Irish League. In enrolling themselves under its banner, the men of Lusk have manifested at the same time their devotion to the national ideal, and their strong common sense.<sup>47</sup>

The above editorial provides a wealth of information, however, when analysed and all the praise and padded words are removed, what does it say about the situation in Fingal at that time? The first aspect which comes to mind is that just because people were members of the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP), and therefore classed as nationalists, did not automatically mean that they accepted the principles of the UIL. Philip Bull suggests that John Dillon, for one, was lukewarm about the UILs policy on agitation.<sup>48</sup> Two examples of meetings which Dillon attended in County Roscommon, in 1901 and 1902, perhaps demonstrate the ambiguity of his situation in that on both occasions he lashed out against landlordism, and where his words were greeted with great enthusiasm by the gatherings. On the former occasion at Boyle, he said that the only remedy was to 'hunt out the British government and the landlords'.<sup>49</sup> Terence Dooley in his work, *The decline of the big house in Ireland* relates that on the latter occasion Dillon castigated landlords engaged in hunting, however, afterwards, a pack of hunting dogs in the area were attacked. He also urged people to band together in the UIL, and act with the same courage as the people in the Land League days.<sup>50</sup> The question arises as to how Dillon intended the changes he was advocating to happen without recourse to agitation? On the matter of how some nationalists within the IPP viewed such conflicting sentiments and how it coloured their own attitudes. This aspect could perhaps have led to some members of the party,

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<sup>47</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 29 Mar. 1902.

<sup>48</sup> Philip, J. Bull, 'The significance of the nationalist response to the Irish land act of 1903' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxviii, no. 111 (1993), p. 287.

<sup>49</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 12 Oct. 1902.

<sup>50</sup> Inspector general's confidential monthly report (IGCMR), County Roscommon, November, 1901; county inspector's confidential monthly report (CICMR), County Roscommon, November, 1901; Terence Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland; a study of Irish landed families, 1860-1960* (Dublin, 2001), p. 262.

even those in Fingal, from having a less than welcoming attitude to the UIL. Still on this aspect, David S. Jones, in his work *Graziers, land reform, and political conflict in Ireland*, suggests that even within the UIL itself, there was a few years later, a level of ambiguity between those who favoured militant forms of agitation and those whose preferences were for more moderate action. Amongst the former was Laurence Ginnell, who, according to Jones, saw cattle driving and boycotting as akin to ‘a form of civil disobedience’.<sup>51</sup> Philip Bull points to J. Redmond, J. Dillon, and T.P. O’Connor acting together in August, 1902, against the agitation policy of O’Brien on the basis that its severity could jeopardise the standing of the IPP at Westminster.<sup>52</sup>

Another press report on the Lusk meeting provides a list of names and addresses of over seventy individuals which is useful information. However, due to space limitations, this aspect cannot be expanded on here. Interestingly, it was seen that representatives attended from Fingal seaside towns of Skerries (two representatives), Balbriggan (two representatives), and Rush (ten representatives).<sup>53</sup> Such an attendance seems to provide evidence of a determination by local people and UIL organisers to expand the league further within that part of Fingal. However, if one were to judge from the number of representatives from Skerries and Balbriggan, then it seems that the UIL had an up-hill struggle to overcome. In relation to Rush, the situation there appears to be somewhat more positive. If one were to lay a bet as to which of these three towns, if any, were to form a branch in the near future, then the odds would favour Rush. The representation of the other two towns was paltry by comparison.

The speakers in the report were given as; Denis Kilbride, ex MP; Laurence Ginnell, secretary of the UIL National Directory; J. A. O’Sullivan, UIL organiser; and local men E. Rooney, and Peter Murtagh, R.D.C.. The meeting was chaired by John St. Laurence. It was noted in the report that women were conspicuous by their presence and that this augured well for the league in the area. Several resolutions were adopted but these, with the exception of two, were of a similar vein to those passed at the previous meeting of the branch. The two resolutions which differed had to do with supporting the Irish language, and of the necessity of people purchasing

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<sup>51</sup> *Meath Herald*, 31 Aug. 1907; David Seth Jones, *Graziers, land reform, and political conflict in Ireland* (Washington, DC, 1995), p. 197.

