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“Those lads would tackle anything”: Na Fianna Éireann and the Publishing Enterprise of Youth in the Early Twentieth Century¹

Marnie Hay

Abstract:

This article examines the print culture of the Irish nationalist youth organisation Na Fianna Éireann by using the 1914 publication *Nodlaig na bhFiann* (The Fianna Christmas) and the ensuing monthly paper *Fianna* (1915-16) as a case study. Edited by Percy Reynolds (1895-1983) and Patsy O’Connor (c.1897-1915), two enterprising members in their late teens, these publications are viewed within the wider contexts of the expansion of the Fianna circa 1914 and the growth of literary consumerism. This article also demonstrates the important role that uniformed youth groups could play in fostering their members’ development of practical skills and foundation of future careers. These two publications were likely the first business venture of Reynolds who went on to a notable career as an accountant, company director, and racehorse owner and breeder. In contrast, O’Connor’s premature death may have resulted indirectly from a head injury sustained while administering first aid during the 1913 Dublin Lockout.

First established in 1909, Na Fianna Éireann (or the Irish National Boy Scouts) played an important role in the socialisation and mobilisation of youth within the Irish nationalist movement. From an early stage in the uniformed youth group’s history, its members were involved in the production and distribution of Irish nationalist print propaganda.² This article will focus on the 1914 publication *Nodlaig na bhFiann* (The Fianna Christmas) and the ensuing monthly paper *Fianna* (1915-16) as a case study of Fianna print culture. Both were published in the wake of the first *Fianna Handbook*.³ The creation of Percy Reynolds and Patsy O’Connor, two enterprising members of the Fianna in their late teens, *Nodlaig na bhFiann* and *Fianna* can be viewed within the wider contexts of the expansion of the Fianna circa 1914 and the growth in literary consumerism. Such consumerism [p. 141] encouraged the production of Irish nationalist print culture aimed at youth, which often subverted established genres of British children’s literature. Participation in the production and distribution of publications like *Nodlaig na bhFiann* and *Fianna* empowered Fianna members, providing them with a public voice and helping them to gain practical hands-on work experience, which had the potential to influence their future careers.

Constance Markievicz (née Gore-Booth) and Bulmer Hobson, two Irish protestant activists, first established Na Fianna Éireann in Dublin as an Irish nationalist antidote to the growing popularity and influence in Ireland of Robert Baden-Powell’s Boy Scout movement, which had been founded in Great Britain in 1908.⁴ The Fianna offered members a mix of military training, nationalist nurturing, outdoor pursuits and Irish cultural activities in order to prepare them to play a future role in the Irish struggle for independence. Uniformed youth groups like the Fianna and the Boy Scouts were a form of youth culture that developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a response to social anxieties associated with the tensions that resulted in the outbreak of the First World War (1914-18) and other more

localised conflicts. Many Western countries like Britain and Germany feared that they were losing their competitive edge in industrial and military affairs and that their populations were deteriorating both physically and morally. Such anxieties generated not only fears of a perceived *fin-de-siècle* decadence, but also a cult of discipline, training and manliness reflected in the development of scouting, sporting, and paramilitary groups.⁵ The establishment of uniformed youth groups addressed often gendered concerns about the health, education, and moral welfare of the rising generation: would boys be able to defend their countries, and would girls be up to the task of being good helpmates and mothers? The general template of the uniformed youth group was adapted to the perceived needs of different countries. In the United Kingdom and the British empire, organisations like the various boys' brigades, the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides sought to instil imperial patriotism and middle-class values of order, discipline and "character" in the lower classes.⁶ In Canada guiding was also used to "Canadianise" non-British immigrant and Indigenous girls.⁷ Furthermore, uniformed youth groups could be training grounds for nationalist fundamentalism, as exemplified in both the Irish nationalist movement and Nazi Germany.⁸ [p. 142]

As Brendan Power has noted, the Boy Scouts emphasised experiential learning, which "had a practical application and was partly designed to provide adolescents with enhanced employment prospects and greater integration into the labour market." Power cites an address made by F.J. Romanes, the scoutmaster of the 1st Dublin Troop, to the Dublin Rotary Club in 1917, in which he asserted that the Boy Scout organisation "was not 'a mere plaything or a recreation after a day's work', but a place where the values and skills of enterprise and business were developed."⁹ Like the Boy Scouts, Na Fianna Éireann also provided Irish youth with the opportunity for experiential learning and enabled members to develop skills that they could utilise in their future employment.

The Expansion of Na Fianna Éireann

In its early years Na Fianna Éireann was officially aimed at boys between the ages of eight and eighteen, though some girls belonged to a troop in Belfast between 1911 and 1916 and in Waterford between 1916 and 1918.¹⁰ Fianna troops soon spread beyond Dublin to other Irish cities and towns as well as to British cities with sizable Irish communities, such as Glasgow, Liverpool and London.¹¹ Two factors contributed to the Fianna's growth in membership in 1913-14 in Ireland.¹² The first factor was the endeavours of Liam Mellows (1892-1922)¹³ who served as the youth group's full-time organiser and instructor between April and November 1913. He travelled around the country on his own Irish-built bicycle and stayed with Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) contacts while he was engaged in establishing new branches of the Fianna and giving existing troops a boost.¹⁴ The IRB was a secret society that supported the creation of an independent Irish republic through the use of physical force if necessary. Many Fianna members were recruited into the IRB when they reached their late teens.¹⁵ The second factor that influenced the Fianna's expansion was the formation in November 1913 of the Irish Volunteers as a nationalist counterblast to the Ulster Volunteer Force, a paramilitary organisation formally established in January 1913 to oppose the introduction of home rule in Ireland. Many sons of Irish Volunteers joined the Fianna.¹⁶ The membership momentum generated by these two factors continued into 1914. [p. 143]

As part of the expansion of the Fianna as an organisation, the year 1914 saw the opening of a Fianna Headquarters at 12 D'Olier Street in Dublin and the launch of two Fianna publications. The first was the Central Council's long-awaited *Fianna Handbook* which was to guide and instruct the members of the organisation around the country. It was designed to replace Robert Baden-Powell's *Scouting for Boys* (1908) and British War Office

manuals, which were the only written sources of instruction previously available to the Fianna.¹⁷ The second publication was *Nodlaig na bhFiann*,¹⁸ the first of the two publications edited by Fianna members Percy Reynolds (1895-1983) and Patsy O'Connor (c. 1897-1915) that are the focus of this article. *Nodlaig na bhFiann*, a one-off Christmas "annual," was not issued by Fianna Headquarters but did have official sanction,¹⁹ and provided the impetus for the publication of *Fianna*, a monthly paper launched in early 1915. All three of these Fianna publications sought to offer an Irish nationalist alternative to popular British equivalents.

Literary Consumerism

In producing a Fianna publication at Christmas time in 1914, Reynolds and O'Connor appear to have been influenced by the genre of the Christmas annual, a common gift for British and Irish children since the nineteenth century. Dating back to the 1820s, this form of publication originated in Britain and then expanded into the American market. Early annuals, which featured a mix of engravings of artwork and sentimental poetry and prose, were initially aimed at a mainly middle-class adult female audience, but children's versions soon followed. For instance, Rudolf Ackermann published the first literary annual, *The Forget-me-not: a Christmas and New Year's present for 1823*, in November 1822 and added a junior version entitled *The Juvenile Forget-me-not* from 1828.²⁰ These "sumptuously produced gift books ... largely disappeared" by the 1860s and 1870s, with annuals becoming "increasingly linked to journals,"²¹ which published them as supplements.

The emergence of the annual is associated with the growth of literary consumerism in the nineteenth century, which resulted from a combination of increased literacy levels and leisure time and improved communication and transport channels. All three of these factors [p. 144] expanded the audience and market for books, periodicals, and newspapers. Publishers of periodicals and newspapers often released annuals prior to Christmas and dated for the following year in order to take advantage of the market for Christmas gifts that could be read during the leisure time available during the festive season.²² This was true for both the adult and child markets.

