

**Digital Archives and the Irish Commemorative Impulse:
Gender, Identity, and Digital Cultural Heritage**

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

Information Studies

University College London

2021

Declaration

I, Hannah Smyth, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed:

Abstract

The current ‘Decade of Centenaries’ (2012-2023) in the Republic of Ireland has created a pretext for funding high-profile national digitisation projects. During this decade, digital archives have become part of the public experience of commemoration in a way they were not before. Social media also emerged as a prominent mode of communicating the commemorations online, leaving behind an historical record of engagement. Releases of state digital archives have been aligned with key anniversaries, notably in 2016, and has set a precedent for digitisation as a new ritual of commemoration in this late-modern remembrance culture. Online engagement built towards and spiked between March and April 2016, and though it is a burgeoning area of interest in digital history and memory studies Twitter as a source for the systematic study of contemporary commemoration in Ireland has been little explored.

In this context, this thesis demonstrates how the profusion of digital archives and online engagement with heritage emphasises the digital space as a territory for the performance of remembrance culture, underpinned by a critical heritage and feminist discourse.¹ Taking three centennial collections as case studies, it demonstrates how ‘digitisations may be recognized as vibrant and historically situated sources in their own right’ even as they instantiate Irish cultural and collective memory and identity.² Using digital humanities methods, it further substantiates the ways in which Twitter was (re)appropriated for the commemorations for feminist ends.³ Commemorating the 1916 Easter Rising continues to be a powerful reference point in defining and redefining Irish cultural identity. This thesis shows how both digital commemorative archives and Twitter have been mobilized in articulating national identity during this decade of commemorations, as well as in critical remembrance around the centenary of the Easter Rising, challenging inequality and authorised commemoration.

¹ Emilie Pine, *The Politics of Irish Memory: Performing Remembrance in Contemporary Irish Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 3.

² Bonnie Mak, “Archaeology of a Digitization.,” *Journal of the Association for Information Science & Technology* 65, no. 8 (August 2014): 1516.

³ Frederic Clavert, “Temporalités Du Centenaire de La Grande Guerre Sur Twitter,” in *Temps et Temporalités Du Web*, ed. Valerie Schafer (Nanterre: Presses Universitaires de Paris Nanterre, 2018), 113-34.

Impact Statement

Speaking to a prolonged period of internationally significant commemorations and rapid digitisation of cultural heritage across Europe and beyond, this research is of international reach and interest. The Irish ‘Decade of Centenaries’ is a nationalising project akin to ‘Mission du Centenaries’ in France and these Europe-wide commemorations are arguably the first bringing together of mass, planned digitisation of heritage collections along with sustained public discussion of historical events concentrated in multiple anniversaries. In the midst of an intense decade of commemorations, social media has become a salient mode of participating in public remembrance and history-making, and a litmus test for remembrance conflict and controversy.

This thesis is a major contribution to theory and methodology across the fields of critical heritage studies, archives, digital humanities, public history, social media studies, memory studies, gender studies and Irish studies. Using a suite of qualitative and computer-assisted methods, underpinned by robust interdisciplinary theory, this thesis constitutes an innovative contribution to research methodologies, particularly, but not limited to, the (digital) heritage field. Further to this, social media research is increasingly moving towards questions of politics, power, identity and ethics, as well as mis/disinformation. Therefore, this research is a timely and essential contribution to a burgeoning research area that is attracting attention in academia and society. At a time when access to social media data is increasingly volatile, with privacy policies and international regulations adapting to the new technosocial reality, it is therefore also beneficial to the development of ethical praxis and research integrity.

The research process and findings have been communicated at multiple CHEurope Project seminars and particularly the recent final project conference, which attracted attendees from across Europe. Through continued collaboration with CHEurope partners, this research will have scholarly reach and impact through dissemination in forthcoming open-access joint publications, addressing the broader project and the findings of the digital heritage work package. Previous and forthcoming scholarly outputs will continue to be disseminated via this project website, social media channels, and extensive international research network. Further collaboration and exchange on this

research through forthcoming conferences, such as Memory Studies Association 2021, and a fellowship at Luxembourg University will continue to grow and disseminate the findings to international audiences, developing scholarly papers, delivering seminars, papers and web publications as part of this. Having previously implemented my case study framework for teaching a graduate digital humanities seminar, the work will also benefit public and digital history pedagogy through a forthcoming MA seminar at York University.

Beyond academia, this research is of relevance to government bodies, heritage institutions, and policy makers who lead national commemorations in Ireland and elsewhere and who wish to better understand and respond to their diverse publics, and in shaping public digital heritage resources for the future. This research, particularly concerning social media, is highly amenable to communication to non-expert audiences, and this process has pointed to multiple possibilities for future scholarship of relevance to contemporary politics, digital activism and public-led remembrance culture.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the European Commission and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Innovative Training Networks programme through which the CHEurope Project was made possible. The security and opportunities this has afforded me during my doctoral studies have been a privilege and one that I have endeavoured to make the most of throughout. Secondly, and most importantly, I would like to thank Dr Andrew Flinn and Dr Julianne Nyhan for their guidance, kindness, and support during the CHEurope adventure. Their encouragement, generosity, and the opportunities they have given me to excel have been invaluable for my career and my confidence, I could not have wished for better supervisors. My warmest thanks to Gian Giuseppe Simeone, Kristian Kristiansen, and all the supervisors that worked so hard to make CHEurope - a whirlwind three years - such a rewarding experience. My thanks also to Abigail, Sarah, Hannah, and all at the Black Cultural Archives for hosting my secondment, which was a profound education. My thanks are also due to Diego whose skills, enthusiasm and patience made for an excellent collaboration and friendship. To my fellow CHEurope early-career researchers - Janna, Katie, William, Carlotta, Moniek, Nevena, Vittoria, Mela, Marcia, Anne, Łukasz, Nermin, Khaled – from whom I have learned so much and now share many happy memories and lifelong friendships. The administrative staff in the Dept. of Information studies - Kirstin, Dimitri and Hanna - have made the last three years run extremely smoothly and have helped me to navigate and make the most of my studentship, and for this I am very grateful. And to all those who continually encouraged me to pursue a PhD, who patiently read my work, gave feedback, and helped me prepare applications and interviews - especially Dr Stephen O’Neill, Dr Charlie Travis, Dr Ciaran O’Neill, Dr Mike Cronin, Dr Chloe O’Reilly, Victoria Darragh, and Brigid Leahy. My eternal thanks to my teammates and East London Hockey Club for giving me the greatest escape from the PhD every week. Tom for being my rock, my joy, and my equal. Lastly, my parents Donal and Gabrielle who have always valued and prioritized my education so highly, none of this was possible without your endless love and support.

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Glossary

1916 Easter Rising	Failed armed insurrection against British Rule in Ireland that took place primarily in Dublin city 24-29 April 1916. Thousands were imprisoned and 16 men were executed in the aftermath leading to a change in public opinion and a strengthening of the separatist mandate thereafter.
Anglo-Irish Treaty (1921)	Signed in London in December 1921, giving 'Dominion' status to 26 counties of Ireland (Free State), while 6 northern counties remained part of the Union.
Connaught Rangers	Infantry regiment in the British Army, originating largely from Ireland and the province of Connaught. Formed in 1881 and disbanded in 1922.
Cumann na mBan	'Women's League'. Female separatist organisation formed in 1914 as an auxiliary to the Irish Volunteers.
Government of Ireland Act (1920)	Home Rule implemented in Ireland. Partitioned six northern counties.
Home Rule	Proposed by the Irish Parliamentary Party and supported by constitutional nationalists from the 1880s. Intended to grant limited political freedoms to Ireland within the Union. Placed on the statute books in 1914 but implementation was delayed by the outbreak of the First World War.

Irish Citizen Army	Paramilitary force founded in 1913 by socialists James Larkin and James Connolly to defend labourers and workers in Dublin particularly during industrial strife.
Irish Republican Army	Paramilitary organisation formed in 1919. Involved in guerrilla warfare during the War of Independence.
Irish Republican Brotherhood	Highly secretive, all-male separatist organisation that planned the 1916 Easter Rising.
Irish Volunteer Force	Nationalist military organisation formed to defend the implementation of Home Rule. Founded in 1913 by Eoin MacNeill. Split in 1914, around half of its members joining the British war effort.
Na Fianna Éireann	Nationalist youth organisation founded in 1909 by Bulmer Hobson and Constance Markievicz.
Pro- / Anti-Treatyite	Those who were for or against the terms of the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty. Anti-Treatyites objected to Dominion status and the Oath of Allegiance to the British monarch.
The Truce (1921)	Ceasefire agreed between British and Irish forces to allow negotiations for a withdrawal treaty.
Ulster Volunteer Force	Unionist militia founded in 1913 to resist the implementation of Home Rule.

War of Independence / Anglo-Irish War (1919-1921)	Land war between Irish republican separatists and British Forces. Followed the 1918 General Election during which the Irish ‘Sinn Féin’ party won a landslide victory and the first rogue Dáil (see below) that sat in Dublin in 1919.
Irish Civil War (1922-23)	Fought over the terms and enactment of the Anglo-Irish Treaty from 1922.
Irish Free State	26 counties of independent Ireland (1922-1949).
Republic of Ireland	The Free State of Ireland was declared a Republic in 1949 following the cumulative dismantling of the 1921 Treaty by Irish administrations.
Northern Ireland	Six county state within the northern province of Ulster, partitioned through the Government of Ireland Act (1920) and remaining part of the United Kingdom after the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, operating under devolved governance.
An Taoiseach	Prime Minister of Ireland.
Dáil Éireann	Irish Parliament.
Oireachtas	Houses of Parliament.
Ireland 2016	Government body established to coordinate the 2016 centenary programme.

List of Abbreviations

BMH	Bureau of Military History
DMP	Dublin Metropolitan Police
DoC	Decade of Centenaries
EAG	Expert Advisory Group
GPB	General Prisons Board
GPO	General Post Office
ICA	Irish Citizen Army
ICTU	Irish Congress of Trade Unions
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood
ITUC	Irish Trade Unions Congress
MSCP	Military Service Pensions Collection
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NI	Northern Ireland
NLI	National Library of Ireland
NMI	National Museum of Ireland
PLIC	Property Losses (Ireland) Committee
ROI	Republic of Ireland

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The Decade of Centenaries is a state-led programme of national commemoration in the Republic of Ireland that ‘aims to commemorate each step that Ireland took between 1912 and 1922 in a tolerant, inclusive and respectful way’. Alternatively referenced as the ‘decade of commemorations,’ the programme is self-described as ‘an opportunity to focus on the development of access to historical records and primary sources from the time period,’ and the proliferation of digitisation projects by cultural and academic institutions has produced several new public digital archives and heritage websites.¹ This profusion of digitisation and digital history projects has been one of the defining features of the official Decade of Centenaries programme. Releases of state digital archives have been aligned with key anniversaries, notably in 2016, setting a precedent for digitisation as a new ritual of commemoration in this late-modern remembrance culture. During this decade digital archives have become part of the public experience of commemoration in a way they were not before. Conceived as commemoration for ‘digital natives,’ alongside traditional cultural remembrance practices, social media also emerged as a key mode of communicating the commemorations online.² Building towards and peaking between March and April 2016, this has left behind an historical record of digital public engagement.³ As the ‘key site of memory in twentieth century Ireland,’ the commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising was indeed the ‘centrepiece’ of this Decade of Centenaries (DoC).⁴ The 2016 centenary of the 1916 Rising was also the stage for radical feminist debate and activism in a way it was not fifty, or even ten years ago.⁵ These debates

¹ “About,” Decade of Centenaries, accessed January 11, 2017, <http://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/about/>.

² Mike Cronin, “Irish History Online and in Real Time: Century Ireland and the Decade of Centenaries Mike Cronin,” *Éire-Ireland* 52 (2018): 272.

³ #Ireland2016 and #EasterRising were among the top ten Irish news trends for 2016. @TwitterDublin, *Twitter*, accessed 2017. <https://twitter.com/TwitterDublin/status/806045891786403840>.

⁴ Mary E Daly and Margaret O’Callaghan, “Introduction: Irish Modernity and ‘the Patriot Dead’ in 1966,” in *1916 in 1966: Commemorating the Easter Rising*, ed. Mary E Daly and Margaret O’Callaghan (Royal Irish Academy, 2014), 3; Government of Ireland, “Centenary Programme” (Dublin, 2015), 6, http://www.ireland2016.gov.ie/sites/default/files/final_version_1_5_15.pdf.

⁵ Andrew Flinn, “Archival Activism: Independent and Community-Led Archives, Radical Public History and the Heritage Professions,” *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* 7, no. 2 (2011), <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9pt2490x>; Roisín Higgins, *Transforming 1916: Meaning, Memory and the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Easter Rising* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2013), 82.

played out in the anticipation and reception of certain commemorative milestones and digitisations, and in social media commentary on the commemorations. ‘1916’ persists as the crucible of Irish cultural identity, and the occasion of commemoration provided a medium and reference point for engaging in a feminist critique of remembrance and of the present.

Both the digitality and the discourse of the Irish commemorations are a break from the past in terms of how the Irish State and cultural heritage institutions have rendered the national story for their audiences. The commemorative activities both north and south of Ireland have in the past explicitly expressed narrow, nationalised tropes, but many aspects of the decade of commemorations have heralded a shift to a more pluralistic cultural and historical narrative in the Republic. A feature of the DoC has also been the involvement of ‘the public,’ that is to say those outside academia or professional heritage practice, in pluralising the history of the period to include diverse narratives, ‘traditions’ and identities and new ways of exploring its heritage and legacy. This played out in memorabilia collection days, a multitude of public history and community heritage events, as well as online through public digital humanities projects like *Letters of 1916*, in the access and use of digital archives nationally and internationally (as borne out by institutional reports and web analytics in chapters 4-6), and in debating and sharing knowledge in social media spaces such as Twitter. The ‘Expert Advisory Group’ for the centenaries programme declared that during this decade there would be an ‘acknowledgement of the complexity of historical events and their legacy, of the multiple readings of history, and of the multiple identities and traditions which are part of the Irish historical experience’.⁶ The DoC has been, to this end, a multifaceted exercise in public history, a relatively newly established field in the Irish context. It is also now widely acknowledged that during the 2016 commemorations of the centenary of the Easter Rising in the Republic of Ireland, an unprecedented number of people engaged with history.⁷ Events such as the ‘World War 1 Roadshow’, and especially RTÉ’s ‘Road to the Rising’ and ‘Reflecting the Rising,’ the

⁶ Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations, “Initial Statement by Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations,” Decade of Centenaries, accessed August 27, 2020, <https://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/wp-content/uploads/publications/Initial/Initial/index.html>.

⁷ Creative Ireland, “Clár Éire Ildánach / Creative Ireland Programme 2017-2022,” Creative Ireland (Dublin, 2017), 8, accessed September 4, 2017. https://creativeireland.ie/sites/default/files/creative_ireland_programme.pdf; Ronan McGreevy, “‘Over 1 Million’ Attend Dublin Easter Rising Commemorations,” *The Irish Times*, March 31, 2016.

largest public history events in the history of the State, were a manifestation of this change and a more participatory culture inclusive of ‘ordinary’ people.⁸ Inclusiveness, nuance and complexity has been the *lingua franca* of these commemorations.

The Decade of Centenaries, but especially the 1916 centenary, has also been a national identity project rooted in ‘culture and heritage’:

We will proudly present to ourselves and to the world our achievements as a Republic and show how we have taken our place ‘among the nations,’ expressing our individuality through our own distinctive culture and heritage, in all its diversity.⁹

This statement chimes with Assmann’s observations on cultural memory and identity: ‘Through its cultural heritage a society becomes visible to itself and to others’.¹⁰ *Creative Ireland*, a legacy project of 2016, similarly acknowledged the ‘unprecedented public participation that brought us together in shared reflections on identity, culture and citizenship that combined history with arts, heritage and language’ and ‘The value of culture in presenting Ireland to the world’.¹¹ Archives have been one of the cornerstones of this endeavour. Horne suggested in 2016 that the Irish commemorations had been successful so far because of a ‘favourable alignment’ of the conditions of collective memory, the civic sphere, officialdom, and the work of historians, and that the ‘democratisation of the archives’ has been critical to this.¹² ‘Democratisation’ is not a *fait accompli* but indicative of a break from the past and the potential for greater access and

⁸ The World War 1 Roadshow was a public memorabilia collecting and lecture event hosted at Trinity College Dublin with RTÉ and the National Library of Ireland on the 12 July 2014. The Irish Times reported a 16% increase in visitor numbers to the National Museum of Ireland in 2016, for the first time reaching over 1 million visitors before the fourth quarter of the year ‘as a result of interest in the 1916 commemoration exhibits’. “World War One Roadshow at Trinity College Dublin,” Trinity College Dublin, accessed January 25, 2017, <https://www.tcd.ie/decade-commemoration/events/world-war-one-roadshow/>; Áine McMahon, “Rising Centenary Boosts Visitor Numbers at Museum Sites,” *The Irish Times*, September 7, 2016, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/rising-centenary-boosts-visitor-numbers-at-museum-sites-1.2782950>.

⁹ Government of Ireland, “Centenary Programme,” 9.

¹⁰ Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” *New German Critique*, no. 65 (July 23, 1995): 133.

¹¹ Creative Ireland, “Clár Éire Ildánach / Creative Ireland Programme 2017-2022,” 8-9.

¹² *Ibid.*

critical engagement with history. In this way, ‘democratisation’ and ‘access’ have been used as metonyms for the digitisation of heritage archives. Digital surrogates of historical collections are a key focus in this thesis and they are defined by the UK National Archives as:

...records created by converting analogue material such as paper, microfilm or microfiche to digital images. The paper record remains in the custody of the archive as the original public record.¹³

‘Digital archives’ on the other hand have no fixed definition across academic literature. In practice it is a catch-all term for the lifecycle of an archival object or objects, their availability online, and their conservation and preservation for the future. It is used to denote analogue archival material that has been digitised and made available online as digital surrogates, whether presented as a detailed catalogue, an online exhibition or a collection. It may also refer to born-digital material that has been archived in a digital repository, and this may be online, in the cloud, or in physical hard drives. For the purpose of brevity ‘digital archives’ will be used throughout this thesis to refer to these instances collectively. ‘Digitisation’ will also be used to refer to the product, but also the act and process, of the digitising in its historical context.¹⁴ Digital archives are also in this context a form of ‘digital heritage’ or ‘digital cultural heritage,’ which is outlined in the UNESCO Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage:

The digital heritage consists of unique resources of human knowledge and expression. It embraces cultural, educational, scientific and administrative resources, as well as technical, legal, medical and other kinds of information created digitally, or converted into digital form from existing analogue resources.¹⁵

¹³ The National Archives, “Digital Cataloguing Practices at The National Archives” (London, 2017): 6.

¹⁴ Mak, “Archaeology of a Digitization.,” 1515.

¹⁵ UNESCO “Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage,” (2003) accessed February 28, 2018. http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/mow/charter_preservation_digital_heritage_en.pdf.

Digital archives shape cultural heritage and historical narratives in diffuse ways. They have been, during this decade, the basis of pioneering feminist academic inquiry, which filters down through books, print and online media, museums and exhibitions, documentaries, theatre and art, 'leaking out' and reshaping history, memories, and identities.¹⁶ Many of the innovations in Irish public history and the evolving historiography of the commemorative period are founded upon the remediation of archival material and cultural heritage through digital means, and the DoC has become a highly digital experience.¹⁷ Digital archives have become part of the public experience of commemoration in a way they were not before; they are now enmeshed in the way we do commemoration in Ireland and commemoration is inextricable from collective memory and identity.¹⁸ State archives in particular have been digitised and made free to access, reuse, and share online making the knowledge and social value they contain, in theory, open to all (who have internet access) and to all interpretations. Archives in this form are now part of a digital, sharing economy, and have the potential to be both academically and socially beneficial in highlighting a plurality of voices in history, and reaching a plurality of publics. Archives in digital form may also perpetuate - albeit in new contexts - dominant narratives while eclipsing others, particularly where they are in the service of national identity projects founded in commemoration.

The use of social media as 'a democratized space for critical comment' and to foreground the position of women in Irish history and the commemorations has also been observed in this decade, notably in 2016.¹⁹ Social media is, as Clavert suggests, a tool for the mobilisation and (re)appropriation of commemoration, and Twitter lends itself to moments of national public commemoration.²⁰ The peak in such Twitter activity during 2016, as will be demonstrated in chapter 7, means that the Irish national commemorations lend themselves to study via this medium. Social media as a source for the more systematic study of contemporary commemoration has, however, been little explored. As will be

¹⁶ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 67.

¹⁷ Stuart Hall, "Constituting an Archive," *Third Text* 15, no. 54 (2001): 89.

¹⁸ Horne, "The Larger Canvas."

¹⁹ Maeve Casserly and Ciaran O'Neill, "Public History, Invisibility, and Women in the Republic of Ireland," *The Public Historian* 39, no. 2 (May 16, 2017): 11.

²⁰ Frederic Clavert, "Temporalités Du Centenaire de La Grande Guerre Sur Twitter," in *Temps et Temporalités Du Web*, ed. Valerie Schafer (Nanterre: Presses Universitaires de Paris Nanterre, 2018), 20.

discussed in chapter 2, it is a burgeoning area of interest in heritage, digital history, public history, and archiving. Just as digitisations should be considered historically complex in their own right and ‘may be taken to represent a particular people’s literature or national identity,’ so too should social media be interrogated as historical primary sources or records.²¹ Two major web archiving projects were carried out to capture the 2016 centenary of the Easter Rising on the web, inclusive of select Twitter feeds.²² Such collections, assert Kunze and Power, ‘will be invaluable primary resources of the future for those attempting to analyse how people interpreted and engaged with the Easter Rising in its centenary year’.²³ Twitter therefore has archival value, and is a valuable record of narrative production, online engagement and critical remembrance during this decade of commemorations. Such data are, however, difficult to access especially in retrospect and they are not easily archivable nor made accessible to researchers, a paradox traversed by this research.

1.2 Commemorating 1916 and the Decade of Centenaries

A brief overview of the issues that have historically dominated commemoration of the revolutionary period is necessary to put these critical departures and gender politics of remembrance in context. The Easter Rising was an armed rebellion against British colonial rule in Ireland during Easter Week of 1916. Militarily it was a failure, yet it sparked a series of events that led to independence for 26 counties, the partition of the island of Ireland and the creation of the Northern Ireland statelet remaining within the United Kingdom. The most significant of these events were the 1918 ‘Sinn Féin’ election that reshaped the political landscape, the War of Independence (1919-1921), and the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. Following the surrender of the 1916 insurgents, the swift trial and execution of 14 rebel leaders at Kilmainham Gaol, but particularly the seven signatories of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, ensured that these men would become enshrined in the nationalist imagination, synonymous with the Rising and instantiating the ‘ideals’ of the nation. Nevertheless, for much of the twentieth century the history and

²¹ Mak, “Archaeology of a Digitization,” 1516, 1517; Cayce Myers and James F. Hamilton, “Social Media as Primary Source,” *Media History* 20, no. 4 (2014): 431-32.