<sup>52</sup> O’Connor to O’Brien, 12 Aug. 1902 (U.C.C., O’Brien papers, AM 139-43); Philip, J. Bull, ‘The significance of the nationalist response to the Irish land act of 1903’ in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxviii, no. 111 (1993), p. 287.

<sup>53</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 29 Mar. 1902.

Irish manufactured goods. Murtagh began by relating that the people of Lusk were ‘never too fond of being very good nationalists, but he ventured to promise that they would now show the people of Dublin and of Ireland that the branch would be second to none in Ireland’.<sup>54</sup> It will be interesting to see if these optimistic projections to pass over time.

When Ginnell addressed the gathering he related that he had heard that ‘the people of North County Dublin did not want the league’, but now that a branch had been established [at Lusk] there was no reason why every boy and man should not join up. However, he wondered openly as to what had prevented them from forming a branch much earlier? Were they too comfortable and therefore did not need the benefit of the league he postulated? He felt that their needs were similar to elsewhere where branches had been formed. If it were the case that no reforms were warranted in the area, he nevertheless, was sure that they would want to offer assistance to those elsewhere who badly needed reforms. He was confident that the branch in Lusk was going to be a vigorous one and that the people of the area wanted the league. Without unity nothing could be achieved he told them. He thought it a hopeful sigh that the farmers and labourers in Lusk had decided that by binding together within the league that they would be stronger body than if each went his own way. In relation to the land bill which was to be introduced by G. Wyndham in the following week, if it should fail, then the branch should have a plan ready for such an event. Also, he was at pains to point out that the labourers must be facilitated in purchasing their plots and homes under any new scheme.<sup>55</sup> Ginnell appeared to be utilising the carrot and stick approach at Lusk, on the one hand castigating them for the slowness of forming a branch and also building up the hope that theirs would be a great branch in the future. When D. Kilbride spoke, he remarked on the many women in the attendance and suggested that such a situation augured well for the league as the women supported their men folk in the league.<sup>56</sup> Interestingly, this was the first mention of the female gender found thus far by this study. However, it stretched credibility that women were not present at other public meetings and perhaps this is just a case of females being airbrushed out of the historiography of the period.

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<sup>54</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 29 Mar. 1902.

<sup>55</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 29 Mar. 1902.

<sup>56</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 29 Mar. 1902.

Notwithstanding the positive gloss which the speakers appeared to be putting on the situation as to the slow uptake of the league in Fingal, nevertheless, the question posed by Ginnell as to why this was so, still, remains to be answered. It must be said here, that if the likes of Ginnell was unable to shed light on the subject, particularly as he stood amongst those who could have enlightened him, and by extension, us. However, at this remove in time it will be extremely difficult to find the answer now. Nevertheless, it is the job of the historian to try to elucidate something out of the muddiest waters and therefore the search for an answer goes on. Before moving on, information garnered from the work of D. George Boyce, *Nineteenth century Ireland; the search for stability* might provide a clue as to the concentration of the UIL in Fingal. Boyce, related that change had occurred during the two year period since the foundation of the UIL, which appeared to have a bearing on the way it was perceived in areas away from the western counties, and its high level of agrarian agitation. The fight there was not necessarily against landlords, but against graziers. Because of this, Boyce suggests that the UIL as an organisation, though politically important, nevertheless, was less so as a national movement and as a result it was not a 'force that could unite all Irishmen'.<sup>57</sup> Why the forgone might be important has to do with the way that landlords were geographically placed within Fingal, with their estates concentrated along the coastal strip from Howth to the river Delvin, and less so inland, especially the rural area where the UIL branches were concentrated (see Map1). Taylor and Skinner's 1778 map of North County Dublin shows landlords estates to good effect along the coastline.