Riona Nic Congáil has highlighted the growth in Irish children's literary culture as a subset of children's consumerism in the post-Famine period. To illustrate this trend, she refers to examples cited in the *Irish Times* and biographies of upper- and middle-class Irish writers.²³ For instance, an 1868 *Irish Times* report asserted that "the category of 'minor works of fiction and children's books' was second only to 'religious books and pamphlets' in terms of quantities being published."²⁴ In addition, poet and playwright W.B. Yeats's childhood reminiscences include references to reading *Grimm's Fairy Tales* in Sligo and looking forward to the distribution of boys' periodicals on Wednesday afternoons while living in England.²⁵

Popular British boys' periodicals like the *Boys Own Magazine*, the *Boys' Friend*, and the *Marvel* were also available in Ireland. Such publications, whose fictional content included an enticing mix of stories from the adventure, detective, and school story genres, were imbued with imperialist ideology. As a result, their popularity with Irish youth was a concern for advanced nationalists, meaning those who supported more radical forms of nationalism, such as republicanism, in contrast to the moderate home rule policy of the Irish Parliamentary Party. For example, Pádraic Ó Riain, the Fianna officer responsible for compiling the *Fianna Handbook* and writing a Fianna column in the *Irish Volunteer* newspaper under the pseudonym Willie Nelson,²⁶ estimated in February 1915 that "nearly every boy from twelve to sixteen years of age" read at least one British boys' story-paper per week. Priced at a penny per issue, their audience included working- as well as middle-class youth. Ó Riain lamented that "preaching against them only acts as an incentive to a wider reading of these papers."²⁷

As part of the growth in Irish literary consumerism, Irish advanced nationalists produced a plethora of weekly and monthly newspapers to spread their cultural, political, and economic messages. Though most of these papers were aimed at an adult audience, they often included some content aimed at children and adolescents. For [p. 145] instance, *Bean na hÉireann* (Woman of Ireland) and *Irish Freedom* included columns for children in which readers were encouraged to compete for book prizes in essay competitions. These papers were produced by the Irish nationalist women's organisation Inghinidhe na hÉireann (Daughters of Erin) and the IRB respectively. Neasa, the pseudonymous author of "Grianán na nÓg" (Sunroom of Youth), the children's column in *Irish Freedom*, often suggested concrete ways in which children could further the struggle for Irish independence.²⁸

Such print propaganda for youth served four main purposes: to redress the perceived shortcomings of the national school system by providing youth with an Irish nationalist education; to promote an idealised image of Irish nationalist youth that young people could emulate; to offer an Irish nationalist alternative to popular reading material produced in Britain; and finally to foster the potential for young people to become nationalist propagandists and activists.²⁹ The publication of *Nodlaig na bhFiann* and the paper *Fianna* and the later participation of their co-editor Percy Reynolds in the Easter Rising of 1916 illustrate the latter two purposes. Recognising that certain aspects of contemporary British children's culture appealed to youth in Ireland, some Irish nationalists sought to provide Irish nationalist alternatives in the form of publications and youth groups.

Young editors and entrepreneurs: Percy Reynolds and Patsy O'Connor

Nodlaig na bhFiann may have been the first business venture of Reynolds who was then aged nineteen. Following his imprisonment in the wake of the 1916 rising, he went on to build a career as an accountant, company director, and racehorse owner and breeder that was notable enough to merit an entry in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.³⁰ His co-editor O'Connor is notable for quite a different reason. O'Connor's was the first name on a Fianna Roll of Honour published circa 1981, which lists the names of members "who gave their lives for Ireland's freedom."³¹ A Fianna commentator reported that O'Connor's premature death in 1915 at the age of eighteen was believed to have resulted indirectly from a head injury that he sustained during the 1913 Dublin Lockout. As a result of this injury, he was periodically "subject to very violent headaches."³² Thanks to [p. 146] the efforts of Jason Walsh-McLean, a commemorative headstone was finally erected on his grave in Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin in 2015.³³

Percy Reynolds, whose full name was Augustus Percival Harald Reynolds, was educated at the Christian Brothers' O'Connell School on North Richmond Street in Dublin.³⁴ Christian Brothers' schools were noted for producing future Irish nationalist activists.³⁵ Originally from County Tipperary, Percy's father John Richard Reynolds claimed knowledge of Irish and English and recorded names in Irish on the 1911 census return of the Mac Rághnaill (Reynolds) family. This was in contrast to his use of English on their 1901 return. Accountant John ("Eóin") and his wife Mary ("Máire") had six children. Their sons Frank ("Prionsais" [sic], aged 18), Jack ("Seaghan," aged 16), and Percy ("Águstis," aged 15) were employed as commercial clerks and claimed knowledge of Irish and English. Their three younger daughters were still at school with English recorded as their only language.³⁶ In 1911 the family lived at 17 Middle Gardiner Street, occupying two rooms of a tenement where a total of ten families resided.³⁷

Percy Reynolds recorded that he joined the Fianna in 1911.³⁸ Nationalist activist Helena Molony, who assisted with the foundation of the Fianna, recalled that he "was a most prominent Scout, and a great favourite of Madame Markievicz. We thought he was too pretty,

and that he was a ‘mammy’s pet’; but he was very good afterwards.”³⁹ Reynolds became a member of the Fianna circle of the IRB, which was also known as the John Mitchel Debating Society, and the Fianna Players, an amateur theatre company associated with the Dublin Fianna. He may also have joined the Fianna pipers’ band along with his brother Jack. Reynolds’ older brothers Frank and Jack were members of the Fianna and its circle of the IRB; they later joined the Irish Volunteers.⁴⁰ In the summer of 1915 Percy Reynolds was elected to the Central Council of the Fianna and appointed to the newly formed Headquarters Staff, serving as Adjutant-General.⁴¹ In this role he was responsible for assisting Pádraic Ó Riain with the administration of the youth organisation. Although Bulmer Hobson was appointed the nominal chief of staff in 1915, Ó Riain, who was honoured with the title Ard-Fhéinne (Fianna chief), actually directed and coordinated the work of the various departments.⁴² [p. 147]

Reynolds’ younger sister Molly (1896-1979) recalled that “there was always a good Irish atmosphere” at home, which appears to have helped to foster the family’s nationalist activism. Their father John joined the Irish Volunteers and became the organisation’s auditor. An accountant, he shared office space at 12 D’Olier Street during the period circa 1913-14 with Fianna co-founder Bulmer Hobson, who was working as a writer and editor. The Fianna Headquarters that opened in 1914 was also located at this address. Molly, who was studying at a commercial college, often spent time in her father’s office practising her typing skills. Envious of her older brothers’ involvement in Fianna activities, she asked Hobson in early 1913 “if they would start a girl’s section in the Fianna and he replied that if I started it, they would give me all the assistance I needed.” Molly, by her own admission, lacked “the self confidence and initiative” to take up the task, “and so the matter was dropped.” When Hobson alerted her to the formation of Cumann na mBan in 1914, she joined this female counterpart to the Irish Volunteers.⁴³

Less information is available to account for the nationalist activism of Patrick “Patsy” O’Connor, who was the son of Patrick and Mary O’Connor originally from County Meath. In contrast to the Reynolds family, the O’Connors could afford to occupy an entire house to themselves. Patrick O’Connor, senior, was listed as an agricultural labourer in the 1911 census and the family’s home at 27 Harold’s Cross Road was described by the enumerator as a greengrocer’s shop. Patsy was one of nine children borne by his mother Mary.⁴⁴

When he was about twelve years of age Patsy joined the Fianna after marching a small group of boys from the south Dublin suburb of Harold’s Cross to the Fianna’s Camden Street hall, a distance of about 1.5 kilometres. He rose to the rank of lieutenant in the Fianna and passed his first-aid exams, securing certification by the St Patrick’s Ambulance Association.⁴⁵ He was an electrician by trade and resided with his family in Harold’s Cross at the time of his death in 1915.⁴⁶ Liam Mellows recorded the following account of O’Connor’s injury and subsequent death:

During the great Dublin strike in 1913, Patsy received a severe blow on the head from a police baton while trying to administer first aid to an old man who had been badly hurt [p. 148] during one of the baton charges. After superficial treatment at a hospital Patsy thought he was all right as the wound healed up rapidly. But two years later he arrived home one evening complaining of a pain in his head and after drinking a cup of tea suddenly collapsed and died almost immediately. A clot of blood had congealed on the brain and two years after the blow had burst.⁴⁷

In contrast to Mellows’ account, the record of O’Connor’s interment in Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin indicates that the alleged cause of his death was pneumonia.⁴⁸ Jason Walsh-McLean recorded that Shane Mac Thomais, the “resident historian of the Glasnevin Trust,”

informed him that “Back then, many who died of a beating were recorded as dying of something else.”⁴⁹