²² National Library of Ireland, “Remembering 1916, Recording 2016” (Dublin, 2016), <http://www.nli.ie/en/udlist/web-archive-collections.aspx>; Svenja Kunze and Brendan Power, “Capturing Commemoration: The 1916 Easter Rising Web Archive Project,” *Internet Histories* 1475 (2018): 1-16.

²³ Kunze and Power, “Capturing Commemoration: The 1916 Easter Rising Web Archive Project,” 205-6.

memory of the Rising and the revolutionary period was a fraught and chequered affair. This was due to the divisions leftover from a bitter civil war (1922-3) that followed the Anglo-Irish Treaty that created the Irish Free State with ‘Dominion’ status, eventually dismantled to create the Republic of Ireland in 1949, and the Government of Ireland Act (1920) that began the partitioning of the north. Fitzpatrick, Ferriter and Dolan have recounted the rituals, rivalries and reticence that variously characterised state and ‘unofficial’ commemoration of the Rising and what came after in the early years of the Free State.²⁴ Political rivalries over the legacy of 1916 continue to this day.²⁵ A concomitant neglect and extreme control over the national record of the revolution by successive administrations during the earlier decades of the independent state, as has been recounted by Holland and O’Brien, was also responsible for the under-historicisation of the revolution.²⁶ Indeed, while the records of successive government administrations in the new state existed in the wild west of archives and records management policy until the National Archives Act of 1986, O’Brien has detailed the intent of successive administrations ‘to confine the interpretation of the past... to the perception advanced by the republican revolutionary generation whose warriors had secured the partial independence of Southern Ireland in the early 1920s’.²⁷ If not the narrative control,

²⁴ David Fitzpatrick, “Commemoration in the Irish Free State: A Chronicle of Embarrassment,” in *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, ed. Ian McBride (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 184-203; Diarmaid Ferriter, “Commemorating the Rising, 1922-65,” in *1916 in 1966: Commemorating the Easter Rising*, ed. Mary E Daly and Margaret O’Callaghan (Royal Irish Academy, 2014), 199-219; Anne Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War: History and Memory, 1923-2000*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

²⁵ Much of this ‘unofficial’ parading and commemoration was carried out by those who had been against the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 and fought with or supported the anti-Treatyite civil war faction, among them widows and relatives of the dead of 1916 and the wider conflict. In August 2015, Sinn Féin launched an alternative centenary programme with a separate commemoration of the funeral of Jeremiah O’Donovan-Rossa - the inaugural state event for the centenary year held at Glasnevin cemetery - instead replicating the funeral cortege that left City Hall where the veteran Fenian was lying in wake. Later in January 2016, a prominent Irish historian, Patrick Geoghegan, was invited to deliver a lecture to the Fine Gael party *Árd Fheis* (convention) about how the Sinn Féin party of today has no direct historical link to the Rising or the old Sinn Féin party that went on to election victory in 1918. The same historian would also become Taoiseach Leo Varadkar’s official speech writer in 2017. See: “Sinn Fein Launch Alternative Easter Rising Commemorations,” Creative Centenaries, accessed July 20, 2019, <https://www.creativecentenaries.org/post/sinn-fein-launch-alternative-easter-rising-commemorations>; “8 Things We Learned at the Fine Gael *Árd Fheis*,” *TheJournal.Ie*, accessed July 20, 2019, <https://www.thejournal.ie/what-happened-at-the-fine-gael-ard-fheis-2-2563784-Jan2016/>; Fiach Kelly, “Varadkar Hires Trinity Historian as Speechwriter and Researcher,” *The Irish Times*, June 19, 2017, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/varadkar-hires-trinity-historian-as-speechwriter-and-researcher-1.3125129>.

²⁶ See: Ailsa C. Holland, “From Louisburgh to Ladsmith: Archives in Ireland and South Africa in a Century of Conflict and Change,” in *Archives and Archivists*, ed. Ailsa C Holland and Kate Manning (Dublin: Four Courts, 2006), 127-46; Gerard O’Brien, *Irish Governments and the Guardianship of Historical Records 1922-72* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004).

²⁷ O’Brien, *Irish Governments and the Guardianship of Historical Records 1922-72*, 11.

certainly the neglect of state archives continued through to the 2000s, lamented in successive annual reports from the National Archives of Ireland. Equally, women and their role in achieving independence were side-lined in Free State Ireland, and public commemoration of the Rising reflected this by focusing overwhelmingly on a small number of men, compounded by a comparative failure to capture and preserve the record of women's activism in the period, particularly suffrage activism. It has been widely acknowledged that women are less documented and less visible in the historical record in Ireland and the National Library of Ireland, for its part, acknowledged that even in 2017 donations relating to men outnumbered those relating to women by five to one.²⁸ Hopkinson says that the civil war 'helped to turn Ireland in on itself and contributed to the long-term dominance of the conservative elements of the "new nationalism"', a conservatism that characterised the political and social hostility towards women in the Free State and later Republic, and the marginalisation of women in bringing about independence.²⁹ The reasons for their marginalisation are multiple and complex, but they primarily reflect the operation of patriarchal mentalities both through the prism of post-colonial nation building, the entrenchment of the Catholic church in this project, and the afterlife of revolutionary ideology in tension with the partitioned state.³⁰

The fiftieth anniversary of the Rising in 1966 was, according to Daly and O'Callaghan, the first concerted attempt by the State to take ownership of the Rising on a significant national scale.³¹ Retrospectively appraised for its overly celebratory tone in light of the outbreak of the northern 'Troubles' in the years that followed, 1966 was, as Graff-McRae has described, haunted by what came after.³² State commemoration of the 1916 Rising then saw an effective hiatus from the 1970s, when revisionist debates about 1916 and its

²⁸ The National Library of Ireland, "Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan 2019-2021" (Dublin, 2019), accessed September 10, 2019. <https://www.nli.ie/en/implementation-plan.aspx%0Ahttps://www.nli.ie/GetAttachment.aspx?id=031f5bcc-deff-401a-9584-7bac661d8dc4>.

²⁹ Michael Hopkinson, "Civil War and Aftermath, 1922–4," in *A New History of Ireland Volume VII* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 55, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198217527.003.0002>.

³⁰ See, for example, Ward's discussion of the abstention of Cumann na mBan from the debates over the 1937 Constitution, which included a number of regressive clauses that would operated against women's equality and participation in public life, offering 'only the barren prospect of waiting for the Republic': Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London; New Haven, CT: Pluto Press, 1995), 243–45.

³¹ Mary E. Daly and Margaret O'Callaghan, 'Introduction', *1916 in 1966: Commemorating the Easter Rising*, Mary E. Daly, Margaret O'Callaghan, eds. (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2007), p.7.

³² Rebecca Graff-McRae, *Remembering and Forgetting 1916: Commemoration and Conflict in Post-Peace Process Ireland* (Dublin; Portland Oregon: Irish Academic Press, 2010), 39.

mythology raged, until the re-instatement of the military parade in 2006 upon the ninetieth anniversary, a year after the Provisional Irish Republican Army had officially laid down their arms. Ireland looked cautiously towards the centenary to come and anxiety about a military-style commemoration during this delicate time in the north abounded. The meaning, memory and commemoration of the Rising was, after all, irrevocably altered by the Troubles and an ongoing Peace Process. McCarthy has pointed out that the peace process that followed the 1998 Good Friday Agreement helped eventually to render 1916 transmissible again in the Republic, though not entirely without fear of inciting violence by 2015 when the year and a half-long state commemoration of 1916 commenced.³³ Just as it was a chance to break the ‘chronicle of embarrassment,’ an enduring epithet attached by Fitzpatrick to the history of state commemorations of the revolutionary period, 2016 was also another opportunity to re-affirm the Easter Rising within moderate, centrist politics and further distance the official national origin story from the modern paramilitary tradition that also claims it.³⁴ Equally the passage of time and the seismic economic, cultural and social shifts of late-twentieth century Ireland have re-conditioned 1916 in collective memory and commemoration in the Republic. The ninetieth anniversary in 2006 had drawn questions about how to commemorate the centenary a decade later and, more difficult, the centenary of the Civil War in 2022-3, questions that plagued even as 1916 was celebrated in 2016.

The effective hiatus on public commemorations of the 1916 Rising between 1972 and 2006 also means that, in terms of tone, scale and diversity of activities, the 2016 centenary, indeed the DoC, has no comparable historical moment other than the fiftieth anniversary in 1966, each year-long festivals of national remembrance and both historic in their own right. Certain points of interest echo across these two pivotal commemorative moments. In 1966, just as in 2016, new ‘sources’, that is to say archival materials, were becoming available (to historians) underpinning a productive period of historical scholarship.³⁵ The fiftieth anniversary was also an opportunity to show-case the years-long accumulation of rebellion relics, personal papers and *bibelots* by Irish cultural institutions; it also encouraged

³³ Mark McCarthy, *Ireland's 1916 Rising: Explorations of History-Making, Commemoration & Heritage in Modern Times* (London: Routledge, 2016), 334; Marie Coleman, “Was State Commemoration of O’Donovan Rossa Funeral Appropriate?” *The Irish Times*, August 10, 2015.

³⁴ Fitzpatrick, “Commemoration in the Irish Free State”; Higgins, *Transforming 1916*.

³⁵ Michael Laffan, “Easter Week and the Historians,” in *1916 in 1966: Commemorating the Easter Rising*, ed. Mary E. Daly and Margaret O’Callaghan (Royal Irish Academy, 2014), 337.

further donations.³⁶ And as with the digitisations addressed in these pages, exhibitions and the acquisition of ‘important relics’ warranted the blessing of high political office. Broadly, historical links were drawn between the cultural and literary revival and the struggle for freedom making cultural (and especially national cultural) institutions the natural allies of an aestheticizing agenda implicit in the fiftieth anniversary commemorations. The line between cultural revolution and revolutionary culture remained equivocal in 2016 but, as this thesis will evidence in detail, the emphasis on archives and the efforts of national cultural institutions were at least as much about ‘democratising’ access and ‘democratising’ history as the fetishization of heritage. Two collaborative and participatory digital history projects created during this decade, *Letters of 1916-1923: Ordinary Lives, Extraordinary Times* and *Inspiring Ireland*, are exemplary of this ‘democratising’ and digital shift.³⁷ Historical anniversaries can be an impetus for donations, purchases, loans, and collection drives both for specific exhibitions or long-term preservation. Joy and Malone have tracked the National Museum’s intake of 1916 objects in the 1930s showing that the lead up to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Rising (years 1935-41) saw the highest rate of acquisitions that went towards some of its first 1916 exhibitions and what would become the museum’s first distinct, thematic collection.³⁸ In many ways 2016 was an update on the foundations laid in 1966, which itself built on the smaller-scale rituals and practices of previous anniversaries.³⁹

³⁶ Taoiseach Sean Lemass presented the “Irish Republic” flag, recently repatriated from Britain, to the National Museum during the official opening of the 1916 exhibition, which had been years in the making and which had, according to Patrick Hillery, Minister for Trade and Commerce who opened the exhibition, “grown steadily in interest and importance through its constant enrichment by gifts of many benefactors who had been prepared to sacrifice their personal attachment to cherished relics in order to make them available to the nation”. “EXHIBITION TELLS STORY OF RISING: Post Office Flag on View,” *The Irish Times*, April 13, 1966, 11; “Mementos of Rising for Museum,” *The Irish Times*, April 20, 1966.

³⁷ Letters of 1916 is a public transcription project that digitises letters donated by the public. Inspiring Ireland repurposes digitised material from cultural institutions in themed collections, as well as material from public memorabilia collection days in Ireland and abroad. Both may also be classed as “digital history projects” defined by Williams as: ‘Academic and cultural heritage institutions, often partnering with one or more organizations, initiate projects based on specific historical questions...[and] do not limit themselves to using archival records to form their collections; some also crowd source their record creation’. “Letters of 1916-1923: Ordinary Lives, Extraordinary Times,” accessed November 12, 2020, <http://letters1916.maynoothuniversity.ie/>; “Inspiring Ireland,” accessed November 12, 2020, <https://inspiring-ireland.ie/>; Amy Williams, “Participation, Collaboration, and Community Building in Digital Repositories/Participation, Collaboration et Développement Communautaire Dans Les Dépôts Numériques,” *Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science* 39, no. 3-4 (2015): 369-70.

³⁸ Lar Joye and Brenda Malone, “Displaying the Nation: The 1916 Exhibition at the National Museum of Ireland, 1932-1991,” in *Making 1916: Material and Visual Culture of the Easter Rising*, ed. Lisa Godson and Joanna Brück (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 186-87.

³⁹ See: Diarmaid Ferriter, “Commemorating the Rising, 1922-65,” in *1916 in 1966: Commemorating the Easter Rising*, ed. Mary E Daly and Margaret O’Callaghan (Royal Irish Academy, 2014), 199-219.

Notwithstanding the repetitious nature of commemorative practices - the ‘conventions and routines’ more than the ‘traditions’ - the themes, programming and pageantry are highly reminiscent between the two.⁴⁰

The years 1916, 2006 and 2016 are not only significant in Irish nationalist history. Previously, the First World War was primarily characterised as the backdrop to the conditions for rebellion in 1916 - ‘Ireland’s opportunity’ - while Britain was engaged in an international war. However, 1916, the year of the first Battle of the Somme, is also central to northern unionist and protestant identities. The catastrophic losses to the Ulster 36th Division on 1 July during the First World War became part of a long-established tradition of protestant unionist remembrance that stretches back to 1641. This ethno-political duality of remembrance is important to understanding the discourse of the DoC project as it relates to the all-island politics of today, as is the Peace Process to the alternative ‘Decade of Anniversaries’ timeline in Northern Ireland. Closely related and equally important to this broader commemorative context was the restoration, from the 1990s, of the memory of southern Irish and northern nationalist involvement in the First World War alongside northern unionist soldiers in the national story. Beiner reappraises the 1990s as a kind of pre-decade of centenaries that witnessed a series of significant anniversaries precipitating a ‘memory boom’ in Irish academia and ‘shared history’ as an Irish political project.⁴¹ Now with an established body of literature documenting this national amnesia and road to remembrance, the history and memory of Irish participation in the First World War was a cornerstone of the first half of the DoC.⁴² The extent to which peace and reconciliation vis-à-vis Northern Ireland and Anglo-Irish relations underscored the rhetoric of this state commemorative project cannot be ignored:

⁴⁰ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition, Canto Classics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3.

⁴¹ Guy Beiner, “Probing the Boundaries of Irish Memory: From Postmemory to Prememory and Back,” *Irish Historical Studies* 39, no. 154 (2014): 296; See also for an extended discussion of these reappropriations of “shared history”, inclusivity and reconciliation: Rebecca Graff-McRae, *Remembering and Forgetting 1916: Commemoration and Conflict in Post-Peace Process Ireland* (Dublin; Portland Oregon: Irish Academic Press, 2010), 95-111.

⁴² For a range of academic, professional and other perspectives on the history, memory and commemoration of Ireland and the First World War see: John Horne and Edward Madigan, eds., *Towards Commemoration: Ireland in War and Revolution, 1912-1923* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2013).

This series of commemorations offers us an opportunity to explore and reflect on key episodes of our past. We will do so in a spirit of historical accuracy, mutual respect, inclusiveness and reconciliation...But we want to ensure that this is a decade not only of remembering but also of looking forward; a decade of renewed and strengthened co-operation between our two countries.⁴³

The Expert Advisory Group (EAG) on the commemorations reiterated this in its second phase guidance in 2018, looking towards the centenary of partition: ‘The guiding principles in the Advisory Group’s Second Statement are of particular importance in the remembrance of partition, because of contemporary issues and sensitivities’.⁴⁴ A 2019 report by the EAG Chair to the Oireachtas committee on culture, heritage and the Gaeltacht explicitly called attention to ‘Northern Ireland and Brexit,’ making reference to the simultaneously upcoming fiftieth anniversaries of certain Troubles-era events and the 3-year power-sharing vacuum rectified only in early 2020. The report cited the difficulties posed by the ‘backdrop of Brexit and the continued absence of agreement on operating the devolved structures in Northern Ireland’ in planning for the centenaries to come.⁴⁵

1.3 Women and 1916

We cannot speak of this Decade of Centenaries - or ‘Decade of Anniversaries’ in the north - without recourse to these post-colonial politics.⁴⁶ Heritage has been central to the so-called ‘identity politics’ of different political, ethno-political and social groups both

⁴³ Decade of Centenaries, “Excerpt from Joint Statement by the Taoiseach Enda Kenny T.D. and Prime Minister David Cameron M.P.,” Decade of Centenaries via Internet Archive, 2014. Accessed 10 July 2020. <https://web.archive.org/web/20140625152920/http://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/statement/>.

⁴⁴ Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations, “Decade of Centenaries Second Phase Guidance” (Dublin, 2018), 15, <https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2019/01/decade-of-centenaries-guidance.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Maurice Manning, “Meeting of the Joint Committee on Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Wednesday, 11,” December 11, 2019, 3, https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint_committee_on_culture_heritage_and_the_gaeltacht/submissions/2019/2019-12-11_opening-statement-dr-maurice-manning-chairman-expert-advisory-group-on-centenary_en.pdf.

⁴⁶ Community Relations Council Northern Ireland, “Decade of Anniversaries Toolkit: Understanding Our Past, Shaping Our Future,” (2013) accessed July 7, 2018. https://www.community-relations.org.uk/sites/crc/files/media-files/NI_Community_Relations_Council_Toolkit_0.pdf.

north and south of Ireland. However, it is their relationship with the rise of public history and ‘history from below’ in the Irish context that is pertinent to this thesis. Pine preceded McCarthy in recognising the ‘expanding forms of memory made possible by the peace process,’ now manifest in this decade of commemorations in the Republic.⁴⁷ And as Cauvin and O’Neill point out ‘Public history in Ireland has been greatly associated with authorized commemorative events,’ especially true during this decade.⁴⁸ While pluralising the history of the war was paramount and some attention was given to labour strife, one of the most notable shifts in this commemorative period has been the way in which it has driven academic and public discourse around women in the national heritage, primarily through the lens of revolutionary politics. If remembrance can trigger ‘social openness’, as Pine suggests, the implications of this shift to a more pluralising past must therefore be understood from a critical heritage and a feminist, gender perspective.⁴⁹ This shift came on the back of decades of a growing women’s and gender scholarship in Irish academia, and of a seismic social and political change in the status and freedoms of women in the Republic.⁵⁰

Women were active in all stages of this momentous period, including the literary revival, anti-recruitment and anti-conscription campaigns, social reform, socialist movements, nationalist politics and militant separatism, suffragism, the War of Independence and the Civil War.⁵¹ In a circular for the 1917 Cumann na mBan convention firmly claimed credit for their part in bringing about a rebellion, couched in a distinctly feminist analysis of its outcome for women:

⁴⁷ Pine, *The Politics of Irish Memory*, 15.

⁴⁸ Thomas Cauvin and Ciaran O’Neill, “Negotiating Public History in the Republic of Ireland: Collaborative, Applied and Usable Practices for the Profession,” *Institute of Historical Research*, 2017, 5.

⁴⁹ Pine, *The Politics of Irish Memory*, 13.

⁵⁰ For an overview of these changes see: Diarmaid Ferriter, “Women and Political Change in Ireland since 1960,” *Eire-Ireland* 43, no. 1 & 2 (2008): 179-204.

⁵¹ Senia Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women, 1900-1918* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), See; Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism*, 119–98.

...by taking their place in the firing line, and in every other way helping in the establishment of the Irish Republic, they have regained for the women of Ireland the rights that belonged to them under the old Gaelic civilisation where sex was no bar to citizenship...; which rights were stolen from them under English rule, but were guaranteed to them in the Republican Proclamation of Easter Week.⁵²

A romanticised reference to the early-medieval Brehon Law system, this analysis also attributes women's oppression to colonisation rather than homegrown patriarchy. These women were attuned to the greater nuances of their oppression, but it is an evocative reminder of the position that Cumann na mBan took in prioritizing the national question as the key to women's emancipation, their self-awareness of their agency in it, as well as how much of an inspiration the Rising was to them in both respects. The circular goes on to declare one of their three policies for the coming year to be: 'To follow the policy of the Republican proclamation by seeing that women take up their proper position in the life of the nation'.

The subsequent marginalisation of women from the national heritage narrative stands out all the more when we consider the role of women in establishing and maintaining the commemorative tradition particular to that revolutionary generation. These women were part of a generation for whom history, memory and commemoration figured directly in their collective identity affirmation, and subsequent recollections of the revolutionary period.⁵³ As Foster recounts, many of this revolutionary generation were 'brought up on commemorations'.⁵⁴ That the genealogy of commemoration was crystalized in the words of the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic - 'the dead generations' - speaks to the utility of remembrance, and recognition of its affective capabilities, in Irish revolutionary culture at that time. Some who later gave statements to the Bureau of Military History (BMH) recalled having witnessed or taken part in such spectacles as the 1798 'United

⁵² Cumann na mBan, "Circular about the Cumann Na MBan, Its Constitution, Policy for 1917-18, and Organisation, [1917].," National Library of Ireland, accessed August 7, 2020, <http://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000648668/HierarchyTree>.

⁵³ Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women*, 100.

⁵⁴ Roy Foster, *Vivid Face: The Revolutionary Generation in Ireland, 1890-1923* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), 289.

Irishmen' rebellion centenary and the Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa funeral, the latter described by Townshend as 'a major watershed in public attitudes'.⁵⁵ This funeral was orchestrated as a commemoration for which 'commemoration booklets' were sold, with Cumann na mBan (women's nationalist military organisation) among the organising sub-committees and the military-style procession. These booklets were reproduced in August 2015 for the centenary of the funeral, known for Pearse's graveside oration that made famous the declaration that 'Ireland unfree shall never be at peace'. Some recalled how they had become fully conscious of the separatist movement and spurred to join Cumann na mBan after witnessing the spectacle.⁵⁶ Remembering the sight of the '1898 procession' commemorating 1798, Marie Perolz declared how it had 'thrilled' her heart.⁵⁷ Helena Molony (member of Inghinidhe na h'Éireann and later Cumann na mBan) recalled the significance, as she perceived it, of the centenary of the 1798 rebellion commemorations: 'the Nation-wide celebrations of the Rebellion of 1798, which in my opinion marked the starting point of the resurgence of real National idealism.'⁵⁸

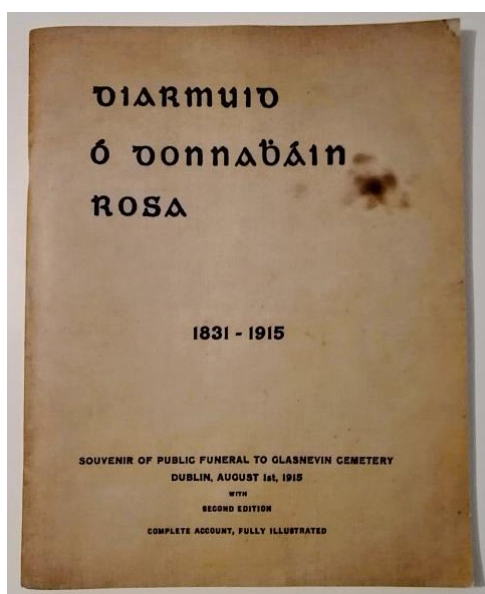


Figure 1-1. Commemorative Booklet reproduced by the Irish Government in conjunction with Glasnevin Trust for the Centenary of the funeral of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, 1 August 2015. Image by author.