The next speaker was J. A. O'Sullivan, who expressed himself amazed that though there were four policemen in attendance watching the proceedings, that they did so without interfering with the meeting. He contrasted this situation with the case in the western counties where proceedings are far less harmonious and he related an incident where he witnessed the police drawing their batons against a gathering who were meeting to deal with similar issues as that meeting at Lusk. Yet the attitude of the police was dramatically different. He gave an account of his being chased from a meeting on St. Patrick's Day at Galway, where he was pursued through the fields and feared for his life. He could not account for the difference in policing between the two parts of the country. He was however, glad to be able to say that there was

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<sup>57</sup> D. George Boyce, *Nineteenth century Ireland; the search for stability* (Dublin, 2005), p. 242.

twenty-five UIL meetings held in proclaimed areas recently and without any interference from police. The next to speak was one of the two representatives from Skerries, and he began by congratulating those men of Fingal who had formed branches of the league. However, though he himself was not a member of the league, he explained that this was because Skerries did not have a branch of the national organisation. Furthermore, he remarked, 'more shame to the men of Skerries'. As he continued to talk about the lack of a league branch in Skerries, a voice in the crowd shouted out that the answer was that 'they have no landlords in Skerries'. Matthews, in replying to the owner of the loud voice, said, 'they were a toadying lot in Skerries, but he was sure the nationalists of Skerries would take example of the people of Lusk and establish a branch of the UIL'.<sup>58</sup> He did not seem to realise the ambiguity of his own situation as a non member of the league. Did it not occur to him to join the Lusk branch or any other branch and thus end his seeming embarrassment? In regard to the aforementioned shouted out statement that Skerries had no landlords. This is simply preposterous, as the Hamilton family owned the town lock, stock, and barrel. David S. Jones, points to the family, who were based at Sheephill, and Abbotstown [Fingal] and whose estate extended to 6,900 acres of quality land. He relates also that in 1897, they were elevated to the peerage under the name of Holmpatrick.<sup>59</sup>

While the editorial in the *Drogheda Independent* heaped praise on the nationalists of the Lusk area for belatedly forming a branch, and even applauding them for taking their time over the decision. However, a legitimate question remains as to why had it taken so long to reach a decision to embrace the league when others as at Garristown and the Naul had done so over a year earlier? This question will be returned to further on in the story. Meanwhile, the editor makes a case that the tenant farmers of Fingal were more hard done by than farmers elsewhere, but what did he mean by that? He cites the striving of tenant farmers in Fingal to escape from the clutches of landlordism, but then the same could be said of almost everywhere else in Ireland at that time too. In questioning the motives of the said editor in heaping what appears to have been excessive praise on the nationalists of Fingal, not for the speed for which they embraced the league, but rather the opposite case. Should he not have castigated them instead? By way of an answer, Fergus Campbell relates that the role of some

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<sup>58</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 29 Mar. 1902.

<sup>59</sup> David Seth Jones, *Graziers, land reform, and political conflict in Ireland* (Washington, DC, 1995), p. 142.

Irish provincial newspapers at that time was to encourage the expansion and popularity of the league within each papers own 'sphere of influence'.<sup>60</sup> It can certainly be said that the editor of the *Drogheda Independent* took his work seriously in regard to the above, even if it meant glossing over any unpalatable truths along the way. The relative slowness of the UIL to develop in a large part of Fingal, can, however, be shown to have existed in parts of counties Meath and Louth too. For instance, the major towns of Navan, and Drogheda, did not form branches until months later than Lusk. In the case of the former, it took until September before a branch was formed,<sup>61</sup> meanwhile the latter town had to wait until November for an earlier branch to be 'revived'. It having, apparently 'fallen by the wayside due to apathy by nationalists'.<sup>62</sup> This may be a clue as to the relative tardiness of some of the nationalists in Fingal. Perhaps other clues are to found elsewhere too? At Deanstown, near Navan, a branch there was not doing well and had to be amalgamated with the latter branch. When trying to fathom what went wrong it was postulated that perhaps the Saturday meetings were a failure and that Sunday after mass would be better. It was also thought that the poor attendance was due to people not reading the Saturday newspaper, which carried the details of meeting, until Sunday afternoon. Others suggested putting up posters throughout the village.<sup>63</sup> All these plans seemed to camouflage the fact that there was a lack of interest in the branch. Meanwhile, in the previous August, the *Drogheda Independent*, in an editorial, reported on a meeting of the executive committee of the Irish Landowner's Convention, and when writing on the meeting used the sub-heading of 'Irish landlords on the warpath'. Among the many suggestions that the editor made in regard to the above, he pointed to what he considered the poor prognosis for the UIL, if the people of Ireland did not pull together in response to the landowners. He went further and said;

While the people in other parts of the country are alive to the situation, he said, that those in this part [north-east Leinster] are struck down with some sort of apathy and indifference [towards the league] which border on the insane. Why it is so we fail to understand. The grievances of the tenants in this district may not be quite so grievous, as those which have roused the tenants of the west and south to determined agitation, though we doubt it; but they are at least sufficiently pressing to demand

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<sup>60</sup> Fergus Campbell, 'Irish popular politics and the making of the Wyndham Land Act, 1901-1903' in *The Historical Journal*, vol. 45, (4) (2002), p. 762.