***Nodlaig na bhFiann* (The Fianna Christmas)**

In producing their Christmas publication, Reynolds and O’Connor were able to draw on a supportive nationalist network of writers, artists, and advertisers. For instance, “a shrewd Dublin business man” viewed the pair as “lads” who “would tackle anything” and bought “a substantial advertisement” in order “to show his admiration” for their enterprise.⁵⁰ Thus, *Nodlaig na bhFiann* featured a mix of articles, short stories, poetry, cartoons, and plenty of advertising designed to appeal to Christmas shoppers. Contributors included well-known nationalist activists and creative practitioners of the day such as Countess Markievicz, James Connolly, A.E. (George Russell), Bulmer Hobson, Colonel Maurice Moore, Maeve Cavanagh, and Grace Gifford, as well as the young editors themselves. Priced at a penny, the sixteen-page publication had a greenish-blue cover, was printed on newsprint, and included a portrait of Fianna president Countess Markievicz as a supplement.⁵¹

Nodlaig na bhFiann’s primary audience was members of the Fianna. In their editorial Reynolds and O’Connor encouraged their comrades to close the doors of their meeting halls to work and open them up to festivities. “Make merry,” they declared. “Copy ... the old Fianna of Finn [Mac Cumhaill], for who worked harder than they? And when the time came they were always ready to be the gayest of [p. 149] the gay.” The editors also explained what they were trying to achieve with what they called “their first Christmas book”: “We have tried to get together a Christmas party of stories, poems and articles by our many friends and well-wishers.”⁵² They asked readers to make their “Christmas number a success” by purchasing all their “Christmas necessities” from the businesses that had bought advertising space in the publication. “The majority of our advertisers are Irish-Irelanders, and by helping them you help Irish Industry” which helps “your own small NATION,” they asserted.⁵³

Nodlaig na bhFiann offered readers a taste of the exotic with two short stories. One was set in the ranch country of the American wild west where “Frank Desmond, Deputy Sheriff,” who “was but a lad,” solves a mystery regarding horse theft.⁵⁴ The other was a ghost story following the tradition of Victorian festive publications featuring “narratives that pivot on spirits and hauntings,” most famously exemplified in Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* (1843).⁵⁵ Entitled “The doctor’s secret,” this ghost story was set on a ship returning home from an arctic expedition. A spate of weird noises and bad luck leads the crew to believe that there is a ghost on the ship. After investigation, the body of an “Esquimaux” woman is found preserved in salt. As the only person with a key to the room where she was hidden, the narrator is accused of murder. It later transpires that the ship’s doctor, having been paid a lot of money to bring back an Inuk, had smuggled a recently buried corpse onto the ship. Once the woman is given a Christian burial at sea, the strange shipboard happenings end.⁵⁶ As the author’s identity cannot be known for certain, it is difficult to interpret the underlying purpose of this story: was it a plea to leave Indigenous peoples and the dead in peace or was it merely meant as spine-tingling entertainment for a cold winter’s night? Its subject matter has a particularly disturbing resonance today given revelations regarding the past treatment of the remains of Inuit and other Indigenous people.⁵⁷ In recent years the discovery of unmarked mass graves of Indigenous children “removed from their parents and communities who never returned home” and those of infants and children who died in Irish Mother and Baby Homes have highlighted a history of shameful attitudes and behaviour displayed by church, state and society in both Canada and Ireland.⁵⁸

Nodlaig na bhFiann also featured poetry by A.E. (George Russell), Maeve Cavanagh and Seamus O’Sullivan as well as cartoons [p. 150] and other illustrations by Grace Gifford,

the artist, activist, and future bride of 1916 insurrectionist Joseph Mary Plunkett. Their contributions were among those praised in a brief review published in *The Irish Worker*.⁵⁹ In a cartoon on the first page of *Nodlaig na bhFiann*, Gifford referenced World War I, which had begun the previous August. The caption read: “Weeping Spouse (to Private Muggins, leaving for the Front) – ‘Jimes if yer beats the bloomin’ Kaiser the way yer beats me – ye’ll come ’ome a General!’”⁶⁰ By using “Muggins” as a surname, Gifford implied that the soldier was a fool and a dupe.⁶¹ Advanced nationalists would have found this portrayal of a Cockney wife-beater leaving for the Western Front less amusing had it depicted an Irishman going to war. Although the cartoon’s blithe reference to domestic violence is problematic from a twenty-first-century perspective, such humour may have been considered acceptable at the time. According to the reviewer in *The Irish Worker*, Gifford has “given us something to laugh at in [her] clever cartoons.”⁶² Elena Ogliari has examined the role of laughter in establishing “community and connection between text and readers, between the editorial board and the young” in the Christian Brothers’ publication *Our Boys*. She observes: “By laughing at the same object (person or thing), strong ties were formed binding the laughers together, and they thus came to define themselves in relation or opposition to the derided.”⁶³ Readers of *Nodlaig na bhFiann* may have felt a sense of Irish nationalist solidarity (and superiority) in laughing at the depiction of Mr and Mrs Muggins in the cartoon.

Nodlaig na bhFiann also included material on the history of the Fianna. The organisation’s two founders both contributed articles: Markievicz shared her memories of how the Fianna was first established while Hobson reflected on the organisation’s first five years. Writing under his usual pseudonym of “Corporal Willie Nelson,” Pádraic Ó Riain also provided a first-hand account of the Fianna’s role in the Howth gunrunning in July 1914, which illustrated the real-life adventures that the youth group’s members could enjoy.

Some contributors proffered advice to the publication’s young readership. Labour leader James Connolly, whose daughters Nora and Ina and son Roddy belonged to the Fianna in Belfast, shared his views on the tensions between boys and their parents. He encouraged boys not to be content to conform to the “beaten paths travelled intellectually, nationally or socially” by their parents, who in turn were [p. 151] urged to allow their children to develop in new directions.⁶⁴ Colonel Maurice Moore, the only founding member of the Irish Volunteers with previous military experience, counselled any “Irish boy whose National fervour led him to believe that his country called him to her service” that first of all he should “as preliminary training... prepare by hard work and discipline for the necessities of his own life.” In Moore’s opinion a patriot could do little for his country if he was weighed down by poverty.⁶⁵

There is limited evidence available to explore how *Nodlaig na bhFiann* was received by readers. It certainly garnered harsh criticism from Fianna officer and pseudonymous contributor Pádraic Ó Riain in his column in the *Irish Volunteer*. He deemed it “the most unboyish boys’ paper I have ever seen,” though he admired the editors’ “pluck and enterprise.” He objected to the “rather heavy articles” by Connolly and Hobson (“The chief merit of both is that they are brief”) and complained that the title *Nodlaig na bhFiann* was the only line of Irish that appeared in the publication. The subjects and settings of the two short stories were too exotic for his taste. “I am at a loss to understand why the two stories in the paper deal with incidents not in any way connected with the Fianna or with Ireland,” he protested. “Surely the numerous wars in this country afford young authors plenty of scope for boys’ stories. Thrilling yarns might be written around Putnam McCabe, Willie Nelson, or the Rapparees.”⁶⁶ Ó Riain was referring to William Putnam McCabe (c. 1776-1821), a United Irishman and “veritable Emerald Pimpernel”;⁶⁷ the seventeen-year-old Willie Nelson who was captured and hanged as a result of his involvement in the 1798 rebellion in County Antrim,⁶⁸ and rapparees who were Irish irregular soldiers of the late seventeenth century. As

these examples attest, Ó Riain made a valid point that Irish history could easily provide the basis for stories of adventure.