⁵⁵ O'Donovan Rossa was a veteran Fenian involved in the London bombing campaign in the 1880s and whose body had been transported back from America, to where he had been exiled, to be interred. First lying-in-state at city hall, a funeral cortege took his body through Dublin city to Glasnevin cemetery, now home of the 'republican plot'. Charles Townshend, *Easter 1916: The Irish Rebellion* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), 84.

⁵⁶ "WS: 632 Elizabeth Bloxam," *Bureau of Military History, 1913-1921*, 31-32; "WS 1754: Leslie Price (Mrs Tom Barry)," 102; "WS 805: Lily Curran and Annie O'Brien," 1.

⁵⁷ "WS 246: Marie Perolz," 1.

⁵⁸ "WS 391: Helena Molony," 2.

Moloney, who clearly understood the affective capital of commemoration, further detailed how she and Madeline French-Mullen had later conspired to make and have tricolour flags raised and to paste reproductions of the Proclamation (to ‘proclaim it again’) around Dublin city upon the first anniversary of the Rising and of the executions in 1917, in spite of countermands emanating from the male military command.⁵⁹ An autograph book held and digitised by Kilmainham Gaol Museum, contains, amongst others, the signatures of Moloney and French-Mullen alongside Dr Kathleen Lynn dated 12th May 1917 at Liberty Hall, on the anniversary of James Connolly’s execution, and where they had raised a scroll marking this anniversary as part of this first effort to commemorate the Rising.⁶⁰ According to Moloney’s recollection ‘That celebration in 1917 established the 1916 commemoration’.⁶¹ Both Cumann na mBan and relatives of the executed also kept the spirit and memory of the rising alive through fundraising efforts for the incarcerated in the aftermath of 1916, and political and anti-conscription campaigning in 1918.⁶² McAtackney has recounted the occasion when the official commemoration of 1916 was orchestrated exclusively by the women - many of whom were relatives of the executed leaders - imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol in 1923 during the Civil War, using yet to be digitised autograph books from the Kilmainham Gaol Museum archive. These women, McAtackney demonstrates, claimed and proclaimed their links to the ideal and memory of the rising and its leaders, which she further suggests may have operated to help establish ‘the myth that women themselves were not central to its preparation, execution and continuation’.⁶³ Female widows and relatives were active in ‘unofficial’ commemorations of the rising in the early years of the Free State, and as was asserted by many on Twitter in 2016 in recalling the women of 1916, the Easter Lily, totemic of republican remembrance since, was created by Cumann na mBan in 1926 for the tenth anniversary of the Rising.⁶⁴ The aforementioned 1916 collections at the National Museum,

⁵⁹ Ibid., 42-49.

⁶⁰ Kilmainham Gaol Museum, “Relatives of 1916 Leaders,” Kilmainham Gaol Autograph Books, accessed August 3, 2020, <http://www.kilmainhamgaolautographbooks.ie/books/signatures-of-relatives-of-1916-leaders-and-other-prominent-nationalists/>.

⁶¹ “WS 391: Helena Moloney,” 49.

⁶² Sinéad McCoole, *No Ordinary Women: Irish Female Activists in the Revolutionary Years, 1900-1923*, 2nd ed. (Dublin: Dublin: O’Brien Press, 2015), 59-61, 66-67.

⁶³ Laura McAtackney, “Female Prison Autograph Books: (Re)Remembering the Easter Rising through the Experiences of Irish Civil War Imprisonment,” in *Making 1916: Material and Visual Culture of the Easter Rising*, ed. Lisa Godson and Joanna Brück (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 108-16, 116.

⁶⁴ Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism*, 209.

grew from the instigations of Nellie Gifford-Donnelly (sister of Muriel and Grace) and her involvement in a 1916 veterans organisation to create an Easter Week exhibition in the early 1930s.⁶⁵ As Malone has elsewhere observed, Gifford-Donnelly and other prominent women activists failed to deposit their own material evidencing their extensive contributions when donating that of their male relatives and spouses to the museum.⁶⁶

1.4 Rationale

In 2013, Pennell predicted that ‘on-line is a key space where discussion, reflection, and “remembering” are going to take place’ in this decade of commemorations.⁶⁷ Commemoration, past and present, bears upon our collective memory and vice versa. Both are deeply entangled with notions of heritage and identity, and have a bearing on how we understand, challenge and negotiate our present social and political struggles.⁶⁸ Heritage can, Smith says, ‘become a powerful resource in the politics of recognition - how certain groups are recognized or misrecognized can have important consequences in wider struggles over resources and equity’.⁶⁹ A radical feminist discourse has taken place around these commemorations of the revolutionary period as the recovery of activist women’s histories accelerated when, Crosier De-Rosa and Mackie contend, ‘feminist pressure was exerted as the post-colonial Irish nation prepared for centenary commemorations of the revolution’.⁷⁰ The digitisation of certain state archives has been key to the rediscovery of ‘hidden histories’ precipitated by this feminist pressure.⁷¹ As will be discussed in chapter 6, the initial release but especially the digitisation of the BMH Witness Statements from 2012 was a turning point in the acceleration of these rediscoveries, not alone of women but the ‘rank and file’ of the volunteer movement, a

⁶⁵ Joye and Malone, “Making 1916,” 182-85.

⁶⁶ Brenda Malone, “Recording Change: A Case Study of Collecting the Irish Abortion Rights Referendum, 2018,” in *Museums, Sexuality, and Gender Activism*, ed. Joshua Adair and Amy Levin (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2020), 208.

⁶⁷ Catriona Pennell in Dominic Bryan et al., “Ireland’s Decade of Commemorations: A Roundtable,” *New Hibernia Review* 17, no. 3 (2013): 68.

⁶⁸ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2006), 3-4.

⁶⁹ Laurajane Smith, “Heritage, Gender and Identity,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian Graham and Peter Howard (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 163.

⁷⁰ Sharon Crozier-De Rosa and Vera Mackie, *Remembering Women’s Activism*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2018), 5-6.

⁷¹ Flinn, “Archival Activism.”

digitisation that ‘breathed new life into academic and popular perceptions of 1916’ in the lead up to the centenary.⁷²

Counter to past asymmetries in remembrance, during 2016 heritage was mobilised in explorations of citizenship, identity, and feminism. The Richmond Barracks project, for example, came about with the restoration of the building that held a number of male and female rebel prisoners after the Rising. The project focused on seventy-seven women insurgents who were imprisoned there in the wake of the 1916 Rising and uses ‘these seventy seven women as a lens to understand the lives, activism, motivations and contributions of women to the 1916 Rising’.⁷³ The project went further than the archival researching of a book detailing these women’s lives. A ‘commemorative quilt’ creative group was also established with seventy-seven women from the local community in Inchicore, Dublin, using the collaborative quilt-making exercise as an interpretive aid and as a deliberate ‘commentary on the domestic role assigned to women in the post-revolutionary period’.⁷⁴ The exercise was a vehicle for exploring how the participants related to the history of the Rising and the lives of the historical women in question. According to historians convening these workshops a ‘collective shared sense of feminist identity emerged’ and:

...it appeared evident that ‘commemoration’ was equally a means of exploring the idea of identity in general and feminist identity in particular. The issue of comparing the life circumstances and ideals of the women of 1916 to that of women today came up again and again, leading to the question; ‘What does being “an Irish woman” mean for me today?’⁷⁵

These commemorations have further posed a unique case in that the women’s movement and the involvement of women in separatist activism in Ireland in the 1910s was radical. The now iconic 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic was, at the time, radical in its

⁷² Beiner, “Probing the Boundaries of Irish Memory,” 302.

⁷³ Mary McAuliffe et al., “Forgetting and Remembering - Uncovering Women’s Histories at Richmond Barracks: A Public History Project,” *Studies in Arts and Humanities* 02, no. 01 (2016): 17.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

egalitarian language, described by Pašeta as a ‘feminist document’.⁷⁶ This historic decade was one in which the nature and position of Irish feminism, or rather feminisms, was being debated, actualised and contested - not just by women but also men - in ways that would have lasting effects on gender politics and equity in the century that followed. Casserly and O’Neill assert that the ‘centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising has encouraged a reflection on gender equality and women’s rights one hundred years on from this decisive point in Irish history’.⁷⁷ Pašeta similarly observed in 2016 that while we might not have any political affiliation with the men and women of 1916 ‘their commemoration in this decade has acted as a real spur to feminist thinking and activism’.⁷⁸ In late 2015, the ‘Waking The Feminists’ (#WakingTheFeminists) movement had come into being through social media and public protest, becoming a national and international news story, emblematic of this historically conscious feminist activism. It emerged that ‘Waking the Nation,’ the official programme for the 2016 centenary year at the National Theatre, the Abbey, included only three female directors and one female playwright. This centenary programme unwittingly exposed systemic inequality in Irish theatre production at a time when tensions and debates around the commemoration of women in 1916 were building. As will be further demonstrated in chapter 7, #WakingTheFeminists was a reaction to the historical and continued omission of female playwrights and directors from the interpretation of the national story, and it catalysed tumultuous national debate about gender equality in the arts and drove major policy change. This event shed light on the myth of diversity in the cultural sector, and social media was indeed a space for feminist dialogue in which this lack of representation could be freely and publicly critiqued.⁷⁹ Alongside artists and dramatists, historians such as Catriona Crowe of the National Archives rallied together in this commemorative context. A reminder of how gender-based exclusion or discrimination operates through seemingly liberal cultural spaces, it

⁷⁶ Senia Pašeta, “The Proclamation: A Feminist Doctrine,” Century Ireland - YouTube, accessed January 16, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htCsZYm9QAo>.

⁷⁷ Casserly and O’Neill, “Public History, Invisibility, and Women in the Republic of Ireland,” 27.

⁷⁸ Senia Pašeta, “Where Were the Women in 1916 and Where Are They Now?,” in *Reflecting on a Decade of War and Revolution in Ireland 1912-1923: Historians on 1916* (Mansion House, Dublin: Universities Ireland, 2016), accessed November 27, 2017. <http://universitiesireland.ie/1912-1923-reflecting-on-a-decade-of-war-and-revolution-in-ireland-historians-on-1916/>.

⁷⁹ Maeve Casserly and Ciaran O’Neill, “Public History, Invisibility, and Women in the Republic of Ireland,” *The Public Historian* 39, no. 2 (May 16, 2017): 11.

also demonstrated the affective capital of commemoration both in sparking and driving debate and as a ‘powerful resource in the politics of recognition’.⁸⁰

Feminist heritage was further mobilised in activist campaigns during these commemorative years, notably the campaign to legalise abortion in the Republic of Ireland. The imagery and rhetoric of women revolutionaries and suffragists were called upon by reproductive rights groups in the campaign to repeal the 8th amendment to the constitution between 2016 and 2018. In September 2016, the 5th annual ‘March for Choice’ led by the Abortion Rights Campaign used the rallying cry ‘Rise and Repeal’ and reimagined the banner image of the ‘radical republican-feminist’ journal *Bean na h’Éireann* drawing simultaneously upon historical feminism and the 1916 Easter Rising that had been commemorated earlier that year.⁸¹ The egalitarian language of the 1916 Proclamation and its ‘promise of equality’ were similarly invoked in campaign ephemera.⁸² These invocations and discourse of liberation are reflected in the Tweets captured and analysed in chapter 7. Later, in 2018, the suffrage centenary was explicitly expressed through the prism of female representation in contemporary electoral politics, gender equality, and reproductive rights.⁸³ The spectacle of suffrage campaigning and the suffragette slogan ‘Votes For Women’ found currency again in the ‘Repeal’ campaign in the lead up to the May 2018 referendum.

It was also during this time around the 1916 centenary that gender quotas were, not without protest, introduced in political electoral nominations, and high-profile court cases were highlighting gender inequality in higher education;⁸⁴ new revelations of historical

⁸⁰ Rosalind Gill, “Unspeakable Inequalities: Post Feminism, Entrepreneurial Subjectivity, and the Repudiation of Sexism among Cultural Workers,” *Social Politics* 21, no. 4 (2014): 523.

⁸¹ Information on the production of this graphic was provided by Caoimhe Doyle of the Abortion Rights Campaign; Sinéad McCool, “Women of the Rising: Activists, Fighters & Widows,” *Century Ireland*, accessed March 1, 2016, <https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/women-of-the-rising>.

⁸² Abortion Rights Campaign, “Rise and Repeal March for Choice 2016,” accessed March 7, 2020, <https://www.abortionrightscampaign.ie/2016/08/02/rise-and-repeal-march-for-choice-2016/>.

⁸³ See: Inforgraphics, “Vótáil 100,” Houses of the Oireachtas, accessed January 6, 2018, <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/visit-and-learn/votail-100/>.

⁸⁴ A 2012 act inserted a clause in the Irish statute book that requires that at least 30% of candidates put forward by political parties for election nominations be women or else lose 50% of state funding for their operations. Oireachtas Éireann, “Section 6 of Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012,” *Pub. L. No. 36* (2012), <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2012/act/36/enacted/en/print#part6>; The National University of Ireland Galway in particular was embroiled in several gender discrimination cases in the last four years over non-promotion of female lecturers. “Women Lecturers Sue NUIG over Alleged Discrimination,” *The Irish Times*, July 20, 2016; A 2017 Higher Education Authority report showed a

institutional abuse in mother and baby homes shook the nation;⁸⁵ the passing of the Marriage Equality referendum in 2015 and the recognition of minority sexualities in law; recognition in law of the ethnicity of the Travelling community in 2016;⁸⁶ and public backlashes against the relationship between church and state in the provision of education and control of medical care.⁸⁷ Many of these gendered grievances against the State have been mirrored in the demand for a more critical and representative national historical narrative and a re-evaluation of what kind of heritage is valued in national commemoration. It is worth remembering also that the official Decade of Centenaries commenced on the back of a period of deep economic crisis. A Heritage Council of Ireland study carried out in 2007, before the economic downturn, noted that a significant proportion of participants ‘were willing to draw a connection between heritage and national pride’.⁸⁸ At the point of an International Monetary Fund bailout three years later, 100,000 people had taken to the streets of Dublin where the 1916 Proclamation was referenced in speeches in front of the General Post Office (the headquarters of the 1916 rebellion) accompanied by a woman dressed in Cumann na mBan uniform.⁸⁹ The years to follow saw the rise of the Left and regular protests over austerity and water charges, throwing class consciousness into relief, and even in recovery Ireland continues to live with a spiralling homelessness crisis that took hold after the 2008 financial crash.⁹⁰ In such times of upheaval the national past is often looked to in order to challenge present

disparity between men and women in senior positions in universities with only 21% of professors being female compared to 79% being male. Higher Education Authority, “Higher Education Institutional Staff Profiles by Gender” (Dublin, 2016), http://www.hea.ie/sites/default/files/02574-hea-gender-equality-report_0.pdf.

⁸⁵ In March 2017, an archaeological excavation confirmed that human remains had been found at the Bon Secours Mother and Baby Home in Tuam, Co. Galway after a Commission of Inquiry was established in 2014 to investigate the claims made by Catherine Coreless, a local historian who had combed county and State archives for the location of the burial ground of up to 800 babies dating from the 1920s. Elaine Edwards, “Tuam Babies: ‘Significant’ Quantities of Human Remains Found at Former Home,” *The Irish Times*, March 3, 2017.

⁸⁶ “Taoiseach: Travellers ‘a People within Our People’ as Ethnicity Recognised (1 March 2017),” RTÉ News, accessed February 8, 2018, <https://www.rte.ie/news/2017/0301/856293-travellers-ethnic-status/>.

⁸⁷ “28 June, 2017 - Minister Bruton Sets Out Approach to Remove Religion as a Criteria in Admissions Process,” Press Release, accessed February 8, 2018, <https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2017-Press-Releases/PR2017-06-28.html>; “Dublin Protest over Ownership of New National Maternity Hospital (7 May 2017),” BBC News, accessed February 8, 2018, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-39837968>.

⁸⁸ Keith Simpson and Associates, Lansdowne Market Research, Optimize Consultants, and The Heritage Council, “Valuing Heritage in Ireland,” *Heritage Council of Ireland*, 2007, 73.

⁸⁹ Martin Wall, “Ictú Questions Bailout Terms,” *The Irish Times*, November 27, 2010; Catriona Pennell in Bryan et al., “Ireland’s Decade of Commemorations,” 68.

⁹⁰ Fintan O’Toole, “The Irish Rebellion Over Water,” *The New York Times*, December 19, 2014, accessed November 11, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/20/opinion/fintan-otoole-the-irish-rebellion-over-water.html?_r=0.

inequalities, but equally to bolster the sovereignty, solidarity, and ideals of the nation. As O'Toole remarked in a 2013 roundtable early in the DoC: 'Public interest and participation in these events derives, in part, from their contemporary resonance. They provide a (safe) response to rising unemployment and emigration, and to an utter lack of faith in government to safeguard the public interest'.⁹¹ The obligation to commemorate also always has the potential for political capital when 'organisers seek not only to authorise and justify their aims and actions, but also to mobilise supporters in public affirmations of solidarity'.⁹²

An historical consciousness has always permeated Irish cultural politics and an historically conscious Irish public, both male and female, continued to express the incompatibility of an increasingly more inclusive historical narrative with a continually gendered space in the arts, academia and the workplace during this decade of commemorations. It is not a coincidence that online campaigns around female representation in history, commemoration and academia like Herstory, Waking The Feminists, and #ManelWatch (all-male panel watch), were born of the centenary years.⁹³ Momentous campaigns such as Waking the Feminists and the Repeal movement, but also economic upheavals, class and gender politics were part of the backdrop to the first half of the DoC when several digital collections (among myriad digital history projects) aimed at the 1916 centenary appeared. Further, these cultural moments are directly relevant to the analysis of commemoration of the Easter Rising, specifically the 'women of 1916,' on Twitter. As will be argued in chapter 7, Twitter was a space in which a female narrative of 1916 and the feminist legacy of its protagonists were affirmed in the national heritage and Irish cultural identity, and a space of critical remembrance in which a feminist historical identity was being expressed through 'authorized commemoration'.⁹⁴ Harrison's thesis maintains that recent conceptualisations of heritage are a response to the experience of late-modernity, globalisation, risk and uncertainty in terms of loss of material cultural heritage

⁹¹ O'Toole, "Ireland's Decade of Commemorations," 67-68.

⁹² David Fitzpatrick, "Commemoration in the Irish Free State: A Chronicle of Embarrassment," in Ian McBride, ed., *History and Memory in Modern Ireland* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 184.

⁹³ "Herstory," accessed August 1, 2020, <https://www.herstory.ie/home>; "#WakingTheFeminists: Equality for Women in Irish Theatre," Waking The Feminists, accessed November 16, 2020, <http://www.wakingthefeminists.org/>; "Manel Watch @ManelWatchIre," Twitter, accessed December 30, 2016, <https://twitter.com/ManelWatchIre>.

⁹⁴ Cauvin and O'Neill, "Negotiating Public History," 7.

but also economic, social, political and environmental upheavals in Western societies.⁹⁵ The power-relations between states, memory institutions and their publics in Western societies have also been altered by the confluence of modern social, cultural and intellectual freedoms. If we are to approach heritage as a social, political and economic phenomenon within a particular historical context, as Harrison suggests, then a cognisance of these intersections is necessary to understand the meaning-making processes of this DoC, as this thesis will detail in chapters 4-6.⁹⁶ A key tenet of critical heritage studies is, as Winter states, to bring ‘a critical perspective to bear upon the socio-political complexities that enmesh heritage’.⁹⁷

In time the history of 2016 within the genealogy of Irish commemorations will undoubtedly be written, with due regard for the foundations laid by the 1966 jubilee. From a critical heritage perspective, what fundamentally differentiates 2016, and the wider DoC, from this previous commemorative moment are: the Peace Process, the rise of Public History, the de-centring of the masculinist narrative, and digitality. The latter three points are wholly intertwined and paramount to the thesis of this dissertation. The fact that women were marginalised in the fiftieth anniversary of the Rising was, according to Daly and O’Callaghan, one of its more ‘predictable aspects,’ but it is also perhaps one the least problematised of those particular commemorations: ‘Cumann na mBan received, at best, marginal attention; the contribution made by women was largely ignored, except for the case of Constance Markievicz...’⁹⁸ Higgins similarly alludes to this marginalisation, pointing out that feminist critique was there but did not capitalise on the moment of commemoration to push debate about the position of women in the present.⁹⁹

In 2016, a group of feminist academics ran a series of roundtables and workshops at Maynooth University on ‘women and the decade of centenaries’, soon to be the basis of a major publication, and advocating an all-island approach to the commemorations. They noted that one of the marked features of the commemorative programme so far had been:

⁹⁵ Harrison, *Heritage*, 4.

⁹⁶ Harrison, *Heritage*, 4.

⁹⁷ Tim Winter, “Clarifying the Critical in Critical Heritage Studies,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19, no. 6 (2013): 533.

⁹⁸ Daly and O’Callaghan, “Introduction: Irish Modernity and ‘the Patriot Dead’ in 1966,” 12.

⁹⁹ Higgins, *Transforming 1916*, 83.

...the underrepresentation or outright exclusion of women scholars/ artists/ writers/ activists / stakeholders from major events (the RIA's 'Global Perspectives on the Rising' series and the Abbey Theatre's 'Waking the Rising' programme are two high profile examples); and its domination by historical discourse and by historians.¹⁰⁰

Echoing Bryan's cautionary analysis of when the historian becomes 'the high priest of commemoration' and considering that the gender breakdown for the 'Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities' workforce was in 2016 (the last census taken) 64% female, this statement further resonates (Appendix A).¹⁰¹ Additionally, the series emphasised the need for and validity of multiple disciplinary approaches to these commemorations beyond historicism such as anthropology, literary and memory studies.¹⁰² This thesis adds critical heritage studies, post-modern archival theory and digital humanities to these approaches. Emphasis on the centennial digitisations has focused primarily on their role in supporting public history, 'democratising' access to history, and above all historical accuracy. Less present in these public proclamations and academic debates has been the archival perspective, and specifically an interrogation of the ways in which archives - specifically digital archives - shape, reshape and instantiate Irish cultural identity through time, and the operation of power through the inviolate archive. Whilst acknowledging the undoubtedly positive aspects of digitisation, Taylor and Gibbons similarly draw attention to the fact that 'much of the attention given to democracy through digitisation has focussed on the ability to reach larger user numbers, rather than how the discourse itself is created and mediated'.¹⁰³ And it is this mediation of commemorative archives - something of a tautology - that I wish to explore and substantiate in the following chapters. Furthermore, affective responses to those histories

¹⁰⁰ "About," All Island Commemoration Network, accessed April 6, 2018, <https://allislandcommemorationnetworkireland.wordpress.com/about/>.