<sup>61</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 27 Sept. 1902.

<sup>62</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 1 Nov. 1902.

<sup>63</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 25 Oct. 1902.



from those who endure them a more manful effort than is now being made in this district to endeavour to make an end of them.<sup>64</sup>

In the above piece is yet another failure to understand the circumstances which brought about the lack of empathy toward the UIL in this part of Ireland. The contagion had seemingly spread southwards, and when John Redmond, in a speech at a recent meeting at Tagamon, County Meath, made reference to his party's action on the land bill, he related that though they had been powerful for two years in the Commons, this would disappear overnight if the whole of Ireland experienced the 'apathy' which had befallen Wexford. Interestingly, in the same speech Redmond allegedly said that 'if only the Irish landlords were not a pack of fools'.<sup>65</sup> The above not only provides an insight on how prevailing the indifference was towards the UIL in north-east Leinster, but also gives an indication of Redmond's views on landlordism at that time.

Meanwhile, on a more positive note, on Sunday 6 April, a UIL branch was established at Oldtown. The speakers were; J.J. Clancy, MP, J. A. O'Sullivan, UIL organiser; and W. Field, MP.<sup>66</sup> The branch appears to have got off to a good start and arrangements were made to meet again on Sunday 11 May.<sup>67</sup> Yet another meeting of the branch occurred on 6 September, and where the same speakers, except Field, once again addressed the gathering. In regard to the last meeting, police returns show that it was held indoors, the reason being that 'a small attendance of 100 people turned up'.<sup>68</sup> The police may have considered the gathering at Oldtown to have been on the low side but what were they comparing it with? If the comparison was made with such meetings in the western part of the country or of perhaps an urban centre, then such a number may have been small, but for a village in a rural part of Fingal, it seems in the light of the numbers at other branches as seen from reported lists of names, that the figure for Oldtown was a reasonable one in the circumstances.

A nationalist demonstration was held at Drogheda on 20 October in protest to the introduction of the Crimes Act, and the proclaiming of many parts of Ireland. The mass meeting was attended by UIL members from many parts of Counties Meath, Louth, and Dublin. One of the speakers at the event was Timothy Harrington, then

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<sup>64</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 30 Aug. 1902.

<sup>65</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 6 Sept. 1902.

<sup>66</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 5 Apr. 1902.

<sup>67</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 3 May, 1902.

<sup>68</sup> CO 904/21, part 3, police returns, anti-government organisations, 1882-1921, p. 20.

Lord Mayor of Dublin. Interestingly, the editor of the *Drogheda Independent* M. A. Casey also addressed the meeting.<sup>69</sup> Fergus Campbell provides information in regard to which areas were proclaimed by the government and though in the second wave of proclamations the county boroughs of Dublin were included, there is no evidence to suggest that Fingal was included under the Crimes Act.<sup>70</sup>

In relation to the state of the UIL in County Dublin at the end of December, 1902, was provided by police returns, a source which was utilised earlier in this study. The county was stated to have had five UIL branches with a combined membership of 114.<sup>71</sup> The foregone information is two low by a factor of one branch. There were in fact six branches of the league and all were in the north-west corner of Fingal, this can be clearly seen by recourse to Map1. The branches which have been examined in this study, and in the manner of their establishment were as follows; Garristown, Naul, Swords, St. Margaret's, Lusk, and Oldtown. The police returns appear to have had a difficulty in keeping tabs on the number of branches in County Dublin, and also appears to downplay the number of UIL members attached to those branches. In any event the police knew that their records were susceptible to error. The returns acknowledge this fact and an example can be seen on page 308 of the police returns summary of UIL branches.<sup>72</sup>