On a more positive note, Ó Riain praised Markievicz's "amusing" article on the formation of the Fianna and the aptness of Cavanagh's poem "The fortress of boyhood." He also enjoyed reading "an amusing escapade of four members of the Dublin Fianna" who decided to annoy "the aristocracy of Rathmines and neighbourhood" through their carol singing, highlighting in his review the natural quality of the dialogue.⁶⁹ Rathmines was then (and has become again) a relatively affluent suburb in south Dublin. [p. 152]

Although Ó Riain liked Reynolds' Christmas caroller story, readers outside of Dublin were unlikely to have understood its in-jokes and personal details about the central quartet, Harry Walpole, Seumas Kavanagh, John Shallow, and "Mac," as well as two other Fianna officers, Seamus Pouch and co-editor Patsy O'Connor.⁷⁰ For instance, Walpole "did not want any of his lady friends to see him carol singing in Rathmines" while John Shallow lit his "Golden Spangled" cigarette.⁷¹ Ironically, the future Fianna Code of Honour would urge members to cut out "the poisonous 'nicotine'."⁷² Furthermore, although the Fianna had an official policy of welcoming members of all creeds, Kavanagh's costume was derided for making him look "like a little Jew." Set against the contemporary backdrop of the First World War, the Fianna quartet apparently went carolling in disguise only to be arrested as German spies for singing a song in English called "The Good Comrade" which unbeknownst to them was originally German.⁷³

Ó Riain may have objected to much of its content, but *Nodlaig na bhFiann* was deemed a financial success. In addition to the "great rush" to buy copies,⁷⁴ advertising revenue appears to have been healthy. The publication included thirty-five advertisements for everything from clothing to Christmas cakes, guns to gold jewellery, and typewriters to tea rooms – items an advanced nationalist, or any other reader for that matter, might need not just for the holiday season, but throughout the year. For instance, pharmacist and IRB leader James Deakin advertised his "Wild Rose Cough Balsam" on the front cover while John Daly, a baker, confectioner and former Fenian prisoner, took out a full-page advertisement on the back cover. Daly was an early supporter of the Fianna in Limerick, where the first purpose-built Fianna hall was located behind his premises on Barrington Street.

Fianna

Pleased with the success of their first publishing venture, Reynolds and O'Connor continued to take heed of Hobson's recommendation that "every boy in the Fianna should be a propagandist for the Irish nation."⁷⁵ In January 1915 Ó Riain announced in the *Irish Volunteer* that a new monthly paper edited by Reynolds and O'Connor was in [p. 153] the works. The pair's publishing enterprise was immortalised in the following poem, which Ó Riain quoted:

My name is Percy Reynolds,
And I'm a clever chap;
My partner is O'Connor,
Always eager for a scrap.
We ran a Christmas journal,
A venture we made pay;
So to propagate our Kultur
Likewise to have our say –
We will run a monthly paper,
For as editors we shine,

But we'll accept no "copy"
From that critic called O'Ryan.⁷⁶

Ó Riain observed that "The age of censorship has, indeed, arrived," when commenting on the reference to himself (O'Ryan) in the final line of the poem.⁷⁷

The poet's use of the German word *Kultur* (culture) is intriguing given that wartime propaganda had imbued the word with the connotation of "a supposed predisposition for war, cruelty, and destructiveness that placed Germany outside the community of civilised nations."⁷⁸ Perhaps the poet was presciently hinting that Reynolds and O'Connor would use their paper to propagate an Irish republican perspective that would be critical of Ireland's involvement in Britain's war against Germany. Pro-German and anti-British sentiments were certainly evident when Fianna members performed at a fundraising event held in Dublin in early 1915. In addition to Irish songs, dances, recitations and sketches, the concert programme also featured the German patriotic song, "Die Wacht am Rein" ("The Watch/Guard on the Rhine"), as well as two new songs, "Brit-Huns" and "Ireland to Germany," written by Markievicz and Cavanagh respectively.⁷⁹

Reynolds and O'Connor launched *Fianna*, their monthly paper for boys, in February 1915. The pair could be described as overly optimistic at best or foolhardy at worst with Reynolds admitting that they embarked on this new venture "without any Capital."⁸⁰ When the first issue did not appear on 1 February, as previously announced, Ó [p. 154] Riain wondered "if they have bitten off more than they can chew,"⁸¹ but when *Fianna* hit the newsstands by the middle of the month, Ó Riain gave it "a hearty welcome, for never was a paper launched with more daring or with less capital." In particular, he promoted "The Wandering Hawk," a serial by St Enda's College headmaster Patrick Pearse as promising "to be a really first-rate story of school-life."⁸² Ó Riain later deemed the second issue better than the first and suggested that "there was an element of doubt as to who is now the editor."⁸³

Hobson probably served as advisor to the young entrepreneurs and may have helped to edit the paper, possibly after O'Connor abandoned the project to concentrate on his local *Fianna* troop.⁸⁴ Writing after O'Connor's death in June 1915, Reynolds reported that his former co-editor had

...worked hard, up hill all the time, for the first few issues, but it did not suit Patsy; he was one with a sword mightier than his pen; he was a soldier, and so had to give all his energies to his sluagh [troop] in the *Fianna* and could not find time to continue the work of editing and managing a paper with us.⁸⁵

Reynolds also paid credit to O'Connor for helping to make the Christmas publication a success and for laying the foundation of the *Fianna* paper.

Priced at a penny, *Fianna* initially circulated in Dublin, but by April 1915 Reynolds was tapping into a network of nationalist contacts to find stockists to circulate the fledgling paper nationally. For instance, he asked John Southwell, a member of the IRB and the Irish Volunteers, "Would you mind stocking it, displaying a poster and pushing it for me in Newry, I am prepared if you think it wise, to send you some back numbers which you can give away free as specimen copies, and this should insure you of a good sale of future copies."⁸⁶ Reynolds was already thinking like a businessman.

The paper published a mix of fiction, poetry and jokes, articles on Irish history, and *Fianna* news and views. Reynolds and O'Connor continued to promote Irish nationalist solidarity through laughter by making fun of the English. For instance, the first issue of *Fianna* featured a short story about an Englishman who began to believe his wife was a spy after he read about espionage in the newspaper. His [p. 155] wife in turn thought he was a spy and reported him to the police.⁸⁷ Some short stories were inspired by folklore, such as one featuring the *Gobán Saor*, the legendary Irish master-builder,⁸⁸ while others championed the

merits of loyalty and frugality over luxury and wealth.⁸⁹ *Fianna* published contributions by established poets like Maeve Cavanagh as well as budding poets, some of whom referenced *Fianna* officers and activities in their work. For example, one poem mentioned “[Con] Colbert’s kilt of green” while another was inspired by a *Fianna* winter camp.⁹⁰ Asserting that it was “essential for every member of the *Fianna* to know something of Ireland’s history,”⁹¹ the editors included a monthly list of notable dates in Irish history, which was supplemented by short articles, for example on United Irishman Robert Emmet (1778-1803), who was executed for his leadership of the failed insurrection of 1803.⁹² Although it was not an official organ of Na *Fianna Éireann*, *Fianna* helped to keep members around the country in touch with the centre of the youth movement by reporting on such events as the *Fianna*’s sixth annual congress on July 11, 1915.⁹³ In their witness statements to the Bureau of Military History, former *Fianna* members Patrick Hearne in Waterford city and William McCabe in Ballybunion, County Kerry, recalled receiving *Fianna* regularly.⁹⁴ Coverage of the youth group’s activities petered out by late 1915, however, due to a lack of copy supplied by *Fianna* Headquarters.⁹⁵

The editors of *Fianna* appear to have taken on board Ó Riain’s criticism that *Nodlaig na bhFiann* did not contain any content in the Irish language (other than its title) or “thrilling yarns” inspired by Irish history. *Fianna* initially included “Seanchas na hÉireann” (“Lore of Ireland”), a column written in Irish by Uilliam Ó Rinn. The paper also published adventure stories that were designed to provide an Irish nationalist alternative to the content of popular British boys’ periodicals, such as the *Boys’ Friend*. A series of tales entitled “The Boys of Wexford” focused on “a brave band of boys” who fought during the 1798 Rebellion, while Patrick Pearse’s unfinished serial “The Wandering Hawk” was set in a fictional boys’ boarding school called St Fintan’s where a popular teacher, Owen Kilgallon, inspired his students to support the struggle for Irish freedom.⁹⁶ Kilgallon turns out to be a Fenian organiser who uses the pseudonym “The Wandering Hawk” in honour of James Stephens (1825-1901), a founder of the IRB. [p. 156]

Anne Markey has described Pearse as “one of [the] first and most loyal contributors” to *Fianna*. She notes that “The Wandering Hawk” is a reworking and expansion of Pearse’s earlier play *Owen*, which was staged in Irish in 1913. Pearse contributed an English translation of the play to the December 1915 edition of *Fianna* in the hope that *Fianna* companies might perform it. In both works “education is explicitly linked with the promotion of violent republicanism and with preparation for military action.” Markey asserts that publishing in the pages of *Fianna* enabled Pearse to extend “his influence beyond the confines” of his school St Enda’s and issue “a general call to arms to the youth of Ireland.”⁹⁷ Pearse’s message chimed with Na *Fianna Éireann*’s aim to prepare youth to participate in the struggle for Irish independence.