¹⁰¹ Dominic Bryan, "Ritual, Identity and Nation: When the Historian Becomes the High Priest of Commemoration," in *Remembering 1916: The Easter Rising, the Somme and the Politics of Memory in Ireland*, ed. Fearghal McGarry and Richard S Grayson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 24-42.

¹⁰² "Women and the Decade of Commemorations: An All-Island Perspective," Maynooth University, Department of English, accessed July 7, 2020.

[https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/Part 1 - Róisín Higgins and Mary McAuliffe.mp3](https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/Part%201%20-%20Roisin%20Higgins%20and%20Mary%20McAuliffe.mp3).

¹⁰³ Joel Taylor and Laura Kate Gibson, "Digitisation, Digital Interaction and Social Media: Embedded Barriers to Democratic Heritage," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 23, no. 5 (2017): 409.

and commemorations are equally important to record and understand within this context. In them we see most viscerally the presentness of the past and the meaning-making processes of commemorative heritage. Moshenska warns that in studying authorised cultural productions ‘these representations of the past have audiences and that without an appreciation of their responses and their agency, any study of representations is extremely limited’.¹⁰⁴ This thesis therefore takes up the digital turn in the commemorations and the gender turn in the history and memory of the Irish Revolution with a focus on commemorative archives and Twitter as a ‘theatre of memory’ and critical remembrance.

1.5 Aims and Objectives

Drawing on theories of archives, memory, commemoration, critical heritage, digital humanities, as well as history and public history, the aim of this thesis is to explore the ways in which three state memory institutions have responded to their digital mandate in this decade of commemorations and how these digitisations addressed this discourse of inclusion and plural identities using a case study approach. These are the Decade of Centenaries Collections (National Archives of Ireland), the Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection or MSPC (Military Archives), the 1916 Digital Collections (National Library of Ireland). These three digitisations were pillars of the state-institutional digital and archival response to the 2016 centenary. In chapter 2, and through these case studies, I will introduce the concept of ‘digital commemorative archives’ that has grown from this research and which underpins the progression of this thesis. This development constitutes a major theoretical contribution of this thesis to the field of Critical Heritage Studies and Archives. Digital commemorative archives, as observed in the Irish context, can be defined as digitisations of heritage archives that are circumscribed by nationally or internationally significant commemorations. They are digitisations that are intended for commemoration and as digital legacies of national remembrance as much as they are historical sources, and these may be highly mediated and promoted as such above and beyond a standard digitisation. In addition to their evidentiary and social functions as historical or genealogical records, they may also have greater cultural legitimacy with powerful symbolic potential in (re)framing the nation and national identity at such

¹⁰⁴ Gabriel Moshenska, “Memory: Towards the Reclamation of a Vital Concept,” in *Heritage Keywords: Rhetoric and Redescription in Cultural Heritage*, ed. Kathryn Lafrenz Samuels and Trinidad Rico (University Press of Colorado, 2015), 203.

resonant moments as nationally significant centenaries. Digital access, much more than availability alone, supports these processes. This theory arose from my observations, already outlined, of the alignment of several state digitisations with the centenary commemorations. Through researching these three case studies but particularly the MSPC, this idea was confirmed. Its recent history as well as those working on the MSPC made clear the logic of that particular digitisation project as a commemorative archive: ‘we want people to judge it as an exercise of national identification and in itself as an act of commemoration as well’.¹⁰⁵ From this, I will extend out the idea of ‘digital commemorative archives’.

I will further map these questions of remembrance, representation and identity to the study of Twitter as a space in which identities and affective responses to the commemorations, especially the commemoration of the ‘women of 1916’, were performed. In doing so I aim to substantiate commemorative Twitter as a ‘theatre of memory’ in the Irish context in which critical and feminist remembrance has taken place with intensity around the commemorations of the 1916 Easter Rising. Ireland and Europe are in the midst of an intense decade of commemorations during which social media has become a salient mode of participating in public remembrance and history-making, and the Irish ‘Decade of Centenaries’ is a national project not unlike *Mission du Centenaire* in France. These internationally significant commemorations are arguably the first bringing together of mass, planned digitisation of heritage collections along with sustained public discussion of historical events spread over time as well as concentrated in multiple anniversaries. The velocity of this data creation, limits on accessing social media data for research, both legislative and commercial, and the problematic nature of its interpretation pose significant challenges, as will be reviewed in chapter 3. Social media research is increasingly moving from network and community studies to questions of identity. Therefore, this study of feminist commemoration on Twitter is an essential contribution to a burgeoning research area that is attracting attention both in academia and wider society.

¹⁰⁵ Cécile Gordon, Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Project, “Discussion Panel QA,” Soundcloud, accessed April 2, 2019, <https://soundcloud.com/user-468339899-144564352/discussion-panel-qa>.

1.6 Research Questions

These aims and objectives outlined are underpinned by four research questions:

1. How have certain state memory institutions responded to their digital mandate for the 1916 centenary and the commemorative decade, and in what ways have these digitisations addressed the opportunities for articulating different narratives and identities?
2. How do these digital archives operate to include, exclude or support debates about collective memory and national identity?
3. What have been the affective and critical responses to the 2016 centenary from a gender heritage perspective?
4. How was the heritage of 1916 mobilised in online discourses about gender politics and national identity?

1.7 Thesis Structure

Having introduced the research context, chapter 2 will outline the literature and relevant theories and debates in the areas of critical heritage, archives and digitisation, interwoven with key concepts in memory, identity and commemoration. Here I will also advance ‘digital commemorative archives’ as a defining concept underpinning the three case studies to follow, as well as the concept of ‘assemblage commemoration’ into which these expressions of heritage and remembrance fit. The historical and archival value of Twitter - Twitter as cultural heritage - will also be introduced. Twitter, I propose, is a late-modern theatre of memory in which critical and feminist remembrance may take place with intensity around nationally significant commemorations. Its status as a burgeoning area of inquiry in heritage studies and public history will be further outlined.

In chapter 3, the methods and approaches to building three institutional case studies focusing on commemorative digitisations will first be outlined, covering sources used and points of reference from context, audience, intended or expected use, financial and legal considerations, collaborations and partnerships, to selection rationale and meditations on gender. Secondly, the query design, data collection and data processing carried out to create a corpus of Tweets for study will be demonstrated. The methods and approaches

for interpreting and presenting the findings will be outlined, as will their limitations and ethical considerations in carrying out social media research.

As will be shown in chapter 4, the National Archives of Ireland (NAI) 'Decade of Centenaries' collections constitute a flagship centennial digitisation that attempts to cover a broad range of social identities as much as it refocuses the primacy of the Easter Rising and its leading protagonists. This chapter also draws attention to the 'cyberinfrastructure' of online archives and exhibitions that send a message about how certain narratives and identities are privileged, or otherwise, in digital commemorative archives. As a key national cultural institution that holds the records of the State, the NAI has struggled to impress upon its funders and its public the essential nature of its work. Therefore, this chapter also draws attention to how digitisations have in recent times been a factor in augmenting the institutional identity of the NAI, in re-legitimizing this resource-strapped institution.

In chapter 5, the collection appraised is a key example of how digitisations were intended to widen access while at the same time presenting an updated version of previous commemorations by 'accentuating the role of the [Proclamation] signatories'.¹⁰⁶ However, it is also an example of how the official or 'authorised' commemorations have meant that this is presented as a prestige collection in a way that other archival collections included in the NLI's 'DoC' phased digitisation plan, and other digitised collections, are not. Further, the re-cataloguing process and the preparation of this digitisation unearthed more incidental records of women who were active alongside the seven signatories.

Chapter 6 will demonstrate how digitisation and the commemorative impulse, as much as the contents of the archives, have been instrumental in altering the identity of the Military Archives as a national cultural institution in a way that it was not before. It will be argued that the synchronic relationship between this digitisation and the commemorative context of their appearance have also shaped the nature of access and use of these archives, and

¹⁰⁶ Cauvin and O'Neill, "Negotiating Public History," 9.

the nature of their ‘transformative’ potential with an emphasis on the feminist possibilities and activations of these records.

Using qualitative methods, chapter 7 interrogates the nature of critical remembrance on Twitter specific to the commemoration of the ‘women of 1916’. Aided by digital humanities methods and visualisations, emergent themes of absence, affect and equality will be conveyed, alongside the broader themes of historical information and centenary commentary. Followed by a synthesising analysis of this discourse as critical remembrance, it will be argued that this digital commemorative space was interdependent with an active reshaping of Irish ‘collective memory’ and identity by publicly recognising and asserting the feminisms embedded in the national past, and especially the foundational national history.

From these four cases and theory development I will substantiate how the Irish commemorative impulse and the *lingua franca* of the Decade of Centenaries, but especially the 1916 centenary, has been a powerful authorising frame in the constitution of these digitisations and in the archival and affective processes of confirming the place of revolutionary women in Irish historical consciousness.

1.8 Research Motivations

The motivation for this research grew from my MPhil dissertation in Public History and Cultural Heritage (2015), and subsequent employment at *Century Ireland*, a flagship digital history project of the DoC, during the 2016 centenary year. The dissertation on mapping the civilian fatalities of the 1916 Easter Rising was inspired by a secondment to Glasnevin Cemetery and Museum where research on locating and eventually memorialising all of the Rising fatalities had been started by the late Shane MacThomáis. This project was an introduction to the hierarchy of remembrance in post-revolutionary Ireland on the eve of the 1916 centenary. Bringing together public history and digital humanities methods, the research later went towards a feature analysis for the *Century Ireland* Easter Rising online

exhibition and a co-authored ArcGIS (mapping software) lesson.¹⁰⁷ *Century Ireland* is a newspaper-style history website that ‘tells the story of the events of Irish life a century ago’.¹⁰⁸ It was through my work in research and production at *Century Ireland* that I was exposed to the use of diverse digital archives at all stages of a public history project. The range of histories and detail that it produces reflects the vast amount of research and collection of stories from multiple national and local newspapers carried out. My short time at *Century Ireland* was enormously educational, a privilege and very formative. It was also in this work that, on reflection, I realised I did not always have the knowledge or language to express and challenge some of the gender-biased perspectives that it inevitably reproduced even as it sought to pluralise the past.

I also became attuned to the extent to which social media were a key mode of communicating history and the commemorations, but equally as a space in which they were hotly contested. Often, stories that we tweeted had a particular resonance with present day concerns and drew impassioned responses. One example is a story about the capital’s housing crisis in 1913 accompanied by a photograph from the French *Le Miroir* newspaper of two children sleeping in a Dublin doorway.¹⁰⁹ The same image was re-used in an *Irish Times* article on the contemporary housing and homeless crisis.¹¹⁰ Early debates around the partitioning of Ireland similarly resonated with the geopolitical fallout of the 2016 Brexit referendum vote.

I also had first-hand experience of the ebbs and flows of engagement, of Twitter analytics and the responses drawn by different content. The *Century Ireland* team ‘live-Tweeted’ the Rising as well as a series of visits to new 1916 exhibitions that were launched for the centenary by various Dublin cultural institutions. Over the course of the intense

¹⁰⁷ Hannah Smyth, “The Civilian Dead: Counting the Human Cost of the 1916 Rising,” *Century Ireland*, 2016, <https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/the-civilian-dead>; Charles Travis and Hannah Smyth, “Tell the Story of Irish Public History,” *Learn ArcGIS* (Esri Press, 2017) Accessed May 20, 2017., <https://learn.arcgis.com/en/projects/tell-the-story-of-irish-public-history/>.

¹⁰⁸ “About Century Ireland,” *Century Ireland*, accessed September 4, 2018, <https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/about-century-ireland/>.

¹⁰⁹ “Arthur Griffith Slams Dublin Housing Inquiry,” *Century Ireland*, accessed July 14, 2020, <https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/arthur-griffith-slams-dublin-housing-inquiry>.

¹¹⁰ Fintan O’Toole, “‘Misery in Dublin’ - What Kind of Legacy for Our Children?,” *The Irish Times*, November 3, 2015; Originally published in 2013, as with all *Century Ireland* stories it was shared again as an ‘on this day’ Twitter post in November 2015.

commemorations between March and April 2016, the *Century Ireland* Twitter account reported over 2 million ‘impressions’, an unparalleled spike so far in its lifetime. ‘Impressions’ are the number of times ‘users are served your Tweet in timeline, search results, or from your profile’ and not a measure of engagement; they are Twitter’s way of saying reach or even ‘impact’. Though only indicative, this spike nonetheless reflected an overall dramatic increase in commemorative Twitter activity around this time, as will be seen in chapter 7. The digital nature of engagement was striking, as was the abundance of archival material circulating on Twitter alone, and these observations would become the seeds of this dissertation.

1.9 Funding

This PhD thesis was carried out as part of a doctoral research consortium and training program in cultural heritage funded by the European Union under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) - Innovative Training Networks (ITN), which in turn falls under the auspices of Horizon 2020, an EU research and innovation programme. The training programme was titled: ‘Critical Heritage Studies and the Future of Europe. Towards an integrated, interdisciplinary and transnational training model in cultural heritage research and management’ (CHEurope).¹¹¹

1.10 CHEurope

The CHEurope doctoral training program required relocation, in line with EU principals of international mobility and cultural exchange, and included 15 doctoral students working across seven higher education and research institutions in Europe. I have been a member of work package 3 ‘Digital heritage: the future role of heritage and archive collections in a digital world’. During these three years of study, I participated in six joint research seminars and two summer schools associated with the training program, as well as a secondment to the Black Cultural Archives working for a project entitled ‘Oral

¹¹¹ “Cheurope: Critical Heritage Studies and the Future of Europe,” CHEurope, accessed January 12, 2018, <http://cheurope-project.eu/>.

History of the Black Women's Movement: The Heart of the Race'.¹¹² A second secondment to the British Museum did not go ahead due to closures arising from the coronavirus pandemic. Our network of early-career researchers, supervisors, as well as scholars and practitioners who participated in our joint-research seminars and secondment partnerships will be an important legacy of the project, in addition to the exposure to the many varieties of critical heritage studies, methodologies and career development.

My experience of CHEurope has been hugely positive on both a personal and a professional level. Participation in this consortium and training program has afforded me access to a spectrum of scholars and opportunities, as well as financial security, that are unusual for any PhD student. I have been equally grateful and uncomfortable with this level of privilege and access to training, networking, and data that is normally out of reach of a typical doctoral studentship. Both the positive and the negative impacts of this privilege should be acknowledged. Undoubtedly this privilege has allowed me to do important and valuable research, especially the acquisition of historical Twitter data that is prohibitively expensive even for established researchers. I was also in a position to appropriately remunerate my colleague Diego for an invaluable collaboration on this aspect of the work. At the same time, in doing so I have bought into a corporate system that perpetuates inequalities in access to data for research, as will be elaborated in chapter 3. I have also travelled internationally on numerous occasions for project seminars and summer schools, a requirement built into the European Commission training model. My discomfort only increased with time as I reflected on the principles of Critical Heritage Studies, the evolving political upheavals, social inequalities, rapid climate change, and my place in them - feelings shared among this group of early-career researchers. After a summer of 'Extinction Rebellion' in 2019 we, the students of CHEurope, gathered in Lisbon for (unbeknown to us) the last time as a consortium in-person, and we collectively debated how we could reconcile our carbon footprint in the name of academia to the

¹¹² See: Black Cultural Archives, "Subject Guide: The Black Women's Movement," accessed October 12, 2018, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a01baa7d7bdcee985c80c15/t/5a08920ae2c483d6cb7d8229/1510511116192/2016_Womens-Movement-updated.pdf; Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie, and Suzanne Scafe, *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain* (London: Virago, 1985); Hannah Smyth, "'Oral Histories of the Black Women's Movement: The Heart of the Race'. Reflections on a secondment to the Black Cultural Archives," CHEurope, accessed October 12, 2018 http://cheurope-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Reflection_BCA-Placement.pdf.

principals of CHS. My colleague William Illsley pondered that it may be Critical Heritage Studies, but is it critical academia?

CHS is in no way immune to the structures it aspires to dismantle and transform, and not all subscribe to its discourse. Yet it certainly demands, and actively responds to the needs for, a heightened level of self-awareness, privilege-checking, and radical critique whether you are of its discourse or not. A capacity for self-awareness and critique of the academic and training structures of which we are a part and in turn perpetuate, even as we embarked on this progressive course of study, was at least as valuable and lasting a lesson as the production of a scholarly dissertation.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Heritage

What is heritage? This was the very first question a group of 15 early-career researchers were tasked with in a London university meeting room in September 2017. A conversation ensued over the tensions between the natural and cultural, the tangible and intangible, the nature of heritage critique, and its ever-unfolding moral-ethical implications. At some point during this circuitous exchange, I remember expressing that what it all boiled down to was that ‘heritage’ only exists in the human imaginary. Heritage is a deeply semiotic and semantic phenomenon that has something to do with ‘the past’ and our relationship with it. It has to do with our identities, our sense of place, belonging and collective self-image, our rights, traditions, and material culture, which all wield great affective power in individuals and societies. Whatever the attempts at conventionalisation or codification, heritage remains an interpretive phenomenon, reflected in the ontological debates surrounding it. Acknowledging this very human fact seems as good a place as any to start thinking about the ways in which we imagine the past in our present selves and realities, as ‘a process and a human condition’.¹ Ultimately a postmodern subject, it has indeed been in the past ‘the postmodernism of heritage that offends’.² One of the messages of Lowenthal’s *The past is a foreign country* was that we cannot ever really prove the existence of the past because knowing exists in the epistemological present.³ The past as we understand it through artefacts and written history is not objective or absolute, is therefore relative and exists only in ‘the continuous present’.⁴ As Meskell sums up: ‘There is no unmediated past.’⁵ If the past is so mutable it follows that heritage is contingent on

¹ David C. Harvey, “Heritage Pasts and Heritage Presents: Temporality, Meaning and the Scope of Heritage Studies,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 7, no. 4 (2001): 320.

² Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory* (London: Verso, 1994), 264.

³ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge, 1985), 187.

⁴ Andrew Hoskins, “Digital Network Memory,” in *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, ed. Astrid Erl and Ann Rigney (New York: De Gruyter, 2009), 95.

⁵ Lynn Meskell, “Introduction: Globalizing Heritage,” in *Global Heritage: A Reader*, ed. Lynn Meskell (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 2.

present-day perceptions of the past and its physical or living signifiers, its material traces and places, and the rituals enacted in its name. Graham and Howard summarise this constructionist view of heritage as ‘the ways in which very selective past material artefacts, natural landscapes, mythologies, memories and traditions become cultural, political and economic resources for the present,’ and its interpretations are time-space specific.⁶

Not that ‘heritage’ is necessarily always a conscious thing in the minds of those who perceive it. Heritage has been variously described as ‘slippery, mercurial,’ ‘vague and elusive,’ ‘nomadic,’ a ‘flexible concept’.⁷ Smith goes so far as to conclude that there is no such thing as heritage at all, rather there is a hegemonic discourse that works to dictate what heritage is or is not, and how we in turn understand and do heritage.⁸ At the same time, as Brothman shows, the point of Derrida’s *Archive Fever* - and its somewhat impregnable language - is the ‘impossible philosophical task’ of communicating meaning and concepts with words.⁹ Even as we seek to give it meaning, the unease around heritage today has far more to do with the heritage ‘process’, the utility of heritage, and the dynamics of power raised by these dialogues.¹⁰ ‘Power’ is meant not in the conspiratorial sense that Samuel read in the heritage critique of the 1980s and 1990s, rather how certain ways of seeing the world find expression and are normalised, but also challenged, through heritage.¹¹ ‘Heritage’ has, for now, no other viable alternative in the English language, and this thesis is more about heritage as an interpretive frame for understanding and navigating the present. This literature review will address some of the key debates and developments in heritage and archives, introducing also commemoration and interlacing them with concepts of memory and identity. I will then introduce a theory development of ‘digital commemorative archives,’ as defined in chapter 1, in order to bring together these varied strands as they are implicated in the Irish commemorative impulse, as well as the historical and archival value of Twitter and as a critical commemorative space. Lastly, an exploration of ‘assemblage commemoration’ will bring together these varied elements

⁶ Graham Brian and Howard Peter, “Heritage and Identity,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity* (Routledge Handbooks Online, 2008), 2.

⁷ Meskell, “Introduction: Globalizing Heritage,” 2; Elizabeth Crooke, “The Politics of Community Heritage: Motivations, Authority and Control,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16, no. 1-2 (2010): 17; Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory* (London: Verso, 1994), 205.

⁸ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 11.

⁹ Brien Brothman, “Declining Derrida: Integrity, Tensegrity, and the Preservation of Archives from Deconstruction,” *Archivaria* 48, no. 1 (1999): 69-70.

¹⁰ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 44.

¹¹ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 1994, 244.

in the cultural apparatus of the ‘Decade of Centenaries’ to draw attention to their complex and interdependent relationships at a moment in time.

2.2 Critical Heritage Studies

Critical Heritage Studies (CHS) is concerned with the power and knowledge systems at work in the ‘dialogical’ relationships between people and all that heritage encompasses.¹² The emergence of CHS reflected a turn with regard to the rise of the ‘heritage industry’, heritage tourism, a so-called ‘memory boom’ and of heritage studies itself from the 1970s, a turn that was more concerned with, as Gentry and Smith summarise, ‘emphasising cultural heritage as a political, cultural, and social phenomenon’ than as a commodification of history.¹³ Pine echoes this re-appraisal in the Irish context, pointing out that ‘anti-nostalgia prevents memory from being an active agent for change’.¹⁴ Now a formalised field of academic inquiry, as of the establishment of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies in 2012, CHS maintains a ‘tradition of focusing in particular on themes of power, protest, and dissonance’ in the academic arena.¹⁵ A kind of supra-disciplinary field, CHS is grounded in a multitude of areas, not alone the interdisciplinary Heritage Studies, but also archaeology, art history, architecture, history, public history, memory, media and cultural studies, anthropology, digital humanities, and archives to name a few. It attempts to transcend these fields in challenging conventional praxis and discourses of heritage, the very nature of ‘heritage’ itself, in ways that are ‘pluralising’ and ‘consciously post-Western,’ aspiring even to be ‘post-disciplinary’.¹⁶ Inevitably then, CHS is closely tied up with identity and the politics of recognition. CHS is also increasingly preoccupied with, as Winter says, ‘addressing the critical issues that face the world today’ such as sustainability, climate change, ‘multiculturalism’, and conflict resolution.¹⁷ Heritage has a

¹² Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 14.

¹³ Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987); For an overview of what Harrison calls the “heritage boom” see: Harrison, *Heritage*, 69–76; Kynan Gentry and Laurajane Smith, “Critical Heritage Studies and the Legacies of the Late-Twentieth Century Heritage Canon,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25, no. 11 (2019): 1149.

¹⁴ Pine, *The Politics of Irish Memory*, 13.

¹⁵ “About Us,” Association of Critical Heritage Studies, accessed August 1, 2018, <https://www.criticalheritagestudies.org/presidents-welcome>.

