

horror and historically-rooted drama – is the extent to which the familiar associations with nationalism, identity and violence recur.

Such continuities beg questions as to how far the latest on-screen representations reflect or diverge from a reality where complexity and change have been hallmarks of the G.A.A. experience. To point up that those questions are not comprehensively addressed in this book is not a criticism. Rather it is to acknowledge Seán Crossan's achievement in beating a previously untrammelled path where such questions can now begin to be asked. *Gaelic games on film* will deservedly win a wide readership: it is a book that practitioners of several disciplines will draw from and build upon, and it is one against which future explorations of Irish sport on film will be undoubtedly measured.

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NA FIANNA ÉIREANN AND THE IRISH REVOLUTION, 1909–23. By Marnie Hay. Pp xi, 273. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 2019. £80.

This monograph places Na Fianna Éireann within a wider international historiographical context. It shows that the organisation was part of a broader trend of pseudo-military scouting groups created in anticipation of the coming war in Europe with comparable groups formed in Poland and Germany, as well as Britain. The Fianna, an openly republican organisation, however, was created by Countess Markievicz and Bulmer Hobson specifically to combat the imperialistic influence of the Baden-Powell boy scouts and indoctrinate children with Irish republicanism. The group aimed to train boys and some girls (although as Marnie Hay notes the youth group eventually excluded girls from the organisation) to become part of the future army of Ireland and to fight for Irish independence: 'to pledge themselves to the future Republic of Ireland'.

Members of the Fianna went on to fulfil a variety of roles within the struggle for Irish independence. Younger members generally undertook a support role in carrying dispatches, disseminating propaganda and intelligence work whereas older members participated in raids, but more often than not graduated to the Irish Volunteers, later Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.). In fact, Fianna and I.R.A. members record clashes in operations which ultimately led to the formation of the army agreement of 1921 which, to a degree, brought the Fianna under the control of the I.R.A. and implemented a system whereby Fianna members, upon reaching the age of eighteen, would automatically be transferred to the I.R.A. ensuring a steady flow of new recruits and soldiers. The Fianna, as an organisation, was officially anti-Treaty, although some members did defect from the youth group to join the national forces. Marnie Hay's monograph ends in 1923 with the conclusion of the Irish Civil War, although while the Fianna did continue to function afterwards this is not fully explored.

However, Hay's study aims to 'provide an accessible account of the organisation's earlier history and contribution to the Irish Revolution' (p. 3). This monograph is well thought-out, highly readable and well written, and it fulfils the objective Hay sets out: to examine how 'Na Fianna Éireann became the military trail blazers of the Irish nationalist movement' (p. 2). Despite the youth group's participation in all the events of the Irish revolutionary period, this is the first piece of academic scholarship to provide a study devoted solely to the Fianna since John R. Watts's unpublished Ph.D. thesis in 1981. Other, more recent, publications include a study of *Scouting in Ireland* by J. Anthony Gaughan (2006) and a narrative history of the Fianna by Damian Lawlor (2009).

Hay's nuanced monograph significantly builds upon her previous articles dedicated to the youth group. Instead of a linear study charting the group's evolution from its formation in 1909 to the end of the Irish Civil War in 1923, Hay has written distinct thematic chapters dealing with different aspects of the group, such as 'who joined the Fianna' and 'moulding minds and marketing martyrdom'. This approach offers the reader an analysis of several aspects of the

Fianna's membership, evolution and, indeed, contribution to the Irish Revolution. The chapter on propaganda depicts the attempts made by the Fianna to indoctrinate and persuade other youths to join the nationalist cause, and its contribution to the dissemination of anti-recruitment posters as well as campaign literature. 'Who joined the Fianna?' unpicks the backgrounds of the children of this revolutionary generation who were drawn to the Fianna as well as charting what happened to members after they left, noting the group's influence and impact upon their future careers as activists, politicians or businessmen.

The book also provides a valuable and useful appendix that includes a list of all known Fianna members to date as well as battalions and their strength at different dates. Due to source limitations, some aspects or events that certain members took part in are repeated in different chapters; chapters three and eight could have been moulded into one chapter, for instance. The sources used by Hay however are noteworthy and are carefully scrutinised. The use of the sources, including the Bureau of Military History witness statements, Military Service Pensions Collection, *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, and newspapers, builds upon our understanding of the youth group. Hay, with her wealth of research, proceeds carefully to unravel its inner workings and over-lapping networks. Overall, this study provides a thoughtful and well-constructed analysis of Na Fianna Éireann which is a must-read for both academics and non-academics alike.

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LOUTH: THE IRISH REVOLUTION, 1912–23. By Donal Hall. Pp 170. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 2019. €19.95.

In recent years there has been a growing body of work that has set out to address Louth's role in the revolutionary era. One of the first to do so was Joseph Gavin and Harold O'Sullivan's, *Dundalk: a military history* (Dundalk, 1987). Local historian Stephen O'Donnell went on to focus on the activities of the crown forces in his book, *The Royal Irish Constabulary and the Black and Tans in County Louth* (Dundalk, 2004). Kevin McMahon and Éamonn Ó hUallacháin more recently published a printed guide to local newspapers' treatment of the period, entitled *Time of the trouble: a chronology of the Anglo-Irish and Civil Wars in Armagh, south Down and north Louth* (2014). To coincide with the decade of centenaries, the witness statements given by Louth men to the Bureau of Military History were re-produced in the *Louth Volunteers, 1916* (Dundalk, 2016).

This work is a culmination of a Masters, Ph.D., four books and twenty years of research on the part of Dr Donal Hall who was first introduced to the period through his interest in Louth's First World War casualties. Hall utilises a wide array of primary sources including newspaper reports, police records, private collections and government records, with the Military Archives collections taking centre stage. One of the rich highlights is the diary of Vera Bellingham, who was a member of the landed gentry with family seats in Dunany and Castlebellingham, and who had first-hand experience of events during Easter week and the First World War in France. The book was completed before the release of the I.R.A. Brigade Activity Reports and the eighth instalment of the Military Service Pensions Collection. However, it has deservedly established itself as the first comprehensive account of Louth's experience of the revolutionary period.

One of the many interesting theories that Hall puts forward is that pre-existing socio-economic tensions, petty jealousies and personal animosities wove themselves into the very fabric of every political split in Louth between 1912 and 1923, and that parallels may be drawn between the population's response to the Parnellite split of the 1890s and the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. Hall also demonstrates that the First World War had more of an impact on the population of Louth than the War of Independence. One I.R.A. contemporary labelled the county's population as 'sneeringly hostile' to the republican movement