Despite the paper’s anticipated support by nationalists, *Fianna*’s editors found it difficult to compete against the seductive allure of British youth publications. In March 1915 they declared that “English boys’ periodicals” were “killing Irish Nationalism.”⁹⁸ What they really meant was that competition from these better resourced publications was killing their fledgling paper. Reynolds complained that *Fianna* had “not received the support it deserves nor the support we expected when we started it.” As a result businesses would not buy advertising space in the paper.⁹⁹ Despite attempts to boost circulation by offering incentives such as free copies of the *Fianna Handbook* to readers who attracted four new subscribers,¹⁰⁰ Reynolds was forced to widen the target audience to include adult men as well as boys from July 1915 onward in hope of averting *Fianna*’s possible failure.¹⁰¹ A later nationalist youth paper, *Young Ireland / Éire Óg*, which first appeared in April 1917, also had to broaden its target audience to include adults within a year of its inception.

Reynolds claimed that since the outbreak of the First World War, Irish nationalists had had weekly papers to read but no monthly one. He was probably referring to the suppression of the republican monthly *Irish Freedom* because its content was deemed seditious in the context of the war. “Without tampering with the boys’ paper, except to enlarge it, we will supply the Irishman’s demand with articles attaining a high literary standard dealing with all classes of Irish problems,” explained Reynolds.¹⁰² *Fianna’s* content now included articles on weightier topics such as Irish industries or the imprisonment of Irishmen who opposed conscription in speeches or [p. 157] served as organisers for the Irish Volunteers,¹⁰³ as well as a children’s column entitled “Neasa’s nook,” which had a monthly competition for readers aged sixteen and under offering books as prizes.¹⁰⁴ The pseudonymous Neasa had previously contributed a children’s column to *Irish Freedom*.

An article in the July 1915 issue of the revamped *Fianna* paper criticized its competitors’ war-related content, apparently quoting an overheard conversation between *Fianna* members discussing the Christian Brothers’ magazine *Our Boys*, which had been launched in September 1914 as an Irish Catholic alternative to British boys’ periodicals. One boy observed, “Yes, ‘Our Boys’ was needed and I got it every month, but last month Father didn’t like it and said I am to get it no more.” Another boy responded that the previous month’s issue of *Our Boys* “wasn’t much better than the ‘Marvel,’ and they’re making a mistake in having such war articles. I won’t get it again.”¹⁰⁵ The boys’ conversation illustrated that advanced nationalists viewed some Irish publications of the time as being too sympathetic toward the British war effort. Perhaps Reynolds hoped criticism of competitors who showed support for Irish involvement in the war might inspire loyalty in his advanced nationalist readers. As Michael Flanagan has noted, it was not until after the outbreak of the Irish War of Independence (1919-21) that *Our Boys* began to include pro-republican content, such as a serial entitled “The *Fianna*, Irish Boy Scouts” which ran from October 1919 to March 1920.¹⁰⁶

Fianna was on the radar of the British authorities in Ireland by the summer of 1915. Although the Inspector General of the Royal Irish Constabulary included *Fianna* in a list of publications disseminating “seditious propaganda” in August 1915, no move appears to have been made to suppress it.¹⁰⁷ By November 1915 the British authorities estimated that *Fianna* had a circulation of at least 859, which grew to 1,094 by early 1916.¹⁰⁸

In an advertisement for the December 1915 edition of *Fianna*, Reynolds reassured readers that the reason why the paper did not appear on the first of that month was not because it had been suppressed, but because it would be a special double issue for the Christmas season.¹⁰⁹ Priced at two pence, this expanded twenty-page issue of *Fianna* echoed the content of *Nodlaig na bhFiann* in some ways. It featured a mix of articles, opinion pieces, poetry, and fiction by Connolly, Markievicz, Pearse and W.J. Brennan Whitmore, among [p. 158] others, but did not include any *Fianna* coverage or as many visual images or advertisements as the Christmas publication of the previous year,¹¹⁰ which may have impacted on its appeal.

The ongoing development of *Fianna* and Reynolds’ associated business ventures may be charted through changes in premises. The office of the *Fianna* paper was initially based at 12 D’Olier Street, the same address as *Fianna* Headquarters. By August 1915 the paper’s office had moved to St Andrew’s Chambers at 1 College Street, the address at which Reynolds’ father’s office was by then located.¹¹¹ The College Street office was described as the base of the “*Fianna* Publishing Co.” whose other publications included *Sheaves of Revolt*, a book of verse by the so-called “Poetess of the Revolution” Maeve Cavanagh.¹¹² The office move may have been connected to a “buy Irish” business venture that Reynolds started in conjunction with the broadening of *Fianna’s* remit. The *Fianna* Supply Stores sought to

promote Irish industries by supplying “Irish-made goods to Irish nationalists and others.” Reynolds boasted that it could supply “anything” that was Irish made.¹¹³

Although the January 1916 edition of *Fianna* gives the impression that Reynolds planned to continue publishing, I have not yet found any further issues of this first incarnation of the paper. A dearth of revenue from advertisers and subscriptions or the consequences of the imminent rebellion may have forced him to abandon the enterprise, which had survived for at least a year. *Fianna* Headquarters later revived the *Fianna* paper in June 1922 in a new intermittent format as part of an exercise to re-brand itself as an educational rather than military organisation in the wake of the Irish War of Independence.

From Easter 1916 rebel to successful businessman

Reynolds participated in the Easter Rising of April 1916, initially serving with the garrison based at Jacob’s Biscuit Factory, where the rebellion disrupted the production of baked goods such as the “hard-tack” biscuits and softer, coconut-flavoured Verdun biscuits supplied to soldiers serving at the front during the First World War.¹¹⁴ Having volunteered to take “tins of biscuits” to feed the garrison at the Royal College of Surgeons, Reynolds spent the remainder of Easter week [p. 159] serving in the St Stephen’s Green area. After the surrender, he was taken to Arbour Hill and then sent to Stafford Prison before being transferred to Frongoch internment camp in Wales. When he was released and returned home in the autumn of 1916, he was in poor health and “his business had collapsed.” This may have been a reference to his ventures the *Fianna* Publishing Co. and the *Fianna* Supply Stores, which may explain why he produced no further issues of *Fianna*. He claimed that he was no longer able to take an active role in the independence movement because of his health.¹¹⁵ The Irish state later recognised Reynolds’ service during Easter week in the form of a military service pension and a 1916 medal.¹¹⁶ The award of this pension was probably more valuable to Reynolds as a sign of recognition of his active service during the rebellion than as a form of income, unlike many of his other former *Fianna* comrades who did not experience his prosperity in the post revolution period.

Reynolds clearly possessed the self-confidence and initiative that his sister Molly once felt she lacked. In the years after the 1916 rising, he built a successful career as a founding partner of the accountancy firm Reynolds, McCarron & Co. and an executive in the transportation industry, most notably as the first chairman of Coras Iompair Éireann (CIÉ) in the latter half of the 1940s.¹¹⁷ By the mid twentieth century he was the owner of Abbeville, an eighteenth-century mansion renovated by architect James Gandon and set in 120 acres in Kinsealy, County Dublin, which was later owned by former Irish Taoiseach Charles J. Haughey.¹¹⁸ Such upward mobility is noteworthy given that in 1901 five-year-old Percy and his family lived in one room of a tenement on York Street off St Stephen’s Green.¹¹⁹

Conclusion

The expansion of Na *Fianna* Éireann circa 1914 and the growth of literary consumerism facilitated the development of *Fianna* print culture. In producing *Nodlaig na bhFiann* and *Fianna*, Reynolds and O’Connor seized the initiative in publishing Irish nationalist alternatives to popular British publications for youth. These two publications are significant because they were initiated and produced by adolescents for adolescents. Although the success of *Nodlaig na bhFiann* and *Fianna* was mixed, the pair displayed a combination of [p. 160] confidence, courage and enterprise fostered by their active involvement in the *Fianna*. Their *Fianna* training and commitment to activism were also evident when O’Connor administered first aid during the 1913 Lockout and Reynolds participated in the Easter

Rising. In both cases, they exposed themselves to danger, injury, and ill health with potentially fatal consequences. The example of Reynolds in particular highlights the value of uniformed youth groups like the Fianna in providing opportunities for experiential learning that have the potential to influence their members' development of practical skills and foundation of future careers. The case of O'Connor is less clear, however, as due to his premature demise, it is impossible to posit the potential longer-term impact of his experiences in the Fianna. [p. 161]

Endnotes

¹ Quoted in Willie Nelson [pseudonym of Pádraic Ó Riain], "Na Fianna Éireann," *Irish Volunteer*, 19 December 1914, 8. Ó Riain is revealed as Willie Nelson in *The Howth Gun-Running and the Kilcoole Gun-Running*, ed. F.X. Martin (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1964), 156.