¹⁶ G J Ashworth, B J Graham, and J E Tunbridge, eds., *Pluralising Pasts: Heritage, Identity and Place in Multicultural Societies* (London, 2007); Winter, “Clarifying the Critical in Critical Heritage Studies,” 451.

¹⁷ Winter, “Clarifying the Critical in Critical Heritage Studies,” 533; David Harvey and James A Perry, eds., *The Future of Heritage as Climates Change: Loss, Adaptation and Creativity* (London : Routledge, 2015);

pre-history, as does heritage with a ‘moral compass,’ but it will be more useful to engage with what has become the CHS field and its key discourses that underpin this thesis in relation to commemoration, digitality and gender.¹⁸

Much of the heritage and CHS literature has been concerned with the conventionalisation of heritage in successive UNESCO and ICOMOS charters, World Heritage-building projects, as well as national heritage legislation, and the codifying, universalising language of heritage and its ‘rhetorical devices’.¹⁹ Laurajane Smith’s theory of ‘authorised heritage discourse’ (AHD) is now axiomatic of this ‘discursive turn’ that has shaped CHS.²⁰ Smith defines AHD as a primarily Western mode of speaking heritage ‘that works to naturalize a range of assumptions about the nature and meaning of heritage’ as well as ‘a professional discourse that privileges expert values and knowledge about the past and its material manifestations’.²¹ In this way, she outlines, AHD scaffolds a top-down relationship between ‘experts’ on the one hand and ‘the public’ on the other, in which the traces of the past have inherent and unchanging values and which works to resist the negotiation of heritage meanings that fall outside the boundaries of acceptability within this framework.²² Graham and Howard insist upon the selectivity of heritage, not least to reign in exponential definitions, but primarily to spotlight this process of ascribing worth to certain traces of the past and not others:

Harrison, *Heritage*; Elizabeth Crooke, “Confronting a Troubled History: Which Past in Northern Ireland’s Museums?” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 7, no. 2 (2001): 119-36.

¹⁸ David C. Harvey, “Heritage Pasts and Heritage Presents: Temporality, Meaning and the Scope of Heritage Studies,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 7, no. 4 (2001): 319-38; David Harvey, “The History of Heritage,” *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, no. 11237 (2008): 19-36; Rodney Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (London; New York: Routledge, 2013), 42-67.

¹⁹ Trinidad Rico, “After Words: A De-Dichotomization in Heritage Discourse,” in *Heritage Keywords: Rhetoric and Redescription in Cultural Heritage*, ed. Kathryn Lafrenz Samuels and Trinidad Rico (University of Colorado, 2015), 287.

²⁰ Harrison, *Heritage*, 96-113.

²¹ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 4.

²² *Ibid.*, 29-34.

...the study of heritage does not involve a direct engagement with the study of the past. Instead, the contents, interpretations and representations of the heritage resource are selected according to the demands of the present and, in turn, bequeathed to an imagined future.²³

This process of 'heritagisation' - a 'metamorphosis' - is not alone the accession of materials to institutions, protection orders or conferral of World Heritage status, and the preservation and heritage gaze this affords them, but also the layer of cultural authority, the afterlife, with which they are newly endowed.²⁴ Commemoration, remembrance and the relationship between this AHD and ideas of the nation and national identity are strongly associated with this naturalisation of 'The Heritage', as Hall has symbolically capitalised it, and its material instantiations.²⁵ 'The Heritage' in this sense 'becomes the material embodiment of the spirit of the nation, a collective representation of the... [insert national identity] version of tradition'.²⁶ Building on these approaches to the late-modern heritage regime, Harrison has sought to re-emphasise the material (or tangible) heritage in our everyday lives, suggesting that the affectivity of heritage *things* in everyday contexts has been underexplored.²⁷

The utility of this AHD critique is in recognising the processual nature of heritage, as well as the operation of power relations through heritage. Ashworth and Tunbridge's thesis that heritage is inevitably a site of dissonance, that is to say of difference and contestation, reflects this possibility for multiple meanings and identifications in any heritage site, space or act.²⁸ This eternal conflict also speaks directly to remembrance and commemoration, which are divisive by nature.²⁹ Correspondingly, and akin to 'usable pasts' and the intellectual tradition of public history, is the idea that heritage can be mobilised in alterity

²³ Graham and Howard, "Heritage and Identity," 2.

²⁴ Harrison, *Heritage*, 69; Wera Grahn, "Intersectionality and the Construction of Cultural Heritage Management," *Archaeologies* 7, no. 1 (2011): 227.

²⁵ Ibid.; Stuart Hall, "Whose Heritage?," *Museums Journal* 13, no. 49 (1999): 4.

²⁶ Hall, "Whose Heritage?," 4.

²⁷ Harrison, *Heritage*, 112-13.

²⁸ Ashworth, Graham, and Tunbridge, *Pluralising Pasts*, 36-37.

²⁹ Graff-McRae, *Remembering and Forgetting 1916*, 6.

to the consensus tradition: 'heritage may also be a resource that is used to challenge and redefine received values and identities by a range of subaltern groups.'³⁰

2.3 Critical Heritage and Gender

The heritage of the 1916 Rising has been a resource in redefining received wisdom and values about the role of women in the Irish revolution, a process that has consequences for, and is driven by, gender politics in the present. Gender is understood as a set of differentiated performances of masculinity and femininity that are socially and culturally constructed, and which are produced by and re-produce normative social roles and power dynamics between people and within society.³¹ Sexuality and what it means to be male, female or genderqueer is included in this, though the focus of this thesis will be primarily on gender as it relates to female identity. Smith, whose earlier work focused on community heritage among Waanyi women in Australia, extends her analysis of normative heritage values to account for 'the stress on the universal values of heritage enshrined within the AHD which ensures that patriarchal heritage becomes symbolic for all'.³² This universalising, purported objectivity and neutrality in the way heritage is preserved, coded and presented - usually a (white) masculine proxy - has also been questioned in (digital) archival and digital humanities contexts.³³ The performance of gender and the default masculinity of heritage is indissociable from these already value-laden cultural productions and representations:

³⁰ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 4.

³¹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: New York : Routledge, 1999).

³² Laurajane Smith, "Heritage, Gender and Identity," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian Graham and Peter Howard (Abington: Routledge, 2008), 162.

³³ Catherine Bishop, "The Serendipity of Connectivity: Piecing Together Women's Lives in the Digital Archive," *Women's History Review* 26, no. 5 (2017): 771-72; Shawna Ross, "Toward a Feminist Modernist Digital Humanities," *Feminist Modernist Studies* 1, no. 3 (2018): 215-19; Michelle Caswell, "Dusting for Fingerprints : Introducing Feminist Standpoint Appraisal," *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 3, no. 1 (2019): 7, 11.

...the construction, commemoration and expression of gender identities in heritage can never be understood to be politically or culturally neutral, as what is constructed has a range of implications for how women and men and their social roles are perceived, valued and socially and historically justified.³⁴

Reading outlines a typology of scholarly approaches to gender and heritage: representation, consumption, production, and policies and protocols.³⁵ The first three are most relevant here though in reality all are interdependent. As many research studies do, the feminist informed approach to this thesis grew out of questions of representation, of marginalisation or outright absence of women in national commemorations - as both historical subjects and contemporary shapers of heritage. 'Representativeness' is, as Grahn refers to in the Swedish context, 'related to the democratic function of cultural heritage, and which refers to everybody's right in a society to be able to identify with and benefit from the cultural heritage'.³⁶ Questioning representation precludes structural critique of power and gendered knowledge systems, like heritage, and their material manifestations. Cramer and Witcomb in this vein distinguish between 'women's history' and 'feminist history' in appraising museum curation in the Australian context, the former additive to the mainstream narrative - 'add women and stir' - the latter questioning and reshaping the entire intellectual tradition of history.³⁷ However, we cannot have feminist or even gender history without women's history. The approach to representation in this thesis also incorporates Bergsdóttir and Baldur Hafsteinsson's eschewing of an absence-presence binary in favour of absence as a 'relational entity' with presence regarding the marginalisation of women in heritage institutions and collections. Just as remembering is contingent on forgetting, absences, the authors contend, are integral to our understanding of what is present - or seen - in turn shaping our understanding of what it is to be a woman or a man, and which therefore has ethical implications; absence, in other words,

³⁴ Smith, "Heritage, Gender and Identity," 161.

³⁵ Anna Reading, "Making Feminist Heritage Work: Gender and Heritage," in *Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research*, ed. Emma Waterton and Steve Watson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 401-7.

³⁶ Grahn, "Intersectionality and the Construction of Cultural Heritage Management," 229.

³⁷ Lorinda Cramer and Andrea Witcomb, "'Hidden from View?': An Analysis of the Integration of Women's History and Women's Voices into Australia's Social History Exhibitions Exhibitions," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25, no. 2 (2018): 4-5; Smith, "Heritage, Gender and Identity," 163.

is political and affective matter.³⁸ Bishop echoes this in advocating that we ‘question absence as well as presence’.³⁹ The obfuscation and ‘domestication’ of revolutionary nationalist women and their memory has elsewhere been shown for its role in constructing the image of the post-colonial, paternalistic Irish nation-state.⁴⁰ Absence in this way, as Smith says, ‘validates elite male history’.⁴¹ Equally, the rediscovery of this unseen matter demonstrates that absence is not a fixed state. Silence is not a void; it is the yet unsaid.

To this affective reading of representation then, consumption is closely tied. The interpretation of heritage rests also, Reading continues, on how gender and gender identities are socially constructed and performed through its publics.⁴² These reflexive ‘dialogical relationships’ and meanings are constructed or reshaped in digital spaces as much as physical, in the creation and use of digital media or communally through social media.⁴³ As will be seen in chapter 7, absence and a feminist ‘politics of visibility’ on social media are tied up with the critical heritage of 1916: ‘hashtag feminism engages in a performative politics of visibility, in which one person’s narrative, when shared and connected with many others, makes power visible so that it might be deconstructed and challenged.’⁴⁴ Consumption of commemoration in the digital age is therefore already also productive.

Production then is connected to the apparatus of cultural institutions - ‘gendered practices in curation and gendered discourses’ - that privilege certain masculinist aesthetics, narratives and ways of knowing the past that devalue other gender identities (not alone feminine), tending also to be overwhelmingly white and heteronormative.⁴⁵ Historical

³⁸ Arndís Bergsdóttir and Sigurjón Baldur Hafsteinsson, “The Fleshyness of Absence: The Matter of Absence in Feminist Museology,” in *Gender and Heritage: Performance, Power and Place*, ed. Wera Grahn and Ross Wilson (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 102-3.

³⁹ Bishop, “The Serendipity of Connectivity,” 771.

⁴⁰ Crozier-De Rosa and Mackie, *Remembering Women’s Activism*, 88, 79-102.

⁴¹ Smith, “Heritage, Gender and Identity,” 163.

⁴² Reading, “Making Feminist Heritage Work: Gender and Heritage,” 403; See: Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*.

⁴³ Reading, “Making Feminist Heritage Work: Gender and Heritage,” 403.

⁴⁴ Rosemary Clark-Parsons, “‘I SEE YOU, I BELIEVE YOU, I STAND WITH YOU’: #MeToo and the Performance of Networked Feminist Visibility,” *Feminist Media Studies* 00, no. 00 (2019): 8.

⁴⁵ Reading, “Making Feminist Heritage Work: Gender and Heritage,” 403; Smith, “Heritage, Gender and Identity,” 163; Lorinda Cramer and Andrea Witcomb, “‘Hidden from View’?: An Analysis of the

decisions around collection and preservation necessarily factor in these processes and create challenges for heritage professionals in doing unconventional work.⁴⁶ Moravec rightly includes labour and ethics as a vector of analysis in the production of digital archives, questioning gendered organisational structures more broadly but also the obfuscation of labour (that may be feminised, unpaid or otherwise exploitative) behind digitisations.⁴⁷ Production can also be a counter to unrepresentative and normative practices.⁴⁸ The Women's Museum of Ireland (a 'virtual museum') and Herstory Ireland are two examples, born of the centenary years, of digital resources outside the mainstream that speak to the 'amnesia of women's stories' and the need to promulgate the role and agency of women in Irish history.⁴⁹ Wilson focuses on this broader issue of the 'liminality' of gender studies as a politicised position from which powerful critique may have transformative effects on the mainstream of heritage, and further advocates that gender should be an axial mode of analysis in the field.⁵⁰

Cutting across these studies, explicitly or implicitly, is a standpoint position in (intersectional) feminist approaches to archives and heritage that rests on a recognition of both the impartiality of heritage - and concomitant valuing/devaluing of particular identities and knowledge - and the positionality of the researcher/professional. Most strident is Caswell's 'feminist standpoint appraisal' that inverts the way we think about archival value by foregrounding and giving weight to records of (but especially created and preserved by) oppressed identities, echoing Wilson's argument for an embracing of critical marginality that 'leverages the insights gained from outsider status' as well as recognising the oppressor positions that we may simultaneously hold.⁵¹

Integration of Women's History and Women's Voices into Australia's Social History Exhibitions Exhibitions," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25, no. 2 (2018): 3-4.

⁴⁶ Taylor and Gibson, "Digitisation, Digital Interaction and Social Media: Embedded Barriers to Democratic Heritage," 409.

⁴⁷ Michelle Moravec, "Feminist Research Practices and Digital Archives" 32, no. 91-92 (2017): 191-92.

⁴⁸ Reading, "Making Feminist Heritage Work: Gender and Heritage," 404.

⁴⁹ "Herstory"; "About the Museum," Women's Museum of Ireland, accessed August 1, 2020, <https://www.womensmuseumofireland.ie/about>.

⁵⁰ Ross Wilson, "The Tyranny of the Normal and the Importance of Being Liminal," in *Gender and Heritage: Performance, Power and Place*, ed. Wera Grahn and Ross Wilson (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 6-9.

⁵¹ Caswell, "Dusting for Fingerprints," 7.

2.4 (Digital) Archives and Identity

The triptych of heritage, memory and identity is essential to this thesis, and as demonstrated is everywhere apparent in the literature of both archives and heritage. Heritage has something to do with the past and our connection to it. As Lowenthal stated it is ‘integral to our sense of identity’ and the ability ‘to recall and identify with our own past gives existence meaning, purpose, and value’.⁵² Smith takes this further contending that heritage is ‘concerned with the negotiation and regulation of social meanings and practices associated with the creation and recreation of “identity”’.⁵³ Identity is, as Feng describes, ‘a deep cognitive topic relating to social status and sense of belonging...The pursuit of identity confirms individual or collective senses of social status, belonging and value’.⁵⁴ Heritage and identity are also the products of memory work and memory is, according to Yeo, one of the historical and ‘symbolic affordances’ of archives and records:

Symbolic affordances of records are also connected to memory, since they are often associated with the honorific commemoration of people or events deemed significant in the life of an individual or a community.⁵⁵

Records are linked with collective memory because they transcend the limits of a single human mind.⁵⁶

At the height of the ‘memory boom’ Nora contended that ‘Modern memory is, above all, archival. It relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of recording, the visibility of the image’.⁵⁷ Already in this statement, Nora undermines the separation of history and memory asserted in his *Lieux de Mémoire*, rather they exist on a continuum in the human endeavour of reconstructing the past. What is meant by ‘archival’ here cannot exclusively be ‘the archiving archive’ but the relationship between materiality - from which

⁵² David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 41.

⁵³ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 5.

⁵⁴ Feng, “Identity and Archives,” 100-101.

⁵⁵ Geoffrey Yeo, “Concepts of Record (1): Evidence, Information, and Persistent Representations,” *The American Archivist* 70, no. 2 (2007): 331.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 330.

⁵⁷ Pierre Nora, “Between History and Memory: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” *Representations* 26, no. Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (1989): 13.

we might extend out to ‘social frameworks’ - and the ability to reconstruct the past.⁵⁸ Cook further distinguishes between the archive singular, concerned with power, memory and identity, and archives plural, concerned with the life and transformations of the contents of archival material; the one is nonetheless indissociable from the other.⁵⁹ The difference, in a sense, between *lieux de mémoire* and *milieux de mémoire* - the former fossilised and unchanging, the other ‘living’, always shifting and evolving, ‘environments of memory’ whose death Nora once spelled.⁶⁰ Avoiding, as Moshenska advises, rhetorical statements like ‘archival memory’, it is more productive to approach the memory and identity work associated with archives as what Ketelaar calls ‘activations’ or ‘appropriations’, particularly relevant in reading the digital archive and commemoration.⁶¹ Both Ketelaar and Assmann and Czaplicka use the idea of ‘cultivation’ to relate the social life of a text and how their meaning and the cultural memory they support are altered by many hands and mediating processes over time, though Ketelaar is concerned with the specificity of the archive, and digitisation.⁶² Archives, after all ‘do not speak of their own accord’ and Ketelaar highlights ‘first the meaning *of* the record and second, the meaning *for* someone or *for* an occasion’.⁶³ Meaning and memory, two building blocks of identity, are not contained in archives - those are qualities of the human condition. Archives and records are, however, a source of information, of knowledge, of affective stimuli, that are cyclically activated, physically or symbolically, over time and to which innumerable meanings are ascribed:⁶⁴

The concept of cultural memory comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose ‘cultivation’ serves to stabilize and convey that society’s self-image.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ Jaques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 17; Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago, London: Chicago University Press, 1992), 38.

⁵⁹ Terry Cook, “The Archive(s) Is a Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists and the Changing Archival Landscape,” *The American Archivist* 74, no. 2 (2011): 600.

⁶⁰ Hall, “Constituting an Archive,” 89; Nora, “Les Lieux de Memoire,” 7.

⁶¹ Gabriel Moshenska, “Memory Towards the Reclamation of a Vital Concept,” in *Heritage Keywords: Rhetoric and Redescription in Cultural Heritage*, ed. Kathryn Lafrenz Samuels and Trinidad Rico, Rhetoric and Redescription in Cultural Heritage (University Press of Colorado, 2015), 201; Eric Ketelaar, “Cultivating Archives: Meanings and Identities,” *Archival Science* 12, no. 1 (2012): 29-30.

⁶² Ketelaar, “Cultivating Archives: Meanings and Identities,” 28-29; Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” *New German Critique*, no. 65 (July 23, 1995): 131.

⁶³ Ketelaar, “Cultivating Archives: Meanings and Identities,” 23.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁶⁵ Assmann and Czaplicka, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” 132.

As discussed in previous sections, the relationship between heritage and identity is a cornerstone of CHS as much as identity is bound to the archival record. Heritage is understood as tied to the politics of representation and recognition, with sense of self, place, and belonging, and of attachment to kin, collective or nation, and additional ‘symbolic affordances’ of the historical record are indeed ‘legitimization of power’ and ‘a sense of personal or social identity and continuity’.⁶⁶ The historical record of the nation-state, and its safeguarding into the future, is essential to its legitimisation and identity because heritage institutions ‘can play a significant role in bolstering the shared identity which underpins the “imagined” community of the nation’.⁶⁷ The ‘imagined community’ in Anderson’s formulation constitutes a ‘deep, horizontal comradeship’ that is perceived between members of a nation despite never encountering the majority of its other members and bolstered by a sense of difference to other nations and their citizens.⁶⁸ ‘National identity’ or ‘cultural identity’, or at least what counts as constitutive of them, is in this sense the historically cultivated ‘self-image,’ subscribed to - wholly, partially, or not at all - by its members.

In more localised ways, archives and archiving can also, as Cifor and Wood note ‘be understood as critical tools and modes of self-representation and self-historicization’.⁶⁹ This can manifest in, for example, feminist historical research, but also ‘radical public history’ making, community archives, activism and activist archiving, and everyday personal encounters with the archival record such as, but not exclusively, family / genealogical research and pedagogy.⁷⁰ Feng characterises the archive as a corporeal host of collective memory and the historical traces it houses as ‘cognitive artefacts as much as evidence artefacts’. For Feng, as for Nora, modern memory is archival, and archives may

⁶⁶ Jerome de Groot, *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 2009), 87; Barbara Reed, “Reinventing Access,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 42, no. 2 (2014): 127.

⁶⁷ Andrew Flinn, “An Attack on Professionalism and Scholarship?: Democratising Archives and the Production of Knowledge,” *Ariadne*, no. 62 (2010), <http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue62/flinn/>.

⁶⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 6-7.

⁶⁹ Marika Cifor and Stacy Wood, “Critical Feminism in the Archives,” *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 1, no. 2 (2017): 3.

⁷⁰ Andrew Flinn, “Archival Activism: Independent and Community-Led Archives, Radical Public History and the Heritage Professions,” *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* 7, no. 2 (2011), <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9pt2490x>; Andrew Flinn and Ben Alexander, “‘Humanizing an Inevitably Political Craft’: Introduction to the Special Issue on Archiving Activism and Activist Archiving,” *Archival Science* 15, no. 4 (2015): 330-32.

work to legitimate and give depth to a sense of individual or communal identity.⁷¹ The methodology of historical inquiry also remains, in Feng's reading, significant in the business of identity work because the historical trace provides the clues and continuity that aid in the process of identity formation and confirmation.⁷² If knowledge legitimises the identity of a person or group of persons, in the knowledge and memory creation, the efficacy of that knowledge in a collective or societal consciousness is a legitimising factor in constructions of the self and a range of social identities in the present. Identities are also continually re-evaluated and reformed, and Cook likewise reminds of the ways in which justification and reinforcement for these identities are sought in associated memories, whether of triumph or defeat, achievement or oppression.⁷³ History is, as Crooke says, 'tied up with a sense of what was right and what was wrong, and is linked to present-day events', and archives can act as both historical evidence and agents of meaning-making and remaking.⁷⁴

The post-modern turn in archival theory rested on a critique of the archival processes and reassertion of value that operate to perpetuate a hierarchical chain of transmission - the process, in other words, that brings a particular historical source material and thus a particular narrative under the historian's gaze.⁷⁵ Caswell has since pointed out that this role in shaping history has been embraced by most archival scholars and archivists, but that scholarship in the humanities still 'lags behind in realizing the influence of archival labor'.⁷⁶ Similarly foregrounding this perspective, Moravec admits that 'archivists and librarians have preceded us [historians] in considering issues of privacy, labour practices, and silences in the archives'.⁷⁷ Each of these and more are nonetheless transmissible in what Moravec refers to as the 'digital archival environment' in response to confusion around the term 'digital archives'.⁷⁸ Building further on this archival critique of process, humanities researchers are increasingly calling for greater critical awareness of the

⁷¹ Feng, "Identity and Archives," 101.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Terry Cook, "Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms," *Archival Science* 13, no. 2-3 (2012): 96.

⁷⁴ Crooke, "Confronting a Troubled History," 122.

⁷⁵ Cook, "The Archive(s) Is a Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists and the Changing Archival Landscape," 606, 611.

⁷⁶ Michelle Caswell, "'The Archive' Is Not an Archives: Acknowledging the Intellectual Contributions of Archival Studies," *Reconstruction. Studies in Contemporary Culture* 16, no. 1 (2016): 11, <http://reconstruction.eserver.org/Issues/161/Caswell.shtml>.