An aspect not examined so far has to do with the political dimension of the UIL in Ireland. Fergus Campbell relates that the 1902 local government elections resulted in an increase in UIL candidates for county council posts and that country-wide about fifty-seven per cent of such jobs went to league candidates.<sup>73</sup> The question now is what was the political situation in Fingal? Though some information is available on who was selected to go forward for a variety of posts as county councillors and also to the balrothery rural district board as well as the Balrothery board of guardians. However, the information is fragmentary at best and therefore would require a larger study that this one to bring all the variables together into a meaningful whole. Nevertheless, it was seen that UIL branches in Fingal influenced their members as to whom they should give their vote. Conservative candidates along with bogus labour

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<sup>69</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 19 Apr., 25 Oct. 1902.

<sup>70</sup> Fergus Campbell, 'Irish popular politics and the making of the Wyndham Land Act, 1901-1903' in *The Historical Journal*, vol. 45, (4) (2002), p. 769.

<sup>71</sup> CO 904/ 20, part 2, police returns, summary of UIL branches, 1898 to 1921, p. 418.

<sup>72</sup> CO 904/ 20, part 2, police returns, summary of UIL branches, 1898 to 1921, p. 308.

<sup>73</sup> Fergus Campbell, 'Irish popular politics and the making of the Wyndham Land Act, 1901-1903' in *The Historical Journal*, vol. 45, (4) (2002), p. 762.

candidates were to be avoided at all costs. However, genuine labour candidates appeared to be acceptable to the UIL.<sup>74</sup> If time and space allowed, this study would look to the work of B. M. Walker (ed.), *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922*,<sup>75</sup> and then by comparing the elected candidates names with those from the aforementioned lists of the names of those who attended UIL meetings. Such an exercise might shed some light on the level of political success or lack of it in Fingal at that time and in comparison with the national success of league candidates.

In the last days of December, 1902, the biggest event in regard to land issues for was the Land Conference then taking place at the Mansion House, Dublin. Those charged with the task of finding a workable solution to the Irish land question were, on the landlord's side; the Earl of Mayo, Col. Hucheson-Poe, Col. Nugent Everard, and the Earl of Dunraven. Meanwhile, of the side of the tenants were; John Redmond, William O'Brien, T. Harrington, and T.W. Russell.<sup>76</sup> Great hopes were attached to the outcome of the meeting in that it might end the long wait for a peasant proprietorship in Ireland. That however, is a question for another day.

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<sup>74</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 26 April, 1902.

<sup>75</sup> B. M. Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland* (2 vols., Dublin, 1978).

<sup>76</sup> Earl of Dunraven, *Past times and pastimes*, vol. ii (London, 1922), pp 11-12.

## Conclusion

What has this short study brought forth into the historiography of the UIL on the local level within Fingal, and has it unearthed anything of significance on the national level? At the beginning of the study it was noted that Paul Bew, despite having researched the *Drogheda Independent* newspaper for his work *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland, 1890-1910: Parnellites and radical agrarians*;<sup>77</sup> that it surprised this author that he failed to use any information from that source in his work. However, such a situation is not such a surprise in that an historian writing on events on the national level is basically less interested in the minutia of what was happening on the local stage. And, if as appears to have been the case that nothing of national significance happened in the area of study here, then that of itself does not take away from the worth of such a local study. If such were the case, then fewer local studies would get done.

It has been shown that it took a relatively short time for the first UIL branches to be established in County Dublin (May, 1900), and that by the end of that year Fingal got its first branch at Garristown. While further branches came on stream at a steady pace thereafter, it was seen that the development of branches was geographically concentrated within the north-west corner of the study area. In the absence of any information from the sources as to why that should have been the case, it was left to postulate that it was due to influential forces emanating from the adjacent County Meath, which at that time had a much more developed system of UIL branches. Much of the available information on what was happening has come from the *Drogheda Independent*, a weekly newspaper whose editor displayed a favourable bias towards the league, at least during the period of the study. The aforementioned source invariably provided information, which in tandem with other primary and secondary sources has allowed a story of the league in Fingal to be put together here.