² The present article builds on my previous publications on the Fianna's involvement in the production and dissemination of nationalist print propaganda. See Chapter 7 of Marnie Hay, *Na Fianna Éireann and the Irish Revolution, 1909-23: Scouting for Rebels* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019) and Marnie Hay, "The Propaganda of Na Fianna Éireann, 1909-16," in *Young Irelands: Studies in Children's Literature*, ed. Mary Shine Thompson (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011), 47-56.

³ *Fianna Handbook* (Dublin: Central Council of Na Fianna Éireann, 1914). A similar second edition of the handbook was published in 1924 with fully revised editions published in 1964 and 1988.

⁴ For histories of this Irish republican youth group, see Hay, *Na Fianna Éireann*; Damian Lawlor, *Na Fianna Éireann and the Irish Revolution, 1909 to 1923* (Rhode, Co. Offaly: Caoillte Books, 2009); J. Anthony Gaughan, *Scouting in Ireland* (Dublin: Kingdom Books 2006), 33-77; and John R. Watts, "Na Fianna Éireann: A Case Study of a Political Youth Organisation" (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 1981).

⁵ Hay, *Na Fianna Éireann*, 4.

⁶ John Springhall, *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain, 1860-1960* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1986), 64. Also see Michelle Smith, "Be(ing) prepared: Girl Guides, Colonial Life, and National Strength," *Limina: A Journal of Historical and Cultural Studies* 12 (2006): 1-11, https://www.archive.limina.arts.uwa.edu.au/_data/page/186589/smith.pdf.

⁷ Kristine Alexander, "Can the Girl Guide Speak? The Perils and Pleasures of Looking for Children's Voices in Archival Research," *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Culture* 4, no. 1 (2012): 138.

⁸ Andrew Donson, "Why did German Youth Become Fascists? Nationalist Males Born 1900 to 1908 in War and Revolution," *Social History* 31, no. 3 (2006): 353; Hay, *Na Fianna Éireann*, 11.

⁹ Brendan Power, "The Boy Scouts in Ireland: Urbanisation, Health, Education, and Adolescence, 1908-1914," in *Constructions of the Irish Child in the Independence Period, 1910-1940*, eds. Ciara Boylan and Ciara Gallagher (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 269-70.

¹⁰ Hay, *Na Fianna Éireann*, 112-13.

¹¹ For a map showing the locations of Fianna troops in the period 1909-22, see Marnie Hay, "Na Fianna Éireann," in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, eds. John Crowley, Donal Ó Drisceoil and Mike Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017), 174.

¹² Marnie Hay, "The Foundation and Development of Na Fianna Éireann, 1909-16," *Irish Historical Studies* 36, no. 141 (May 2008): 64.

¹³ Liam Mellows was a revolutionary and socialist executed in December 1922 as a reprisal for the killing of a pro-Treaty TD by republicans during the Irish Civil War. See Marie Coleman and William Murphy, "Mellows,

William Joseph ('Liam')," Dictionary of Irish Biography [DIB], accessed 26 July 2021, <https://www.dib.ie/biography/mellows-william-joseph-liam-a5795>.

¹⁴ C. Desmond Greaves, *Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1988), 48, 53; Eamon Martin, witness statement, 1 October 1951, Irish Military Archives [IMA], Bureau of Military History [BMH] WS 591. BMH witness statements are available from <https://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/bureau-of-military-history-1913-1921>

¹⁵ Hay, *Na Fianna Éireann*, 113-14.

¹⁶ Robert Holland, *A Short History of Fianna Éireann*, no date [c.1981], 19, National Library of Ireland [NLI], MS 35,455/3/1A. Na Fianna Éireann produced this photocopied booklet, which features a memoir written in 1949.

¹⁷ Bulmer Hobson, witness statement, 15 October 1947, IMA, BMH WS 31. See *Fianna Handbook*.

¹⁸ A copy of *Nodlaig na bhFiann* (The Fianna Christmas), no. 1 (December 1914) is available in the National Library of Ireland (Ir 300 p 9). It is bound with a selection of labour / left wing papers of a similar size and can be difficult to find in the library's online catalogue because the title has been misspelled as Nodlaeg na Bhfiann.

¹⁹ Liam Mellows, "Boy Scouts Organising Notes," *Irish Volunteer*, 21 November 1914, 15.

²⁰ Katherine D. Harris, "Forget-Me-Not: a Hypertextual Archive of Ackermann's 19th-Century Literary Annual," accessed 24 March 2014, www.orgs.muohio.edu/anthologies/FMn/Site%20Index.htm.

²¹ Margaret Beetham, "'Oh! I do like to be beside the seaside!': Lancashire Seaside Publications," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 42, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 25.

²² *Ibid.* Some also published holiday or seaside annuals for the summer vacation season (26).

²³ Ríona Nic Congáil, "Young Ireland and *The Nation*: Nationalist Children's Culture in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Éire-Ireland* 46, no. 3 & 4 (Fall / Winter 2011): 43.

²⁴ See *Irish Times*, 11 January 1868, cited in Nic Congáil, "Young Ireland," 43.

²⁵ W.B. Yeats, *Reveries over Childhood and Youth* (Dublin: Cuala Press, 1915), 85-6, cited in Nic Congáil, "Young Ireland," 43.

²⁶ Bulmer Hobson, witness statement, 15 October 1947, IMA, BMH WS 31; Eamon Martin, witness statement, 1 October 1951, IMA, BMH WS 591.

²⁷ Willie Nelson [Pádraic Ó Riain], "Na Fianna Éireann," *Irish Volunteer*, 13 February 1915, 8.

²⁸ Marnie Hay, "This Treasured Island: Irish Nationalist Propaganda Aimed at Children and Youth, 1910-16," in *Treasure Islands: Studies in Children's Literature*, eds. Mary Shine Thompson and Celia Keenan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 34, 39-40. For a discussion of youth content in *Bean na hÉireann*, see Marnie Hay, "What Did Advanced Nationalists Tell Irish Children in the Early Twentieth Century?" in *What Do We Tell the Children? Critical Essays on Children's Literature*, eds. Ciara Ní Bhroin and Patricia Kennon (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 148-62.

²⁹ Hay, "This Treasured Island," 34.

³⁰ See Shaun Boylan, "Reynolds, Augustus Percival Harald ('Percy')," DIB, accessed 26 July 2021, <https://www.dib.ie/biography/reynolds-augustus-percival-harald-percy-a7636>.

³¹ "Fianna Roll of Honour," in Robert Holland, *A Short History of Fianna Éireann*, no date [c.1981], 25-6, NLI, MS 35,455/3/12A.

³² Nelson [Ó Riain], "Na Fianna Éireann," *Irish Volunteer*, 26 June 1915, 8.

³³ Jason Walsh-McLean, “A Headstone for Patsy O’Connor: Fianna Scout and Forgotten Lockout Martyr,” *Saothar* 41 (2016): 294-7. See also Jason Walsh-McLean, “Patsy O’Connor: The Lonely Grave of a Fianna Scout,” 22 December 2014, <https://fiannaireannhistory.wordpress.com/2014/12/22/patsy-oconnor-the-lonely-grave-of-a-fianna-scout/>; Eamon Murphy, “Patsy O’Connor (1897-1915),” 27 April 2014, <https://fiannaireannhistory.wordpress.com/2014/04/27/patsy-oconnor-1897-1915/>.