⁷⁷ Michelle Moravec, "Feminist Research Practices and Digital Archives" 32, no. 91-92 (2017): 187.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 186.

consequences of digitisation that go beyond a teleological view of the abundant, liberatory digital archive. Many of these come from intersectional feminist scholars such as Wernimont who draws attention to the fact that digital archives ‘unite two historically gendered fields - computer and archival sciences.’⁷⁹

The consequences of digitisation decisions not only for ‘non-canonical historical subjects’ and identities resulting from popularity bias in selection criteria, but how we conceive of research methodologies - not least as they concern gender work but also issues of race, class and sexual orientation - cut across historical, archival, digital humanities and media studies scholarship.⁸⁰ A concomitant need for ‘digital archival literacy’ is proposed by Jensen who likewise stresses the problem of uncritical narrative reproduction in digitising archives, of ‘re-traditionalising’ history.⁸¹ So inherently selective is digitisation that Ketelaar has classified it as ‘in fact a form of appraisal’.⁸² Dealing with institutional digitisations (as opposed to commercial) Jensen also stresses the differing logics of analogue and digital collections and the ‘political economy of digital archives’ that encompasses the policy, funding, and end-user influences on selection criteria and systems design, i.e. database, search capabilities and user interface, all of which determine what and how we encounter the online archive.⁸³ Bonde Thylstrup’s study of the politics of such large-scale or ‘mass’ digitisation - which differs from the far more selective digitisations of national institutions - opens these problems up on a globalising scale, grappling with the social, financial, legal, technical, geopolitical and cyber-infrastructure complexities of digitisation projects that bear upon our global, and increasingly privatised, knowledge systems.⁸⁴ The situatedness of a digitisation is, however, also cultural and

⁷⁹ Jaqueline Wernimont, “Whence Feminism? Assessing Feminist Interventions in Digital Literary Archives,” *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (2013), <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/7/1/000156/000156.html>.

⁸⁰ Moravec, “Feminist Research Practices”; Wernimont, “Whence Feminism?,” 187; Paula Hamilton and Mary Spongberg, “Twenty Years on: Feminist Histories and Digital Media,” *Women’s History Review* 26, no. 5 (2017): 671–77; Bishop, “The Serendipity of Connectivity”; Laura C Mandell, “Gendering Digital Literary History,” in *A New Companion to Digital Humanities*, 2016, 511–23; Kate Eichhorn, “Beyond Digitisation: A Case Study of Three Contemporary Feminist Collections,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 42, no. 3 (2014): 227–37; For a detailed literature review on feminist DH and critical digital heritage: Hannah Smyth, Julianne Nyhan, and Andrew Flinn, “Opening the ‘Black Box’ of Digital Cultural Heritage Processes: Feminist Digital Humanities and Critical Heritage Studies,” in *Routledge International Handbook of Research Methods in Digital Humanities*, ed. Kristen Schuster and Stuart Dunn (Routledge, 2020), 295–308.

⁸¹ Helle Strandgaard Jensen, “Digital Archival Literacy for (All) Historians,” *Media History*, 2020, 5.

⁸² Ketelaar, “Cultivating Archives: Meanings and Identities,” 26.

⁸³ Helle Strandgaard Jensen, “Digital Archival Literacy for (All) Historians,” *Media History*, 2020, 4–9.

⁸⁴ Nanna Bonde Thylstrup, *The Politics of Mass Digitisation* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2018).

historical, requiring us to zone in on national, local and institutional contexts, and which are in turn feeders of large-scale, transnational digital heritage entities such as, for example, *Europeana*. Sherratt, in this vein, recalls how a spike in Trove's (Australian national library) collection of newspapers from 1915 was explained by the centenary of the First World War and decisions to prioritize material attending to this - exemplifying the cultural 'politics and practicalities' that shape digital collections.⁸⁵ Well-funded institutions, or commercial collections, are in a better position to balance out these culturally pragmatic asymmetries in the short term.

None of these scholars set out to condemn digitisation, most recognise that certain economies and practicalities are a fact of life, and all reiterate that not everything can be digitised. Eichhorn has shown how digitisation is not always an appropriate or even desirable route of access to certain feminist collections precisely *because* of such media transformations and recontextualising that create interstices in the material and cultural logics of the collections and their use.⁸⁶ The emphasis is rather on how a digitisation comes to be (or not), is mediated, and its scholarly, social and cultural implications.

2.5 Digital Commemorative Archives

The current decade of commemorations in Ireland has created a pretext for funding high-profile archival digitisation projects as well as fuelling myriad academic projects and cultural productions. During this commemorative decade, digital archives have become a part of the public experience of commemoration in a way they never were before. One archivist commented in 2017 that the archives 'have never before been so prominent in the public consciousness', Horne declaring that the 'democratisation of the archives' was critical to the success of the 2016 commemorations.⁸⁷ The 'democratisation' of history is bound to the 'democratisation' of the archives and Conway is not unjustified in making the observation that 'if information from analogue sources is not readily available in digital

⁸⁵ Tim Sherratt, "Hacking Heritage: Understanding the Limits of Online Access," *The Routledge International Handbook of New Digital Practices in Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums and Heritage Sites*, 2019, 121.

⁸⁶ Eichhorn, "Beyond Digitisation: A Case Study of Three Contemporary Feminist Collections," 234.

⁸⁷ ResearchLibrariesUK, "DCDC17 | The Easter Rising and Its Commemorative Impact - Estelle Gittins, Trinity College Dublin," YouTube, accessed April 19, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpEel1GUxtA#action=share>; Horne, "The Larger Canvas."

form, it simply does not exist from the perspective of the vast majority of potential users.⁸⁸ Yet digitisation does not translate to democratisation in a neat corollary. Digitisation indeed ‘establishes the affordances of transformative access’ but there are many variables that dictate access to digital archives beyond the moment of digitisation (copyright, internet access, long-term preservation, findability, optimisation for users with disabilities, digital literacy, etc).⁸⁹ Furthermore, and where heritage archives are concerned, ‘the decision as to what “heritage” is, and what is commissioned for digitisation...is not necessarily a part of this democratisation’.⁹⁰ Moravec similarly warns of the beguiling power of abundance to obfuscate continued absence.⁹¹ Nonetheless, the profusion of digital archives and social media engagement in this centennial context emphasises the online space as a territory for national commemoration, identity affirmation and challenging elitist narratives and gendered historical roles.

Each of the digital archives examined in this thesis concern, in whole or in part, the commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising, billed as the centrepiece of the official Decade of Centenaries.⁹² Almost immediately after it concluded, 1916 and its protagonists were enshrined in the national imagination through commemoration and everyday remembrance culture. Over the last 100 years it has become, as Higgins put it, ‘a conduit for expressions of Irishness and for explorations of the nature of Irish society; a discursive space as well as a historical event’.⁹³ The official programme to mark this and other significant historical moments of the second decade of the twentieth century is a national identity project predicated on a modernising agenda, just as the fiftieth anniversary was in 1966.⁹⁴ The Decade of Centenaries is a cultural space and commemorative assemblage in which the ideal of a nation is performed, but also negotiated, contested, and reified - a site of dissonant heritage. Digital archives have in the last decade become a cornerstone of the heritage economy of national commemorations of the revolution in the Republic

⁸⁸ Paul Conway, “Digital Transformations and the Archival Nature of Surrogates,” *Archival Science* 15, no. 1 (2015): 52.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Joel Taylor and Laura Kate Gibson, “Digitisation, Digital Interaction and Social Media: Embedded Barriers to Democratic Heritage,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 23, no. 5 (2017): 412.

⁹¹ Moravec, “Feminist Research Practices,” 194.

⁹² Government of Ireland, “Centenary Programme,” 6.

⁹³ Roisín Higgins, “‘The Irish Republic Was Proclaimed by Poster’: The Politics of Commemorating the Easter Rising,” in *Remembering 1916: The Easter Rising, the Somme and the Politics of Memory in Ireland*, ed. Richard S. Grayson and Fearghal McGarry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 44.

⁹⁴ Higgins, *Transforming 1916*, 114–15.

of Ireland. The following discussion will attempt to substantiate this somewhat novel relationship between commemoration and digitisation, and the nature of digital archives, or specifically digital commemorative archives, as value-laden cultural productions.

Smith contends that heritage is ‘a multi-layered performance...that embodies acts of remembrance and commemoration while negotiating and constructing a sense of place, belonging and understanding in the present’, going so far as to say that, indeed, ‘the most obvious sense of heritage performance is that of commemoration’.⁹⁵ Commemoration is a ‘vehicle of memory,’ a performance embedded in remembrance cultures.⁹⁶ ‘Remembrance culture’ as Pine asserts, ‘has a dual function as both a mode of knowing the past and as a way of reflecting the needs of the present’ and this includes the myriad practices that constitute national commemorations as well as private remembrance. The duality of commemoration makes it key to the centenary digitisations and online discourses scrutinized in this thesis, and intersects with the politics of digitisation and heritage more broadly.⁹⁷ Remembrance culture is therefore at the heart of this research, and is the source of this consideration of ‘memory’: to speak of commemoration is to speak of memory, which is, Graff-McRae states, ‘intricately bound to discourses of the nation, the State, identity and opposition’ and the politics of representation.⁹⁸

It is almost cliché to state that the needs of the present are ever changing, and that our commemorative practices reflect this: ‘Acts of commemoration are acts of appropriation, exclusion, reclamation, selective and ever-changing’.⁹⁹ What indeed is digitisation if not an act of appropriation, exclusion, reclamation, and selection? Commemorations, like archives, are characterised more by absence than they are completeness and as such are neither ontologically ‘whole or imperturbable,’ nor definitive in the stories they tell.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, to echo Sherratt, digital access ‘is built atop generations of absence and loss’.¹⁰¹ Commemoration is also ultimately about collective memory, which is according to

⁹⁵ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 3, 69.

⁹⁶ Alon Confino, “Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method,” *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (1997): 1388.

⁹⁷ Pine, *The Politics of Irish Memory*, 3.

⁹⁸ Graff-McRae, *Remembering and Forgetting 1916*, 4.

⁹⁹ Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, “Commemoration, Public History and the Professional Historian: An Irish Perspective,” *Estudios Irlandeses*, no. 9 (2014): 144.

¹⁰⁰ Thylstrup, *The Politics of Mass Digitisation*, 23.

¹⁰¹ Sherratt, “Hacking Heritage: Understanding the Limits of Online Access,” 118.

Confino ‘an exploration of a shared identity that unites a social group, be it a family or a nation, whose members nonetheless have different interests and motivations;’¹⁰² for McBride it is a ‘a sub-field of the study of identity’.¹⁰³ ‘Collective memory’ is nonetheless a contested notion, and I do not wish to suggest any kind of homogenous or uncontested national shared recall, nor as a stand in for biographical or individual memory.¹⁰⁴ What is meant by it in these pages is closer to ‘historical consciousness’ and is, I maintain, produced somewhere between social memory (autobiographical, embodied, generational, shared) and cultural memory (mediated, intergenerational) as outlined by Assmann.¹⁰⁵ Remembrance and remembrance culture are similarly placed at the intersection of personal experience and the ‘inherited recollections that prompt feelings of collective shame, pride or resentment on behalf of our real or metaphorical ancestors’.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, Beiner insists that pairing cultural memory with social memory is necessary for robust studies of remembrance.¹⁰⁷ In underscoring the contentious processes of reinvention in defining commemoration, Graff-McRae takes this further as ‘a tension between self-identity and national-identity,’ a conflict that is, she continues, ‘both produced by, and contested through, discourses of memory and commemoration’.¹⁰⁸

Memory is social by nature and flits constantly between different hosts and strata of social and inherited experience in order to survive. As such, ‘social’ and ‘collective’ memory are often conflated, and just as he frames it Beiner warns against an overly schematising notion of memory.¹⁰⁹ Yet there is utility in distinguishing memory forms even as we acknowledge the highly porous boundaries between them. Archives are understood here as a form of cultural memory as categorised by Assmann: caches of information, ‘deemed vital for the constitution and continuation of a specific group and its identity’ selected and stored somewhere between remembering and forgetting and always they have the

¹⁰² Confino, “Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method,” 1390.

¹⁰³ Ian McBride, “Memory and National Identity in Modern Ireland,” in *History and Memory in Modern Ireland*, ed. Ian McBride (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 4.

¹⁰⁴ Moshenska, “Memory: Towards the Reclamation of a Vital Concept,” 202.

¹⁰⁵ Aleida Assmann, “Memory, Individual and Collective,” *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, no. January (2006): 213-15.

¹⁰⁶ McBride, “Memory and National Identity in Modern Ireland,” 5.

¹⁰⁷ Guy Beiner, “Making Sense of Memory: Coming to Terms with Conceptualisations of Historical Remembrance,” in *Remembering 1916: The Easter Rising, the Somme and the Politics of Memory in Ireland*, ed. Richard S. Grayson and Fearghal McGarry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 20.

¹⁰⁸ Graff-McRae, *Remembering and Forgetting 1916*, 5.

¹⁰⁹ Beiner, “Remembering 1916,” 20.

potential for activation, transfiguration and reinterpretation.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, Assmann asserts that cultural memory relies ‘not only on libraries, museums, and monuments, but also on various modes of education and repeated occasions for collective participation’.¹¹¹ Such repeated occasions for collective participation and reception include the rituals of commemoration. Social memory in turn shapes the relationship between past and present, as it reflects a ‘community of shared experience, stories, and memories’ as well as ‘beliefs, values, habits and attitudes’ that are time limited and eventually either dissipate or are kept alive by ‘symbolic forms of commemoration’.¹¹² Digitisation activates certain archives and thus a particular cultural memory in new transfigurations and appraisals; in doing so it may also revive a social memory impaired by natural or political forgetting. In the case of the Decade of Centenaries, these selections are based in a national commemorative agenda and are a ‘symbolic form of commemoration’.

Conway, in a similar vein to Ketelaar but looking towards large-scale digitisations in particular, surveys the idea of a ‘secondary provenance’ whereby archival collections are put online and ascribed new contexts additional to their original context of creation. In other words, that changing techno-material forms also add layers of meaning and context to a record such as when it is digitised.¹¹³ To this I would add the cultural logic of commemoration. The ‘performative nature of remembrance culture,’ as Pine theorizes, underpins the commemorative digitisations, extending the online space as a context for remembrance and historical identity.¹¹⁴ It follows that the digitisation of archives for commemoration, when commissioned and funded by governments, cannot be disentangled from the shaping of national identities. Commemoration is, after all, a vehicle of communal memory, and digital commemorative archives thus connect with this process of history, memory and identity (re)formation. And if commemoration is ‘always an act of conscious, deliberate, purposeful cultural construction’ so too is the

¹¹⁰ Assmann, “Memory, Individual and Collective,” 221-22.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 214, 215.

¹¹³ Paul Conway, “Digital Transformations and the Archival Nature of Surrogates,” *Archival Science* 15, no. 1 (2015): 57.

¹¹⁴ Pine, *The Politics of Irish Memory*, 3.

digitisation of archives that now constitute a branch of Irish public remembrance culture.¹¹⁵

Official or authorised commemoration is one of many external factors that impinge upon the mandates of institutional and state archives as it is an extension of the ‘nation’s desire to construct itself in accordance with a particular set of values’.¹¹⁶ A particular ‘politics of information’ is therefore at play in the digitisation of heritage archives, not least when made possible by public policy decisions that are in turn implicated in a politics of memory and commemoration.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, there is something to be said about the relative novelty of such digital archives as those interrogated in the following chapters: ‘The digital archive is another interpretive frame and, notably, a very powerful one in shaping collective memory by the mere fact of its global reach and accessibility’.¹¹⁸ This accessibility and openness, as Bishop rightly points out, means that digital archives ‘have far more power to influence ideas of what is important than shelves of archives boxes ever did’.¹¹⁹ That power lies not least in the shaping of remembrance and historical identity. Figuring as part of an already established national heritage narrative such novel digitisations may also, as Mak suggests, be shielded somewhat from critical inquiry into their nature as acts of cultural mediation.¹²⁰ As such, and if commemoration is a framework for expanding a previously narrow definition of Irish historical identity, we must also be cognisant of the commemorative cultures and identities that came before, and which persist in present definitions and digitisations.¹²¹ As Gabriele points out, the current ‘cultural desire to digitize’ both favours certain structures of power and ‘is

¹¹⁵ Ó Tuathaigh, “Commemoration, Public History and the Professional Historian: An Irish Perspective,” 142-43; See also the French case surrounding the commemoration of the First World War since 2014:

Lionel Maurel, Valérie Beaudouin, “La Commémoration de La Grande Guerre Sur La Web: Présence et Diffusion Di Patrimoine Numérisé,” *Matériaux Pour l’histoire de Notre Temps* 3, no. 121-122 (2016): 10-17.

¹¹⁶ Kate Eichhorn, “Beyond Digitisation: A Case Study of Three Contemporary Feminist Collections,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 42, no. 3 (2014): 229.

¹¹⁷ Sandra Gabriele, “Transfiguring the Newspaper: From Paper to Microfilm to Database,” *Amodern*, no. 2 (2013): 1, <http://amodern.net/article/transfiguring-the-newspaper/>.

¹¹⁸ Bishop, “The Serendipity of Connectivity,” 772.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 771–72; The use of the terms ‘accessible’ and ‘accessibility’ are generally used in this thesis to refer to access in the basic sense of an information threshold, while recognising that they have particular legal and scholarly applications in the field of Digital Humanities and as set out in the Web Accessibility Initiative. “WC3 Accessibility Standards / Guidelines,” Web Accessibility Initiative, accessed November 30, 2020, <https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/>.

¹²⁰ Mak, “Archaeology of a Digitization,” 1517; Pine, *The Politics of Irish Memory*, 4.

¹²¹ Pine, *The Politics of Irish Memory*, 3.

constituted itself by residual practices of preservation, access and valuation'.¹²² She further observes that:

...neither the concept of remediation nor that of surrogacy provides an adequate conceptual framework for thinking about the traces that remain of the power, ideologies, discourses and institutional policies that mark objects as having 'intrinsic' or 'permanent' value in the language of archives.¹²³

Culture influences digitisations just as digitisations have cultural implications.¹²⁴ As some of the case studies will show, they also have consequences for the formal identity of those institutions that have embarked on such high-profile digitisations. If 'form is ideological,' to digitise for commemoration is no less a value-laden act of cultural mediation.¹²⁵ Digital archives shape and are shaped by national commemorative agendas: they are thus not neutral gestures but deliberate cultural constructions. We should all, Pine insists, 'interrogate those acts, question the uses to which the past is being put, and identify the strategies of cultural mediation at play'.¹²⁶ While the digitisation of significant Irish State archives during the commemorative period resulted in no small way from the insistence and persistence of certain historians over many years, we must also consider the ways in which these digitisations are narrativized and become part of the story and identity that the nation constructs for itself. Thus, from the epistemological stance of this thesis, a critical heritage approach and loosely the notion of 'authorised' heritage in problematizing these traces are further justified. As Conway reminds, "The creation of digital surrogates from archival sources is fundamentally a process of representation, far more interesting and complex than merely copying from one medium to another."¹²⁷

Our perceptions of the past have material consequences for the ways in which we individually and collectively understand and navigate the present. If what we remember

¹²² Gabriele, "Transfiguring the Newspaper," 7.

¹²³ Ibid., 3.

¹²⁴ Thylstrup, *The Politics of Mass Digitisation*, 19.

¹²⁵ Gabriele, "Transfiguring the Newspaper," 2.

¹²⁶ Pine, *The Politics of Irish Memory*, 4.

¹²⁷ Paul Conway, "Digital Transformations and the Archival Nature of Surrogates," *Archival Science* 15, no. 1 (2015): 52.

and how we comprehend the past is present-centred and continually reconfigured by ‘a complex interaction of individual actors, cultural patterns, social forces and technological developments’ then digital archives are as much a threshold for critically interrogating the present as they are the past.¹²⁸ They are sites of meaning making, yet in a sense not limited to questions of memory and history; they are entanglements of past and present, culture and politics, heritage and identity, but also of technological, financial, legal and material realities.¹²⁹ Drucker’s critique of literal materiality provides a useful way to further think about digital commemorative archives as performative memory and identity spaces from a technological perspective. For Drucker, digital formats are inherently material and performed by use. ‘Performative materiality,’ Drucker proposes, and concerning digital artefacts, ‘suggests that what something is has to be understood in terms of what it does, how it works within machinic, systemic, and cultural domains’ and that such a standpoint leads us to more productive analyses of lifecycles (production, use, control, cost) and systems of interdependence (cultural, political, institutional, infrastructural).¹³⁰ Jensen likewise emphasises the digital collection as part of a ‘cyberinfrastructure’ and system of ‘production and distribution’.¹³¹ Finally, Drucker underlines the production of a digital artefact as an ‘interpretative event’ which reflects a Derridean view of the archive: ‘...the technical structure of the *archiving* archive also determines the structure of the archivable content even in its very coming into existence and in its relationship to the future. The archivization produces as much as it records the event’.¹³² We must therefore address digital archives as cultural productions in their own right and consider them, as Mak does, ‘evidence of how we are now collectively perceiving, imagining, making, organizing, and sharing our cultural heritage’.¹³³

Common to several studies of the creation of digital archives is the interrogation primarily of commercially produced digitisations, that is to say digital archives created, mediated and gatekept by for-profit digitisers. Such large-scale digitisation of documentary heritage

¹²⁸ McBride, “Memory and National Identity in Modern Ireland,” 4, 6.

¹²⁹ Mak, “Archaeology of a Digitization,” 1522.

¹³⁰ Joanna Drucker, “Performative Materiality and Theoretical Approaches to Interface,” *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (2013), <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/7/1/000143/000143.html#p17>.

¹³¹ Jensen, “Digital Archival Literacy for (All) Historians,” 3.

¹³² Ibid.; Jacques Derrida and Eric Prenowitz, “Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression,” *Diacritics* 25, no. 2 (1995): 17.

¹³³ Mak, “Archaeology of a Digitization,” 1522.

by private enterprise and public-private partnerships demands its own set of questions about control, access and selection criteria.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, they carry broader lessons for studying the digitisations of public heritage institutions in national commemorative contexts and a defining statement is provided by Mak:

...digitisations may be recognized as vibrant and historically situated sources in their own right that offer alternative points of entry into enduring debates about the production and transmission of knowledge.¹³⁵

Mak addresses these questions via a ‘social history of digitizations’ or an ‘archaeology of a digitisation’ by asking what digitally encoded scholarly resources can tell us about perceptions of the past.¹³⁶ Fyfe similarly excavates digital archives of Victorian newspapers to show how we might better understand and critique their material conditions and how digitisations are created, mediated, accessed, and their paradata collected.¹³⁷ Sherratt likewise insists that we should approach online collections interfaces as ‘archaeological sites’ to be ‘hacked’ for their ‘layers of technology, descriptive practice and institutional history’ in order to expand beyond the remit of historians the kind of ‘critical digital literacy’ proposed by Jensen.¹³⁸ Also treating the digitisation of newspapers ‘archaeologically’ Gabriele takes a networked approach that historicises not just the digital object but also the networks that constitute it.¹³⁹ She asserts that the value of digitised and databased historical newspapers lies in their circulation and relationships to other texts.¹⁴⁰ From these four studies four questions emerge and inform the methodology underpinning the major case studies to follow: what are the networks that constitute a digital archive (state, institutional, professional, academic, technical, legal, financial,

¹³⁴ Gabriele, “Transfiguring the Newspaper,” 6; Tessa Hauswedell et al., “Of Global Reach yet of Situated Contexts: An Examination of the Implicit and Explicit Selection Criteria That Shape Digital Archives of Historical Newspapers,” *Archival Science* 20 (2020): 151–52.

