

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

and observed that many households had a least one family member recruited into the British forces.

The title of Hall's fifth chapter is taken from the witness statement of vice-commandant of the Newry Brigade, Patrick J. Casey: 'The men of north Louth took little if any part in the fight for independence'. This statement raises all kinds of questions around the definition of active service, and forces Hall to examine peripheral and internal factors to explain the reasons by which Louth men did not fulfil Casey's pre-conceived notions of participation. Each county's experience of revolution was unique. Louth's struggle for independence was characterised by twenty-six violent deaths but as Hall notes, the commitment to a revolution should not be measured in fatalities. It could be argued that Munster and Dublin's experience of the Irish Revolution was in fact extraordinary, whereas counties such as Louth may have epitomised the everyman's journey through the period.

During the later stages of the War of Independence, the I.R.A. implemented a structural reorganisation of its units nationwide. Under this new strategy, north Louth, south Armagh and south Down were subsumed into the Fourth Northern Division under Frank Aiken, while south Louth was allocated to the First Eastern Division under Seán Boylan. By 1923, the north Louth republican community was largely predisposed towards Aiken's neutral and later anti-Treaty stance. Similarly, south Louth was bound to Seán Boylan's pro-Treaty leanings. These case-studies add to the growing volume of microstudies suggesting that the Treaty stance taken by the provincial I.R.A. leadership had a strong influence on the republicans in their respective brigade areas.

The book's narrative is focused predominantly towards Dundalk and the Fourth Northern Divisional area. As far as Louth goes, the Dundalk I.R.A. was exponentially more active and recorded far more fatalities and instances of violence than their Drogheda counterparts, whose role was nonetheless significant. This is a seminal piece of work by an established historian whose dedication to the subject matter is as apparent as his accessible writing style and ability to draw in the audience.

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THE LABOUR HERCULES: THE IRISH CITIZEN ARMY AND IRISH REPUBLICANISM, 1913–23. By Jeffrey Leddin. Pp 304. Newbridge: Irish Academic Press. 2019. €24.95.

Coming just after the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising, Jeffrey Leddin's *The labour Hercules: the Irish Citizen Army and Irish republicanism, 1913–23* is a well-researched, comprehensive and highly accessible history of the Irish Citizen Army (I.C.A.). Leddin's account is representative of a renewed interest in, and critical appraisal of, the significance of the Citizen Army and, as such, is the latest in a series of books published to coincide with the centenary of the Rising following a hiatus on the topic of nearly forty years. Unlike his predecessors, Leddin's research has benefitted immensely from the phased release of the online Military Service Pensions Collection from 2014 which has made available 215 I.C.A. pensions application files as compared to the nineteen I.C.A. witness statements previously available through the Bureau of Military History. Leddin, therefore, draws from a much deeper well of first-hand testimony, and one more proximate to the people and events of the revolutionary period providing new information and insights in greater detail.

Leddin's is the first of the recent wave of I.C.A. histories to trace the etymology of the Citizen Army's name and the concept of 'citizen armies' per se to the seventh congress of the Second International in 1907. In so doing, he contextualises the Citizen Army's involvement in the 1916 Rising as a phenomenon which arose not just as a nationalist movement, but as a development rooted firmly in previously established international socialist ideology and policies.