³⁴ Boylan, “Reynolds, Augustus Percival Harald (‘Percy’).”

³⁵ See Barry Coldrey, *Faith and Fatherland: The Christian Brothers and the Development of Irish Nationalism, 1838-1921* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1988). Among the O’Connell Schools’ alumni are Seán Heuston and Éamonn Ceannt, who were executed for their roles in the Easter Rising, Seán Lemass, a former Irish Taoiseach, and Seán T. O’Kelly, the second President of Ireland.

³⁶ Form A Household Return for house 17.5 Gardiner Street, Middle (Mountjoy, Dublin), 1911 Irish census, <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai000060751/>.

³⁷ See Form B 1 House and Building Return for 17 Gardiner Street, 1911 Irish census, <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai000060494/>.

³⁸ Statement of Percy Reynolds, Balram, 62 Fortfield Road, Kimmage, Dublin, IMA, Military Service Pension Collection [MSPC], MSP34REF22403. MSPC files are available online from <https://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923>

³⁹ Helena Molony, witness statement, 19 May 1950, IMA, BMH WS 391.

⁴⁰ Seumas MacCaisín, witness statement, 8 June 1947, IMA, BMH WS 8; Seumas Kavanagh, witness statement, 9 September 1957, IMA, BMH WS 1,670; Molly Reynolds, witness statement, 3 February 1949, IMA, BMH WS 195.

⁴¹ “Fianna Congress, Honorary Officers Abolished, Headquarters’ Staff Appointed,” *Fianna*, August 1915, 7.

⁴² Hay, “The Foundation and Development of Na Fianna Éireann,” 67-8.

⁴³ Molly Reynolds, witness statement, 3 February 1949, IMA, BMH WS 195. Also see Mary Catherine (Molly, Mollie) Reynolds, pension file, IMA, MSPC, MSPREF22404.

⁴⁴ Form A Household Return for 27 Harold’s Cross Road (Rathmines and Rathgar West, Dublin), 1911 Irish census, <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai000150928/>; Form B 1 House and Building Return, 1911 Irish census, <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai000150745/>. In the previous census of 1901 Mr O’Connor was listed as a greengrocer. See Form A Household Return for 104 Lower Clanbrassil Street, West side (Merchants Quay, Dublin), 1901 Irish census, <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai003803717/>

⁴⁵ Nelson [Ó Riain], “Fianna Éireann,” *Irish Volunteer*, 26 June 1915, 8.

⁴⁶ Interment record for Patrick O’Connor, died 15 June 1915, Glasnevin Cemetery, accessed 22 March 2014, www.glasnevintrust.ie/genealogy/.

⁴⁷ Liam Mellows, “The Irish Boy Scouts by an Irish Volunteer Officer – Chapter VII,” IMA, BMH, Col. Dan Bryan Collection, CD 129/1.

⁴⁸ Interment record for Patrick O’Connor.

⁴⁹ Walsh-McLean, “Patsy O’Connor: The Lonely Grave of a Fianna Scout.”

⁵⁰ Nelson [Ó Riain], “Na Fianna Éireann,” *Irish Volunteer*, 19 December 1914, 8.

⁵¹ The supplement is mentioned in the following review: “Nodlaig na bFiann (The Fianna Xmas),” *The Irish Worker*, 5 December 1914, 2.

⁵² “Editorial,” *Nodlaig na bhFiann*, Christmas 1914, 14.

⁵³ “Our Christmas Number,” *Nodlaig na bhFiann*, 14.

⁵⁴ See Lisheen Gifford, “Frank Desmond, Deputy Sheriff,” *Nodlaig na bhFiann*, 4-5. The most likely author of this story is Sidney (sometimes spelled Sydney) Gifford Czira, a journalist and republican activist who usually wrote under the pseudonyms John Brennan and Sorcha Ní Annláin. Resident in the United States in the latter half of 1914, she was acquainted with Percy Reynolds, the pair having stayed at Markievicz’s home in 1913 while both were convalescing from illnesses. See Sidney Czira, witness statement, 29 December 1953, IMA, BMH, WS 909 and Frances Clarke, “Czira (Gifford), Sydney Madge (‘John Brennan’),” in DIB, accessed 6 April 2022, <https://www.dib.ie/biography/czira-gifford-sydney-madge-john-brennan-a2356>. Letters between Muriel Gifford and her husband Thomas MacDonagh indicate that a member of the Gifford family was known as “Lisheen.” See National Library of Ireland, Collection List no. 131, Thomas MacDonagh Papers, 15, 20. Another possible author of this story is Sidney’s older sister Nellie Gifford Donnelly, who wrote and broadcast children’s stories in the 1920s. See Anne Clare, *Unlikely Rebels: The Gifford Girls and the Fight for Irish Freedom* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2011), 247-9.

⁵⁵ Paul Raphael Rooney, “Festive Reading and Seasonal Terrors: Hugh Conway’s *Called Back* (1883), Late Nineteenth-Century Gothic, and ‘Arrowsmith’s Christmas Annual,’” *Journal of Victorian Culture* 23, no. 4 (2018): 561-2.

⁵⁶ See S.M., “The Doctor’s Secret,” *Nodlaig na bhFiann*, 9-10. Sidney Gifford Czira is again a possible author of this story, the initials S.M. perhaps standing for her first and middle names Sidney Madge.

⁵⁷ For instance, the Nanilavut (meaning “let’s find them” in Inuktitut) working group established in 2010 provided guidance for comprehensive research that was undertaken to find “Inuit lost loved ones” who had been “sent away from their communities to undergo treatment” during the mid-twentieth-century Tuberculosis epidemic and subsequently died of the illness and “were buried in cemeteries near the treatment facilities.” See Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada website, accessed 6 April 2022, <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100014187/1534785248701>.

⁵⁸ Emer O’Toole, “In Canada, Like Ireland, Church and State Evade Accountability,” *Irish Times*, 5 June 2021, accessed 6 April 2022, <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/in-canada-like-ireland-church-and-state-evade-accountability-1.4584670>.

⁵⁹ “Nodlaig na bhFiann (The Fianna Xmas),” *The Irish Worker*, 5 December 1914, 2.

⁶⁰ See *Nodlaig na bhFiann*, 1.

⁶¹ The *Collins Dictionary* describes the word “muggins” as a British slang term originating in the mid nineteenth century, accessed 31 August 2021, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/muggins>.

⁶² “Nodlaig na bhFiann (The Fianna Xmas),” *The Irish Worker*, 5 December 1914, 2.

⁶³ Elena Ogliari, “The Social and Historical Effects of Laughter in Revolutionary Ireland: The Case of *Our Boys*,” *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures* 13, no. 1 (Summer 2021): 120.

⁶⁴ James Connolly, “Boys and Parents,” *Nodlaig na bhFiann*, 13.

⁶⁵ “A note to the Fianna from Col. Maurice Moore, C.B.,” *Nodlaig na bhFiann*, 15.

⁶⁶ Nelson [Ó Riain], “Na Fianna Éireann,” *Irish Volunteer*, 19 December 1914, 8.

⁶⁷ John McCabe and W.A. Maguire, “McCabe, William Putnam,” DIB, accessed 20 April 2021, <https://www.dib.ie/biography/mccabe-william-putnam-a5563>.

⁶⁸ For a fictive vignette of Willie Nelson’s involvement in the rebellion, see Donald Harman Akenson, *An Irish History of Civilisation, Vol. 1* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 396-8.