¹³⁵ Mak, “Archaeology of a Digitization,” 1516.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1517.

¹³⁷ Paul Fyfe, “An Archaeology of Victorian Newspapers,” *Victorian Periodicals Review* 49, no. 4 (2016): 546–47.

¹³⁸ Tim Sherratt, “Hacking Heritage: Understanding the Limits of Online Access,” *The Routledge International Handbook of New Digital Practices in Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums and Heritage Sites*, 2019, 127–28.

¹³⁹ Gabriele, “Transfiguring the Newspaper,” 2.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 2, 6–7.

mnemonic, commemorative)? How are they shaped by circulation and their relationship to other texts (social media, news media, TV, radio, academia, hyperlinking, links with other digitisations via the commemorative programme)? How are they created, mediated and accessed (history, representation, access, use, absences)? What can they tell us about perceptions of the past (choices, narratives, memory, commemoration)?

This section began with a consideration of memory and an acknowledgement that the term ‘collective memory’ should be carefully applied. Moshenska, concerned with the over-reach and methodological weakness of many memory studies, and the heritage studies that redeploy its rhetoric, emphasises the need for approaches that are ‘grounded in specificity and the critical study of memory phenomena’. These ‘observable phenomena’ include a range of cultural, political and pedagogical media and commemorative acts; the (re)creation of narratives within small communities and their ‘individual acts of remembrance and storytelling’, and public juxtapositions of opposing narratives.¹⁴¹ Public digital commemorative archives are an example of such cultural media, however, analysis of these alone is a limited understanding of the work that the heritage of 1916 does in the world, and how it has been interpreted. Though not quite a ‘community’ in the traditional sense, more so affective ‘networked publics’, narrative construction and remembrance happen in the dispersed discourse, sharing, engagements, interactions, and exchanges that take place on social media around significant historical commemorations. The following section will attend to this ‘theatre of memory’ on Twitter.¹⁴²

...‘remembering’ is better seen as an active engagement with the past, as performative rather than as reproductive. It is as much a matter of acting out a relationship to the past from a particular point in the present as it is a matter of preserving and retrieving earlier stories.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Gabriel Moshenska, “Memory: Towards the Reclamation of a Vital Concept,” in *Heritage Keywords: Rhetoric and Redescription in Cultural Heritage*, ed. Kathryn Lafrenz Samuels and Trinidad Rico, Rhetoric and Redescription in Cultural Heritage (University Press of Colorado, 2015), 204-5.

¹⁴² Ibid.; Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*; Zizi Papacharissi, *Affective Publics: Sentiment, Technology, and Politics*, *Oxford Studies in Digital Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 9.

¹⁴³ Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, “Cultural Memory and Its Dynamics,” in *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (New York: De Gruyter, 2009), 2.

2.6 Twitter and Commemoration

Twitter, a ‘micro-blogging’ social network platform, is now a commonplace tool of public communication but is also itself a source of information, and a driver of debates. More pronounced since the 2016 US presidential election and Brexit vote, and the #MeToo movement, the extent to which Twitter has become embedded in everyday parlance in shaping other news media and public discourse demonstrates the cultural reach of the platform far beyond the boundaries of those who actually use it.¹⁴⁴ Miller *et al* refute the distinction between offline and online stating that social media ‘has already become such an integral part of everyday life that it makes no sense to see it as separate’.¹⁴⁵ Richardson similarly eschews the bifurcation and reasserts the offline ties using communities of archaeologists on Twitter as an example.¹⁴⁶ The pervasiveness of social media in the contemporary world as a shaper of public discourse and as ‘big-data’ therefore offers the potential for insights into the societies in which they are embedded.¹⁴⁷ However, social media data throw up many practical, analytical and interpretive problems due to, as McCay-Peet and Quan-Hasse observe, the vastness and diversity of content, the speed at which it appears, questions around data quality and ethics, and around what the ultimate value of the data amounts to in our understandings of society.¹⁴⁸ Chapter 3 will elaborate on these methodological issues, while this section of the literature review will concentrate on Twitter as a commemorative space, one in which memory is ‘networked’ and ‘mediated,’ and as having archival value.¹⁴⁹ Twitter, and myriad social media platforms, are not only spaces in which digital heritage is shared or consumed as participatory arms of cultural entities, but in which remembering takes place, in which commemoration is mobilised to different ends including feminist activism and a feminist ‘politics of visibility’.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁴ Lori McCay-Peet and Anabel Quan-Haase, “What Is Social Media and What Questions Can Social Media Research Help Us Answer?,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2016), ch. 2, 6, EPUB pagination.

¹⁴⁵ Daniel Miller et al., *How The World Changed Social Media*, vol. 1 (London: UCL Press, 2016), 7.

¹⁴⁶ Laura-Jane Richardson, “Micro-Blogging and Online Community,” *Internet Archaeology* 39 (2015).

¹⁴⁷ Cook, “Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community,” 97.

¹⁴⁸ Lori McCay-Peet and Anabel Quan-Haase, “What is Social Media and What Questions can Social Media Research Help us answer?,” *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods*, 5-6.

¹⁴⁹ Hoskins, “Digital Network Memory,” 94.

¹⁵⁰ Sarah Banet-Weiser, “Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny” (Duke University Press, November 23, 2018), 22.

Founded in 2006, Twitter is a ‘micro-blogging’ social networking platform.¹⁵¹ Twitter no longer publishes clear figures for its monthly active users (MAU) but in 2017 it reported 319m worldwide by December 2016, of which 252m were outside the USA.¹⁵² It last reported in 2015 that an average of 500m visited the site without logging on, suggesting a larger potential access base than registered users alone.¹⁵³ Twitter falls under the broader and more commonly referenced category of ‘social media’ defined by McCay-Peet and Quan-Hasse as:

...web-based services that allow individuals, communities, and organizations to collaborate, connect, interact, and build community by enabling them to create, co-create, modifies [sic], share, and engage with user-generated content that is easily accessible.¹⁵⁴

Micro-blogging refers to the way that Twitter functions to allow users to ‘post short status updates, messages, trivia, news, links, photos and videos, known as “tweets” to a web-based public time line’.¹⁵⁵ The Tweet character limit was 140 in 2016, the period in question, increasing to 280 since. Retweeting (message forwarding) according to Boyd is both ‘a form of information diffusion’ and ‘a means of participating in a diffuse conversation’.¹⁵⁶ Likewise, the hashtag (or hyperlinked ‘metadata tag’) links disparate tweets in a broader topic of conversation.¹⁵⁷ Other conventions are ‘@user’ and ‘via’ that tag an account and reference an information source respectively (usually followed by an

¹⁵¹ Danah M Boyd and Nicole B. Ellison, “Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship,” *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 13, no. 1 (October 1, 2007): 211.

¹⁵² Twitter Inc., “Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Report,” 2017, 44, accessed July 30, 2020. http://www.pemex.com/ri/reguladores/ReportesAnuales_SEC/2016_20F_i.pdf.

¹⁵³ @drao, “Testing Promoted Tweets on Our Logged-out Experience,” Twitter Blog, accessed August 3, 2020, https://blog.twitter.com/en_us/a/2015/testing-promoted-tweets-on-our-logged-out-experience.html.

¹⁵⁴ McCay-Peet and Quan-Hasse, “What Is Social Media and What Questions Can Social Media Research Help Us Answer?” ch.2, 6, EPUB pagination.

¹⁵⁵ Richardson, “Micro-Blogging and Online Community.”

¹⁵⁶ Danah Boyd, Scott Golder, and Gilad Lotan, “Tweet, Tweet, Retweet: Conversational Aspects of Retweeting on Twitter,” *Proceedings of the Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, 2010.

¹⁵⁷ Clark-Parsons, “I SEE YOU, I BELIEVE YOU, I STAND WITH YOU,” 1.

account and or URL). Gruzd *et al* class these as part of the Twitter ‘folksonomy’ - conventions of, simultaneously, use and speech generated by its users.¹⁵⁸

The Irish commemorations have left - and continue to leave - a substantial digital trace, a *record* of activity in the evidentiary sense but also in this social media sense of user-generated content.¹⁵⁹ Cook has observed that in the digital age people ‘leave through digital social media all kinds of new and potentially exciting, and potentially archival, traces of human life, of what it means to be human’.¹⁶⁰ Batrinca and Treleaven likewise contend that ‘Social media data is clearly the largest, richest and most dynamic evidence base of human behaviour, bringing new opportunities to understand individuals, groups and society’.¹⁶¹ Such data are, in this view, also a form of open-ended digital archives, akin to a ‘living archive’ or a *milieu de mémoire* in that it is continually accumulating and transforming.¹⁶² Hoskins, de Groot and Reed have each leaned on this characterisation of the internet itself is an enormous store of ‘archival memory,’ or a digital archive, though here the meaning of ‘archive’ is again loosely applied, a repository of things more than a collecting and ordering entity.¹⁶³ In this way, social media platforms act as ‘digital repositories’ and play a ‘de facto “archival role”,’ Huvila observes, as they are incidental or semi-conscious, but also mass-accumulating as opposed to the formalised, selecting archive.¹⁶⁴ Equally, and being of the web, social media data are characterised by ephemerality. Not alone the problem of broken links and obsolescence, but the conscious removal or editing of posts, images, pages and profiles - either by the user or the platform - mean that social media is never an unfixed source of social data, nor without its epistemological limitations. The abundance of the web, as much as the digital archive, must also be qualified by absence. Nonetheless, social media data are considered to have potential *archival* value in the sense of being consciously collectable and preservable as an

¹⁵⁸ Anatoliy Gruzd, Barry Wellman, and Yuri Takhteyev, “Imagining Twitter as an Imagined Community,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 55, no. 10 (2011): 1301.

¹⁵⁹ Janet Salmons, “Using Social Media in Data Collection: Designing Studies with the Qualitative E-Research Framework,” in Luke Sloan and Anabel Quan-Haase, eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods, Handbook of Social Media Research Methods* (London: SAGE Publications, 2016), 200.

¹⁶⁰ Cook, “Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community,” 97.

¹⁶¹ Bogdan Batrinca and Philip C. Treleaven, “Social Media Analytics: A Survey of Techniques, Tools and Platforms,” *AI and Society* 30, no. 1 (2014): 90.

¹⁶² Hall, “Constituting an Archive,” 89.

¹⁶³ Jerome de Groot, *Consuming History: Historians and Heritage in Contemporary Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 2009), 87; Barbara Reed, “Reinventing Access,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 42, no. 2 (2014): 127.

¹⁶⁴ Isto Huvila, “The Unbearable Lightness of Participating? Revisiting the Discourses of ‘Participation’ in Archival Literature,” *Journal of Documentation* 71, no. 2 (2015): 358.

historical source, as they are ‘suited for looking back in time pre- and post-critical events’.¹⁶⁵ From an institutional perspective, the historical but also archival value of Twitter has long since been recognised in the fraught attempt by the Library of Congress to process the deposit of Twitter’s archive of public tweets since 2006, part of a broader drive to archive the web.¹⁶⁶ Web archives, inclusive of social media feeds, are increasingly understood as having historical value both for contemporary and future history, and therefore as digital heritage collected and preserved in institutional repositories and national web archive collections. Collecting but also archiving Tweet datasets based on keywords or hashtags (as opposed to user feeds) is also increasingly happening outside of formal memory institutions for both research and activism, as will be discussed in chapter 3.

Unequivocally, Twitter has increasingly been a vehicle for debate and the politics of visibility and recognition in public history, feminist activism (#MeToo) and race relations (#BlackLivesMatter) in the past decade. The use of social media as ‘both a democratized space for critical comment, and as an instant barometer of the reception of any historical narrative or production’ as well as a spotlight on women’s underrepresentation in Irish history has been observed in the current decade of commemorations, notably in 2016.¹⁶⁷ Emblematic of this was the successful social media campaign in 2013, during the centenary of the 1913 Labour Lockout, to have a new tram bridge in Dublin city named after trade-unionist, Irish Citizen Army activist and veteran of 1916 Rosie Hackett.¹⁶⁸ According to Maynard *et al*, ‘Twitter, in particular, is a reactive medium,’ where people ‘express very specific sentiment about a recent or future event’ and the best results ‘will thus be obtained for such analytic tools when they are focused on some very specific

¹⁶⁵ H. Andrew Schwartz and Lyle H. Ungar, “Data-Driven Content Analysis of Social Media: A Systematic Overview of Automated Methods,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 659, no. 1 (2015): 90.

¹⁶⁶ Elisabeth Fondren and Meghan Menard McCune, “Archiving and Preserving Social Media at the Library of Congress: Institutional and Cultural Challenges to Build a Twitter Archive,” *Preservation, Digital Technology and Culture* 47, no. 2 (2018): 33-44.

¹⁶⁷ Maeve Casserly and Ciaran O’Neill, “Public History, Invisibility, and Women in the Republic of Ireland,” *The Public Historian* 39, no. 2 (May 16, 2017): 11.

¹⁶⁸ “The Rosie Hackett Bridge Campaign - the Rediscovery of a Forgotten History by Angelina Cox,” Labour via Internet Archive, accessed August 3, 2020, <https://web.archive.org/web/20140307190506/http://www.labour.ie/blog/2013/09/03/the-rosie-hackett-bridge-campaign-the-rediscovery/>; “New Bridge to Be Named for Rosie Hackett,” The Irish Women Worker’s Union, accessed September 4, 2017, <https://womenworkersunion.ie/rosie-hackett/>.

events'.¹⁶⁹ This is a product of the codification of the hashtag and the retweet as aggregator and amplifier respectively. As such, social media is both a litmus test for major events or upheavals and a birds-eye view of popular attitudes that coalesce around them.¹⁷⁰ However, this tendency towards topic-based research is also a practical issue, as Boyd and Crawford remind, due to the restrictions on historical data collection that Twitter imposes: at the time of writing it is not possible to collect Twitter data more than seven days in the past without recourse to a data purchase.¹⁷¹ A multitude of event or topic-based Twitter research has been done regarding academic communities, political phenomena, social movements and activism.¹⁷² It has also come to the attention of health-related research focusing on communication around a series of global pandemics such as H1N1 and, at the time of writing, Covid-19.¹⁷³

Recent examples in the heritage field have also broached discourses of heritage on various social media platforms. YouTube has been explored using virtual ethnography by Pietrobruno in order to highlight the ways that intangible heritage, in this case dance, is captured and preserved (also as digital heritage) through this platform, and how gendered national heritage representations and identities may be challenged by counter-cultural ones in its 'social archiving' collections.¹⁷⁴ Bonacchi *et al* used digital humanities methods to capture and interrogate uses of the past - the 'pre-modern heritage' of Britain - to express political identities in activism around the Brexit referendum on Facebook. This study further raises the question of 'the effects that diverse expert practices are having on the construction of specific messages, their circulation, proliferation and ultimate

¹⁶⁹ Diana Maynard et al., "A Framework for Real-Time Semantic Social Media Analysis," *Web Semantics: Science, Services and Agents on the World Wide Web*, 2017, 1.

¹⁷⁰ Cayce Myers and James F. Hamilton, "Social Media as Primary Source," *Media History* 20, no. 4 (2014): 432.

¹⁷¹ Danah Boyd and Kate Crawford, "Critical Questions for Big Data: Provocations for a Cultural, Technological, and Scholarly Phenomenon," *Information Communication and Society* 15, no. 5 (2012): 666.

¹⁷² Jin Gao et al., "Visualising the Digital Humanities Community: A Comparison Study between Citation Network and Social Network," in *Digital Humanities 2018* (Mexico: Red de Humanidades Digitales A. C., 2018), 201-4, https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10051991/1/Gao_dh2018.pdf; Richardson, "Micro-Blogging and Online Community"; Gilad Lotan et al., "The Revolutions Were Tweeted: Information Flows during the 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions," *International Journal of Communication* 5, no. 0 (2011): 31; Maynard et al., "A Framework for Real-Time Semantic Social Media Analysis"; Clark-Parsons, "I SEE YOU, I BELIEVE YOU, I STAND WITH YOU"; Papacharissi, *Affective Publics*, 30-93.

¹⁷³ Wasim Ahmed, "Using Twitter Data to Provide Qualitative Insights into Pandemics and Epidemics" (Sheffield University, 2018), [http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/20367/1/Final PhD Thesis 11 MAY.pdf](http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/20367/1/Final%20PhD%20Thesis%2011%20MAY.pdf); Wasim Ahmed et al., "Novel Insights into Views towards H1N1 during the 2009 Pandemic: A Thematic Analysis of Twitter Data," no. 36 (2019): 60-72.

¹⁷⁴ Sheenagh Pietrobruno, "YouTube and the Social Archiving of Intangible Heritage," *New Media and Society* 15, no. 8 (2013): 1259-76.

moulding into identities'.¹⁷⁵ These also have profound implications for thinking through the shaping of 'collective memory'.

No shortage of work on digital media, 'digital memory', and digital heritage exists, nor of memory and commemoration, nor social media and Twitter; those that unite Twitter, heritage and commemoration are less frequent. Some pertinent examples include studies approaching the commemoration of recent traumatic events such as 9/11 and the London 7/7 bombings using a variety of methodologies.¹⁷⁶ Unsurprisingly, given the medium, many of these and research that deals with commemoration of more distantly historical events on Twitter are found in memory, media, and communication studies.¹⁷⁷ Paulsen's, for example, is a small-data investigation into public discourse about the Ukrainian famine ('Holodomor') of 1932-3. Focusing primarily on the nature of 'information diffusion' and information sources, it draws attention to the crossover between national heritage, public and political discourse and how a contested memory was 'mediated by Twitter' yet does not adequately conceptualise this mediation of memory.¹⁷⁸ Interrogating transnational communication networks on the fifth anniversary of the Fukushima disaster, Rantasila *et al* are more concerned with the 'ritual discourse' of commemoration and importantly 'the potentially volatile relationship between the power of ritualizing and the (counter) power of politicizing the ritualized moment' that may be observed through commemoration on Twitter.¹⁷⁹ Farrell-Banks has explored the recent use of the Magna Carta in populist political discourse on Twitter during the anniversaries of its publication and of the Brexit referendum in June 2018, mapping this onto a typology of national identity. Not unlike the Proclamation of the Irish Republic,

¹⁷⁵ Chiara Bonacchi, Mark Altaweel, and Marta Krzyzanska, "The Heritage of Brexit: Roles of the Past in the Construction of Political Identities through Social Media," *Journal of Social Archaeology* 18, no. 2 (2018): 3.

¹⁷⁶ Meg McGuire, "Commemoration in 140 Characters: How Twitter Is Remediating How We Commemorate Resonant Events," ed. Jennifer Sheppard et al. (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2013), <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/docview/1461807681?pq-origsite=primo>; Samuel Merrill, "Walking Together? The Mediatized Performative Commemoration of 7/7's Tenth Anniversary," *Journalism* 20, no. 10 (2019): 1360-78; A Rantasila et al., "#fukushima Five Years On: A Multimethod Analysis of Twitter on the Anniversary of the Nuclear Disaster," *International Journal Of Communication* 12 (2018): 928-49.

¹⁷⁷ A recent issue of *Memory Studies* (August 2020) dedicated multiple articles to explorations of collective memory, commemoration and historical consciousness in social media spaces.

¹⁷⁸ Martin Paulsen, "#Holodomor: Twitter and Public Discourse in Ukraine," in *Memory, Conflict and New Media: Web Wars in Post-Socialist States*, ed. Julie Fedor, Ellen Rutten, and Vera Zvereva (Routledge, 2013), 1-2.

¹⁷⁹ Rantasila et al., "#fukushima Five Years On," 939.

Magna Carta holds iconographic status in the British imaginary and notions of British collective memory and identity. Akin to the research design of this thesis, Farrell-Banks situates this analysis alongside physical heritage site representations of Magna Carta using detailed case studies to highlight the ways that ‘official’ heritage sites may influence national collective identity in the public imagination.¹⁸⁰ Lastly, Clavert’s longitudinal study is perhaps unique in collecting a dataset of several million tweets based on a national and international period of commemoration, the centenary of the First World War, between 2014 and 2019, primarily pertaining to the French commemorations but capturing a small amount of Tweets from the Irish commemorations in 2016. This study explicitly sets out to interrogate the relationship that may exist between commemorations, collective memory, and social networks - specifically Twitter.¹⁸¹ Following Clavert, Twitter is also understood here as a tool for the mediation, mobilisation and (re)appropriation of authorised, national commemorations.¹⁸²

Hoskins asserts that the internet and digital media ‘have transformed the temporality, spatiality, and indeed the mobility of memories’.¹⁸³ In each of these examples, Twitter is recognised as a space for both private and public, individual and collective remembering, but also politicised engagement with remembrance. Memory and identity are not contained in any one place or artefact, rather people find new spaces in which to reconstruct and enact them, and in this way a ‘sense of the past, at any given point of time, is quite as much a matter of history as what happened in it.’¹⁸⁴ Returning therefore to the work of Samuel, Twitter is, I propose, a ‘theatre of memory’ where a sense of the past may ‘find expression in the discriminations of everyday life’.¹⁸⁵ It is a space in which what Erll and Rigney call the ‘social performance’ of memory takes place. This social

¹⁸⁰ David Farrell-Banks, “1215 in 280 Characters: Talking about Magna Carta on Twitter,” in *European Heritage, Dialogue and Digital Practices*, ed. Areti Galani, Rhiannon Mason, and Bethany Rex (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), 86-106.

¹⁸¹ Original quote: ‘s’interroger sur les interactions pouvant exister entre les commémorations, les traces de mémoire collective d’un côté, l’usage des réseaux sociaux numériques et plus particulièrement de Twitter d’un autre’. Frederic Clavert, “Temporalités Du Centenaire de La Grande Guerre Sur Twitter,” in *Temps et Temporalités Du Web*, ed. Valerie Schafer (Nanterre: Presses Universitaires de Paris Nanterre, 2018), 2.

¹⁸² Frederic Clavert, “Temporalités Du Centenaire de La Grande Guerre Sur Twitter,” in *Temps et Temporalités Du Web*, ed. Valerie Schafer (Nanterre: Presses Universitaires de Paris Nanterre, 2018), 20.

¹⁸³ Hoskins, “Digital Network Memory,” 93.