Further branches were formed in 1901, and while those at Naul, and Swords were said to be great successes, nevertheless, these meetings do not appear to have had the support of the clergy at that time. However, the variability of the Catholic clergy's response to the league was demonstrated at St. Margaret's, when the local priest was

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<sup>77</sup> Paul Bew, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland, 1890-1910: Parnellites and radical agrarians* (Oxford, 1987).

thanked for his assistance in forming the branch. Despite the formation of some branches in the north-west corner of Fingal, curiously, that there were no branches to be found elsewhere in the study area. While attempting to elucidate from the sources as to why such a situation should exist, it was seen that Leinster lagged far behind the other provinces in the advancement of the league. Concern was such that J. Redmond, as chairman of the UIL Directory urged the party's members to support the league as a matter of urgency. Examples of the lax attitude towards the league were seen in counties Meath and Louth, and as far south as Wexford. All the while, the editor of the *Drogheda Independent*, tried valiantly to rouse support for the UIL by a two part strategy of praising those with branches and gently urging those without to take their lead and establish branches in their area. Alas, such efforts came to nought in the period of this study

The study could not find from the sources, why there appeared to be such apathy towards the UIL in this part of Ireland and by extension into the larger part of Fingal. L. Ginnell, for example, when speaking at a public meeting at Lusk, expressed his disillusionment at not being able to figure out a reason for the apparent apathy towards the UIL, not only Fingal, but in the wider Leinster area generally. In any event the study has shown that in some respects that Fingal was unique. It was demonstrated that on the one hand, it boasted of a flourishing area of UIL activity in branch formation, while at the same time having a large area with no branches at all. Meanwhile, the adjacent counties of Meath, and Louth, the situation pertained there of major towns such as Navan, and Drogheda, were without a UIL branch, nevertheless, league branches appeared to have been diffused throughout the county and not concentrated in one particular area as in Fingal. The situation in regard to the UIL in Fingal at the end of 1902 was that league branches had formed at; Garristown, Naul, Swords, St. Margaret's, Lusk, and Oldtown, and all appeared to have been prospering. There was no evidence of any form of agrarian agitation and this was true even in 1902, when such agitation was at its fiercest in the west of Ireland. On the other hand not much evidence of agitation was seen from other areas looked to for comparative purposes and this may be due to the general air of apathy prevailing in this part of the country. It could be said that Fingal behaved during the study period as if it were two distinct areas, with a different ethos towards the land question in each one, and as the saying goes, 'never the twain shall meet'. In any event this study must come to an end.

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## Appendix 1

Additional information omitted from within the text for reason of clarity. Below is found lists of names from some of the larger UIL meetings in Fingal.

At Naul, a ‘splendid public meeting’ took place on Sunday 6 January 1901 for the purpose of establishing a UIL branch in that district. The following names were reported to have been amongst the large attendance; James Ennis (chairman); Patrick White, MP; W. D. Harbison, Thomas McIvor (county councillor); Patrick Corbally, R. Rankin, Patrick Gilsinan, Richard Kearns, Thomas Colgan, James Lacey, M. Murray, James Sherwin, B. Colgan, James Andrew[s], O. Gilsinan, James Hamilton, Patrick McGrane, Patrick Corbally, Michael Donnelly, K. Gilsinan, Patrick Colgan, A. Ward, Thomas Reilly, Thomas Duff, John Taffe, A. Sherwin, L. Donnelly, Patrick Monks, P. Collen, John Madden, James White, L. Carr, James Carr, James Byrne, John Rooney, Patrick Carroll, Patrick Morgan, Thos Rigney, John Downes, D. Fullam, L. Dunne, Patrick Murtha, O. Wilson, Thomas Tiernan, John Coleman, Michael Murray, Patrick Fallon, James Dornan, N. Kennedy, J. Caul, C. Sherwin, P. Harford, John Duff, Patrick Connell, John Casey, C. Donnelly, L. Flynn, Patrick O’Hara, L. Sherwin, John Nugent, P. White, J. Bannon, James Carroll, James McCrane, Patrick Halpin, Thomas Hand, Patrick Colgan, James Floody, John Carroll, Patrick Kiernan, P. Sherwin, Thomas Wall, James Downes and M. Neill.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> *Drogheda Independent*, 12 Jan. 1901, p. 2.