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- ⁶⁹ Nelson [Ó Riain], “Na Fianna Éireann,” *Irish Volunteer*, 19 December 1914, 8.
- ⁷⁰ A.P.H.R. [Percy Reynolds], “The Christmas Carol Singers,” *Nodlaig na bhFiann*, 6-8. These Fianna members were Robert Henry (Harry) Walpole, probably Seumas Kavanagh and John (aka Jack / Sean) Shallow, but it was not possible to identify “Mac.” Walpole and Kavanagh gave statements to the BMH. Fianna lieutenants Patsy O’Connor and J.J. Puinse (Seamus Pouch) are also mentioned in the story.
- ⁷¹ A.P.H.R., “The Christmas Carol Singers,” 6.
- ⁷² Fianna Code of Honour, NLI, MS 10,910. This code was developed after the 1919 Ard-Fheis. See Fianna Éireann, Ard-Fheis Report 1919, IMA, BMH, Michael Kilmartin Collection, CD 144/1/5.
- ⁷³ A.P.H.R., “The Christmas Carol Singers,” 6.
- ⁷⁴ Nelson [Ó Riain], “Na Fianna Éireann,” *Irish Volunteer*, 19 December 1914, 8.
- ⁷⁵ Fergus Mac Leda [Bulmer Hobson], “Letters to Members of Na Fianna Éireann,” *Irish Freedom*, March 1913, 6.
- ⁷⁶ Quoted in Nelson [Ó Riain], “Na Fianna Éireann National Boy Scouts,” *Irish Volunteer*, 9 January 1915, 8. O’Ryan is the anglicised version of the surname Ó Riain.
- ⁷⁷ Nelson [Ó Riain], “Na Fianna Éireann National Boy Scouts,” *Irish Volunteer*, 9 January 1915, 8.
- ⁷⁸ This connotation is discussed in relation to the wording on a poster in the Canadian War Museum’s collection, accessed 6 April 2022, <https://www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar/objects-and-photos/propaganda/materials-for-the-war-effort/kultur-vs-humanity/>.
- ⁷⁹ Photocopy of Lang Benefit Concert Programme, IMA, BMH, James FitzGerald Collection. CD 91/5.
- ⁸⁰ A.P. Reynolds to John Southwell, 14 April 1915, IMA, BMH, John Southwell Collection, CD 212.
- ⁸¹ Nelson [Ó Riain], “Na Fianna Éireann National Boy Scouts,” *Irish Volunteer*, 6 February 1915, 8.
- ⁸² Nelson [Ó Riain], “Na Fianna Éireann National Boy Scouts,” *Irish Volunteer*, 13 February 1915, 8.
- ⁸³ Nelson [Ó Riain], “Na Fianna Éireann National Boy Scouts,” *Irish Volunteer*, 29 March 1915, 8.
- ⁸⁴ O’Connor resigned from the editorship sometime prior to his death in June 1915. See Nelson [Ó Riain], “Na Fianna Éireann,” *Irish Volunteer*, 9 January, 26 June 1915, 8; “In Memoriam,” *Fianna*, July 1915, 3. Reynolds may have secured another editorial partner after O’Connor’s departure. Although Virginia E. Glandon and Ben Novick have cited Hobson as editor of *Fianna*, Hobson does not verify this in his memoirs. See Virginia E. Glandon, *Arthur Griffith and the Advanced Nationalist Press: Ireland, 1900-1922* (New York: Lang, 1985), 269; Ben Novick, *Conceiving Revolution: Irish Nationalist Propaganda During the First World War* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 30; Bulmer Hobson, witness statement, 15 October 1947, IMA, BMH WS 31.
- ⁸⁵ “In Memoriam June 17th 1915,” *Fianna*, July 1915, 3.
- ⁸⁶ A.P. Reynolds to John Southwell, 14 April 1915, IMA, BMH, John Southwell Collection, CD 212.
- ⁸⁷ J.J.B., “The Spy Peril,” *Fianna*, February 1915, 12-13.
- ⁸⁸ [Anon.], “The Goban Saor in Scotland,” *Fianna*, December 1915, 19.
- ⁸⁹ See W.J. Brennan Whitmore, “Molly,” *Fianna*, December 1915, 13-14; [Anon.], “The Prince Who Got ‘Fed Up’,” *Fianna*, January 1916, 9-11.
- ⁹⁰ S.MacC., “An Appreciation,” *Fianna*, February 1915, 14; Rap, “A Winter Camp,” *Fianna*, March 1915, 5.

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- ⁹¹ *Fianna*, February 1915, 1.
- ⁹² “Robert Emmet,” *Fianna*, March 1915, 5.
- ⁹³ “Fianna Congress, Honorary Officers Abolished, Headquarters’ Staff Appointed,” *Fianna*, August 1915, 6-7.
- ⁹⁴ Patrick Hearne, witness statement, 18 August 1958, IMA, BMH WS 1,742; William McCabe, witness statement, 25 July 1955, IMA, BMH WS 1,212.
- ⁹⁵ “To Our Readers,” *Fianna*, 19 December 1915, 2.
- ⁹⁶ Pearse’s serial started in the February 1915 issue of *Fianna* while “The Boys of Wexford” by Croghan Kinsella began in April of that year.
- ⁹⁷ Anne Markey, “Patrick Pearse: Literary Pioneer and Propagandist,” in *Patrick Pearse and the Theatre / Mac Piaras agus an Téatar*, eds. Eugene McNulty and Róisín Ní Ghairbhí (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017), 46-8.
- ⁹⁸ “Killing Irish Nationalism,” *Fianna*, March 1915, 4.
- ⁹⁹ “From the Editors,” *Fianna*, June 1915, 3.
- ¹⁰⁰ “Killing Irish Nationalism,” *Fianna*, March 1915, 4.
- ¹⁰¹ “From the Editors,” *Fianna*, June 1915, 3.
- ¹⁰² Ibid.
- ¹⁰³ A.P. Reynolds, “Our Industries,” *Fianna*, July 1915, 4-6; “Another Three,” *Fianna*, December 1915, 12.
- ¹⁰⁴ Neasa, “Neasa’s Nook,” *Fianna*, July 1915, 12.
- ¹⁰⁵ Dalcassian, “From a Long Way to Bodenstown,” *Fianna*, July 1915, 2.
- ¹⁰⁶ Michael Flanagan, “‘There is an isle in the Western ocean’: The Christian Brothers, *Our Boys* and Catholic/Nationalist Ideology,” in *Treasure Islands: Studies in Children’s Literature*, 47-9.
- ¹⁰⁷ Inspector General’s Report, August 1915, TNA, CO 904/97.
- ¹⁰⁸ Breandán Mac Giolla Choille, ed. *Intelligence Notes 1913-16* (Dublin: Republic of Ireland State Papers Office, 1966), 163.
- ¹⁰⁹ Advertisement for *Fianna* in *Nationality*, 18 December 1915, 4.
- ¹¹⁰ See *Fianna*, December 1915.
- ¹¹¹ Rap, “Practical Patriotism,” *Fianna*, January 1916, 3; Molly Reynolds, witness statement, 3 February 1949, IMA, BMH WS 195. Molly recorded that her father had moved his office from D’Olier Street to College Street sometime before the Howth gunrunning in July 1914.
- ¹¹² *Sheaves of Revolt* was dedicated to Na Fianna Éireann, according to an advertisement for the volume in *Nodlaig na bhFiann*, 3. Maeve Cavanagh MacDowell refers to James Connolly promoting her as the “Poetess of the Revolution” in her witness statement, 1 June 1949, IMA, BMH WS 258.
- ¹¹³ Rap, “Practical Patriotism,” *Fianna*, January 1916, 3.
- ¹¹⁴ Ronan McGreevy, “What Does a 100-Year-Old Biscuit Taste Like?,” *Irish Times*, 7 November 2018, accessed 6 April 2022, <https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/food-and-drink/what-does-a-100-year-old-biscuit-taste-like-we-try-the-wartime-biscuits-made-by-jacob-s-1.3689466>.

¹¹⁵ Summary of sworn evidence given before interviewing officers by A.P. Reynolds and agreed to by him on 19 May 1941, IMA, MSPC, MSP34REF22403.

¹¹⁶ For a discussion of these pensions, see Marie Coleman, "Military Service Pensions for Veterans of the Irish Revolution, 1916-1923," *War in History* 20, no. 2 (2013): 201-21.

¹¹⁷ Jerry Dempsey, "Mr A.P. (Percy) Reynolds," *Irish Times*, 29 March 1983, 15; Boylan, "Reynolds, Augustus Percival Harald ('Percy')."

¹¹⁸ Boylan, "Reynolds, Augustus Percival Harald ('Percy')"; Frank McDonald, "€7.5 million Sought for Haughey Mansion," *Irish Times*, 10 May 2012, <https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/homes-and-property/new-to-market/7-5-million-sought-for-haughey-mansion-1.517990>.

¹¹⁹ See Form A Household Return for house 13.7 York Street (Mansion House, Dublin), 1901 Irish census, <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai003800752/>; Form B 1 House and Building Return for 13 York Street, 1901 Irish census, <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai003800573/>. [pp 161-70]