¹⁸⁴ Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Present Culture* (London; New York: Verso, 2012), 15.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

performance of memory constitutes, they articulate, ‘the ways in which particular memorial practices are taken up in the public sphere and hence become collective points of reference’.¹⁸⁶ And if such practices or rituals are themselves a ‘transient form of inscribing memory,’ Twitter, no more than memory itself, is avowedly transient and ephemeral.¹⁸⁷ Tweets are ‘ephemera of the everyday,’ yet they leave potent traces of experience and of a moment in time, ritual moments that are never engaged in uncritically.¹⁸⁸ Networked, affective publics on Twitter, as Papacharissi theorizes, are ‘activated and sustained by feelings of belonging and solidarity, however fleeting or permanent those feelings may be.’¹⁸⁹ Social media is not, after all, separate, but enmeshed in our contemporary realities and no less a space for ‘the performance of remembrance culture,’ one that is at once immediate, potent, ephemeral and of historical interest.

2.7 Assemblage Commemoration

Commemoration is a tradition of remembrance, expressed through ritualistic practices that may be public, private, collective or personal. In this thesis I will refer to commemorative ‘moments’ in the way that Farrell-Banks distinguishes between historical moments and events, following a Ricœurian theory of history in which the moment is conceptualised as ‘a representation of the past that is ambiguous, changing and moving’.¹⁹⁰ Commemoration, as much as it replicates and reprises previous rituals may also be ‘ambiguous, changing and moving’ and those such as the year-and-a-half-long 1916 centenary are moments in time with blurred boundaries of beginning and ending, within which are more distinct historical and mnemonic flashpoints. Commemoration, or rather ‘authorised commemoration’, is thus also an act of ‘heritagisation’: it ordains, it classifies, it ascribes values, and it perpetuates in its self-referentiality.¹⁹¹ Authorised commemoration thus comes to represent something beyond itself in our imaginaries and counter-imaginaries: the spirit of the nation, the character of a people, a cultural lineage, unity, difference, a sense of belonging or estrangement, something to cherish or indeed

¹⁸⁶ Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, “Cultural Memory and Its Dynamics,” in *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (New York: De Gruyter, 2009), 9.

¹⁸⁷ Crozier-De Rosa and Mackie, *Remembering Women’s Activism*, 6.

¹⁸⁸ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 2012, 27.

¹⁸⁹ Papacharissi, *Affective Publics*, 9.

¹⁹⁰ Farrell-Banks, “1215 in 280 Characters,” 90.

¹⁹¹ Thomas Cauvin and Ciaran O’Neill, “Negotiating Public History in the Republic of Ireland: Collaborative, Applied and Usable Practices for the Profession,” *Institute of Historical Research*, 2017, 4.

‘something to hate’.¹⁹² None of these ‘authorising’ processes are beyond contestation or revocation, and what is ‘mainstream’ or ‘authorised’ is a continual cycle of renewal and reinvention, as with commemoration itself.¹⁹³ Once the precedent has been set, however, this ‘aggregation of myths, values and inheritances’ is impossible to extricate entirely from novel modes of remembrance and commemoration and each of these elements are indeed, according to Samuel, valid in the study of the past.¹⁹⁴ As much as they change with the needs of the present, we cannot neatly separate contemporary commemorations from that which came before. Commemorations are thus palimpsestuous in that they form a ritualistic cultural lineage and certain traditions persist just as novel ones are explored, and both commemoration and digitisation have each been framed as ‘palimpsests’ – ‘imbrications of old and new’ – by, for example, Higgins and Mak.¹⁹⁵ However, they are also a constellation of heritage things and performances that extend not just backwards and forwards in time but multi-laterally in the present and are facets of yet other constellations or ‘assemblages.’ It will be argued here and the proceeding chapters that the centennial digitisations (chapters 4-6) are situated members of an assemblage of digital heritage productions and of a larger assemblage, the Decade of Centenaries (DoC), which they both produce and are produced by. Harrison insists that official heritage in particular ‘must be viewed as intricate and shifting assemblages (or *agencements*) composed of a range of people, ideas, institutions and apparatuses’ as they are tools of governance and shapers of culture.¹⁹⁶ DeLanda’s theory for approaching social ontologies will be used to demonstrate how the DoC may be understood as a commemorative assemblage.

Assemblage theory has been employed in various analyses of heritage and identity phenomena.¹⁹⁷ Two will be raised here before addressing DeLanda’s theory of assemblage:

¹⁹² Paula Mota Santos, “The Concept of ‘First-Place’ as an Aristotelean Exercise on the Metaphysics of Heritage,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 24, no. 2 (2018): 122.

¹⁹³ Graff-McRae, *Remembering and Forgetting 1916*, 4.

¹⁹⁴ Sara McDowell, “Heritage, Memory and Identity,” *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, no. Ap (2008): 37.

¹⁹⁵ Higgins, “The Irish Republic Was Proclaimed by Poster,” 51; Mak, “Archaeology of a Digitization,” 1516.

¹⁹⁶ Rodney Harrison, “Forgetting to Remember, Remembering to Forget: Late Modern Heritage Practices, Sustainability and the ‘Crisis’ of Accumulation of the Past,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19, no. 6 (2013): 581.

¹⁹⁷ Sharon Macdonald, *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today* (London; New York: Routledge, 2013); Red Chidgey, *Feminist Afterlives: Assemblage Memory in Activist Times*, Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Tony Bennet et al., *Collecting, Ordering, Governing: Anthropology, Museums, and Liberal Government* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2017); Tony Bennett, *Museums, Power, Knowledge: Selected Essays* (London: Routledge, 2018); Anne J Gilliland, Sue

Chidgey uses assemblage theory and proposes the notion of ‘assemblage memory’ specifically to explore the ways in which the ‘practices, affects and physical things’ of past liberation struggles are transmitted in, amongst other phenomena, contemporary commemorations.¹⁹⁸ While Chidgey’s broader analysis is specific to feminism, protest and activism, it is a useful way to think about and approach heritage and the transmission of knowledge as her study may also be viewed as one of contemporary mobilisations of (feminist) heritage. Modern authorised commemoration, if nothing else, transmits and sustains a certain knowledge of the past in the epistemic present. It is also, as with MacDonald’s portrayal of the ‘memory complex’, a mobilisation and agglomeration of objects, affect and social practices.¹⁹⁹ Drawing on both Chidgey’s and MacDonald’s use of assemblage within memory and heritage frameworks, I propose the term ‘assemblage commemoration’. Assemblage commemoration is used here to refer to these interconnected ‘practices, affects and physical things’ - ceremonies, remembrance, historical artefacts, historic places, digital media, digital spaces, social media platforms and affective ‘networked publics,’ cultural institutions, political ideologies, social identities and more - and the ways in which they operate to mediate memory and identity in late-modern authorised remembrance culture.²⁰⁰ I will now turn to DeLanda’s ‘post-Deleuzian’ assemblage theory and outline its application in relation to this research.²⁰¹ The following explicates the DoC as a commemorative assemblage and the ‘nested’ assemblages demonstrated by the in-depth case studies and analysis of feminist commemoration on Twitter to follow.

The DoC project is an entity composed of heterogeneous cultural heritage productions and producers. It is the larger node or ‘whole’ in a ‘nested set of assemblages’ with many interacting and interchangeable components: cultural and academic institutions, historians, heritage professionals, government bodies, artists, art, exhibitions, ceremonies, parades, pageants, theatre and musical productions, documentaries, books, social media,

McKemmish, and Andrew J Lau, eds., *Research in the Archival Multiverse* (Clayton, Victoria, Australia: Monash University Publishing, 2017), <http://www.oopen.org/record/628143>; Divya Praful Tolia-Kelly et al., *Heritage, Affect and Emotion: Politics, Practices and Infrastructures*, ed. Divya P Tolia-Kelly, Emma Waterton, and Steve Watson (London: London, 2017); Rodney Harrison, “Beyond ‘Natural’ and ‘Cultural’ Heritage: Toward an Ontological Politics of Heritage in the Age of Anthropocene,” *Heritage & Society* 8, no. 1 (2015): 24-42.

¹⁹⁸ Chidgey, *Feminist Afterlives*, 5.

¹⁹⁹ Macdonald, *Memorylands*, 6.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Bennet et al., *Collecting, Ordering, Governing: Anthropology, Museums, and Liberal Government*, 4.

websites, digitisations, digital history projects and more.²⁰² Taking this further in framing ‘the heritage assemblage’, Harrison includes ‘the specific arrangements of materials, equipment, texts and technologies, both “ancient” and “modern”, by which heritage is produced in conversation with them.’²⁰³ Thylstrup, who also draws on assemblage theory in interrogating mass digitisations, summarises an assemblage as an ‘aggregate of many highly varied components and their contingent connections’ and no ‘assemblage is whole or imperturbable, nor is it entirely reducible to its parts but is simultaneously an accumulation of smaller assemblages and a member of larger ones.’²⁰⁴ In other words, an assemblage is a dialectical relationship in which the properties of the whole are not inherent in the parts alone, but when they interact - and not simply co-exist - the parts create the more powerful properties of the whole, not simply additive but interacting to create something new or ‘emergent’.²⁰⁵ Digital archives are one such set of components that both constitute and have come to be influenced by the larger centennial whole. And as they exist in ‘relations of exteriority,’ which is to say they are also independent and detachable from the whole, they are not defined solely by their relationship to the DoC project and can be inserted into other assemblages.²⁰⁶ ‘Assemblage commemoration’ might equally be ‘plugged into’ MacDonald’s ‘memory complex’, just as the digital archival assemblage finds currency in the complex and apparatuses of national heritage institutions.²⁰⁷

DeLanda’s second set of parameters, ‘territorialisation’ and ‘coding’, are also applied to the assemblage proposed. If the former determines ‘boundaries’ then the temporal limitations of the DoC programme in question - 2012 to 2023 - and the territorial formation of the 26-county Republic of Ireland are most salient to the digital archives studied here. These are defined also in alterity to the ‘Decade of Anniversaries’ in Northern Ireland, which follows an alternative timeline of commemorations that additionally encompasses many significant fiftieth anniversaries of the Troubles era. The diasporic community to which the 2016 centenary, and some of the records digitised, also

²⁰² Manuel DeLanda, *Assemblage Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 20.

²⁰³ Rodney Harrison, “Heritage as Future-Making Practices,” in *Heritage Futures: Comparative Approaches*, ed. Rodney Harrison et al. (UCL Press, 2020), 37.

²⁰⁴ Thylstrup, *The Politics of Mass Digitisation*, 23.

²⁰⁵ DeLanda, *Assemblage Theory*, 9.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

reached adds another layer to this complex cultural and political geography. Within these limitations is the question of the extent to which the conformity of the DoC is imposed by the nature of its parts or by the homogenising influence of the DoC itself.²⁰⁸ As such, coding ‘refers to the role played by special expressive components in an assemblage in fixing the identity of a whole’.²⁰⁹ DeLanda’s philosophical duality of upward and downward causality is also at play here. The DoC is itself the product of historical, social and even economic processes and is a cultural entity still in the making until 2023. Its self-definition is continuously produced and reproduced by the cultural heritage things, processes and practices that interact within and with it. As DeLanda states ‘we need to include in a realist ontology not only the processes that produce the identity of a given social whole when it is born, but also the processes that maintain its identity through time’.²¹⁰ In particular, the centrepiece of the commemorative decade - the *Ireland 2016* initiative - was as much a scaffolding effort to consolidate the multitude of national and local commemorative activities that were already in train to mark the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising.²¹¹ *Ireland 2016* was the result, rather than the origin, of the activities it enfolded. It is a bottom-up assemblage that in turn asserted downward its own authorising cohesion. More broadly, this may be understood as the ways in which the DoC is an ‘authorising’ entity that sets the rules of engagement even as those contingent components reify and bestow it with cultural weight and a cultural identity.

In fusing these elements, DeLanda also focuses on language as an expressive component; ‘heritage’ may also serve this codification process. Santos likens heritage to language as a discursive, value-producing system of representation.²¹² This heritage coding takes form in an array of commemorative rituals, cultural policy texts, political speeches, and legitimising narratives, the latter supported (or contested) in part by the inviolate archive. It also refers to the ways in which the technologies of digitisation code the archive as heritage for commemoration. The assemblage of DeLanda, a materialist, perhaps allows for less abstraction than is useful for conceptualising such inventions of the human mind

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 22.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 18.

²¹¹ Diarmaid Ferriter, “1916 in 2016: Personal Reflections of an Irish Historian,” *Irish Historical Studies* 42, no. 161 (2018): 162; Cauvin and Neill, “Negotiating Public History,” 9.

²¹² Santos, “The Concept of ‘First-Place’ as an Aristotelean Exercise on the Metaphysics of Heritage,” 121-22.

as 'heritage'. In this respect MacDonald leans on the affordances of complexity theory, albeit little distinguished from assemblage, to incorporate the linguistic and human meaning-makings that constitute the heritage paradigm, and of which there are multiple levels.²¹³ The same flexibility is applied to the notion of assemblage commemoration here.

With this theoretical framework in mind, the three digital archives and the state institutions that have produced them as well as the remediation and (re)appropriation of the commemorations through Twitter that will be explored in the proceeding chapters, are understood as critical components embedded in assemblage commemoration. The DoC and these three institutional collections that support it are furthermore members of the cultural arm of the State, another entity embedded within the larger 'state apparatus' however independent their institutional identity.²¹⁴ Alone they are a series of collections that serve their institutional mandates, but together they are part of a commemorative national identity project. A steep increase in Twitter activity in direct relation to the 2016 commemorations and concomitant function as distributor of digital heritage, demarcates it as a component of this late-modern commemorative impulse, at the same time as it resides within a global system and culture of communication. What makes this an assemblage also depends on the interactions between the component parts to produce something novel. It is here that the relationship between these digital archives, Twitter, and the commemorative machine produces something that has greater resonant power than the elements alone.²¹⁵ All three digital archives have been aligned to the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising in the ways that they were planned and released to the public. Responding to an apparent demand for public history in the Republic of Ireland they are intended to democratise access to the history of the revolution as well as fulfilling a state commemorative mandate that emphasises both inclusivity and digital access.²¹⁶ Released in tandem with the centennial programme then, these digital archives also invigorate a collective memory of the revolution through mnemonic and affective resonance. Twitter retains traces of these resonances, which swelled during 2016, and which were also challenging authorising heritage from a critical gender perspective. The commemorative digitisations are symbolic cultural productions as much as they are embedded in a culture

²¹³ Macdonald, *Memorylands*, 5-7.

²¹⁴ DeLanda, *Assemblage Theory*, 18.

²¹⁵ Liao, 2010, p.37

²¹⁶ Cauvin and O'Neill, "Negotiating Public History," 8.

of public history that includes social media engagement and participation, and arguably they may be seen as a new ritual of commemoration. Ritual, as Bryan reminds us, is ‘the mechanism by which synchronic social relationships, the political relationships of the present, are converted, ideologically, into a communion with the past’.²¹⁷ The ideal of collective memory is about continuity and union with the past and is a social relationship that affirms a collective identity. Collective memory and identity are in part mediated by the commemorative project, the archives that in turn validate it, and the media through which remembering and affective expression takes place. While the DoC has reaffirmed the foundational centrality of 1916 in the story of the nation, it also broadens the possibilities for, indeed authorises, other historical moments, narratives or figures to act as explorations of Irishness.

²¹⁷ Dominic Bryan, “Ritual, Identity and Nation: When the Historian Becomes the High Priest of Commemoration,” *Remembering 1916: The Easter Rising, the Somme and the Politics of Memory in Ireland*, no. May (2016): 35.

3 Methodology

Social constructionism is the guiding interpretive framework applied in this thesis and qualitative methodology, influenced by postmodern and feminist theories of archives and heritage and digital humanities. I recognise my positionality as an Irish, white cis-woman and a well-funded researcher, my beliefs and previous experiences (outlined in chapter 1), and how these have shaped my path along this research, the choices around research questions, data collection, and the interpretation of findings. In this framework the subjectivity and multiplicity of meanings derived from experiences and interactions are recognised and developed: ‘It is impossible to say that there is only one story that can be constructed from the data’.¹ Archives and digital archives are value-laden and situated cultural constructions that communicate certain meanings, consciously or unconsciously, and the meanings we derive from them are in turn historically, culturally and socially situated. In this vein, the research also approaches interaction with the commemorations online from the perspective of participants through Twitter.² Wilson proposes that gender should be employed as an instrument of analysis for understanding the world, not just identity.³ Gender as an axial mode of analysis in heritage research, and the challenging of patriarchal or discriminatory knowledge practices and representations further complicates this work of interpretation.⁴ A pragmatic and flexible approach to the types of data and data collection has supported this complexity of interpretation to address the research questions, and to best demonstrate the (digital) commemorative assemblage. This research path has principally been inductive; however, I recognise that it was at times ‘both an inductive and deductive process’.⁵ The following section outlines in detail the approaches, methods and data sources employed to build three case studies of institutional digitisations for commemoration. Following this is an outline of the methods

¹ John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, 2016), 24; Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2008), ch.3, 6, EPUB pagination.

² Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 24.

³ Wilson, R., “The tyranny of the normal and the importance of being liminal” in Wera Grahn and Ross J Wilson, eds., *Gender and Heritage: Performance, Place and Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 6-7.

⁴ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 82.

⁵ Corbin and Strauss, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, ch.3, 2.

employed in a qualitative study of feminist commemoration on Twitter aided by computational means, and prefigured by a discussion of ethics and Twitter as a source for research.

3.1 Digital commemorative archives

3.2 Methods

A collective case study approach was applied to the three institutional, commemorative digitisations investigated in this thesis. Creswell and Poth outline the key features of the case study/studies as a research strategy: cases are defined within clear boundaries or parameters; they use a multiplicity of sources to construct and understand the cases in-depth; identification of case themes; identification of the observed ‘phenomenon’ that is to guide the case research. Rich context and description, comparison and/or theory development are also characteristic of this research method.⁶ The pursuit of the three case studies presented in chapters 4-6 was iterative and built upon earlier sample studies in identifying themes, questions, and data sources. The guiding phenomenon was the notion of ‘digital commemorative archives,’ defined and elaborated in chapters 1 and 2 as digitisations of heritage archives driven by nationally significant commemorations, an observation that both guided and was further developed as a theory emerging from these case studies, their process and their findings.

In building these case studies, it was necessary to operate on the assumption that a lot of the information about the constitution of a digital archive - administrative and contextual data - may not be self-evident from the digital interface itself. The following case studies have therefore been constructed by tracing the ‘clues’ left by the creation and dissemination of the digital archives concerned, in addition to their broader historical context.⁷ Such data about the constitution of a digital archive are often lacking or not publicly available, and the chain of custody of the analogue originals can itself prove hazy.

⁶ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 97-98, 102.

⁷ Bonnie Mak, “Archaeology of a Digitization.,” *Journal of the Association for Information Science & Technology* 65, no. 8 (August 2014): 1515.

As such, the digital interfaces and website domains within which these collections sit were scrutinized for information regarding their history, creation, purpose and use as much as for the representation of their contents. Such information is crucial to understanding the politics of a digitisation and the lifecycle of a digital archive within a particular institutional and national context. However, the types and availability of data vary greatly between institutions, shaping what could be said of each commemorative digitisation.

The three case studies were largely assembled from publicly accessible data (outlined below) and supplemented by data and information provided informally through inquiries with staff. Hauswedell *et al* have elsewhere used interviews to penetrate the black-boxed selection criteria of newspaper digitisations by several major international cultural and commercial entities, specifically to unearth information about such practices that cannot be found in the public domain.⁸ Some information is indeed only accessible on internal databases or workflows, and in the recollections of those working in institutions, and it was therefore necessary to meet with staff, where possible, for informal fieldwork. As these are publicly-funded institutions, they were forthcoming with information where it could be provided. Limited access to Google Analytics (non-public) was provided by the Military Archives, from which data about access and use of the website between September 2017 (when it was first used) and June 2019 was collected.⁹ Staff at the National Library of Ireland provided additional information about ‘Phase Two’ of the Library’s Decade of Centenaries digitisation plan.¹⁰ The National Archives did not respond to requests for further website or collections analytics. The bringing together of this dispersed data is an additional contribution of this thesis. The following is an outline of the principal sources used to research the three case studies.

3.3 Sources

Annual Reports and Reviews and strategic planning documents proved to be some of the most valuable sources of information in piecing together the history of these digital

⁸ Tessa Hauswedell et al., “Of Global Reach yet of Situated Contexts : An Examination of the Implicit and Explicit Selection Criteria That Shape Digital Archives of Historical Newspapers,” *Archival Science* 20 (2020): 140.

⁹ My thanks to the staff at the Military Archives for kindly arranging this access.

¹⁰ My thanks to Sandra McDermott and Katherine McSharry at the National Library for this information.

collections and their relationship to the Decade of Centenaries. The consistency of reporting and the amount of informative data gleaned also varied greatly from institution to institution. By comparison, University or research-led projects tend to provide more technical detail concerning methodologies and methods, or have more descriptive research outputs than institutional reporting. Smaller scale or stand-alone projects tend, however, to be in a better position to focus resources on such documentation than larger institutions that have a huge variety of collections and demands on resources.

Wernimont points out that ‘feminist scholars of technology have emphasized the need to account for the technosocial scene - the complex network of relations between institutions, participants, funding entities.’¹¹ Financial reporting, published as part of or separately to these annual reviews, also proved useful in deducing something of the monetary affordances for particular projects. Strategic, annual and financial reports are often found in ‘Freedom of Information’ or ‘Policy’ sections of a website and they provide information on: institutional activities such as the planning and implementation of projects; financial reporting; partnerships and collaborations; outreach activities; online usage reporting; usage statistics and/or social media statistics; purchases, bequests, donations and their associated costs and stipulations of use; recruitment and labour e.g. temporary hires or outsourced labour/services for delivering a digital project. The Internet Archive, but equally the National Library of Ireland web archive was a further source for policy documents and other PDF uploads that have since been removed or contain broken links. Documents such as these often now only exist in the archived version of a website and this also proved true for researching Twitter policies.¹² Web archives also help in tracking website upgrades or changes that may streamline content in ways that make unclear when certain resources, exhibitions or digitisations originally appeared. Tied to this is the fact that these case studies changed and grew over time with website updates and as new information became available. Finally, catalogue searches and studying acquisition records of the institution, where available, can help to historicise a digital collection. Published collections guides, where they exist, can help to fill these gaps. Some such information can often only be found in the internal databases of an institution and requires fieldwork visits or correspondence with staff. Similarly, detailed data relating

¹¹ Wernimont, “Whence Feminism?,” 16.

¹² Paul Fyfe, “An Archaeology of Victorian Newspapers,” *Victorian Periodicals Review* 49, no. 4 (2016): 568.

to website hits and usage may not be a feature of public reporting or, beyond large aggregate figures for overall use of a domain, may not be consistently collected by an institution.

Beyond the immediate interface or host domain, associated blogs or linked resources were also pursued for information, evidence of dissemination, and the ‘near history’ of these digital archives.¹³ Similarly, social media channels, podcast and image-sharing platforms were explored and noted. The official Decade of Centenaries website provided an important timeline and reference point throughout, additionally aggregating official centenary publications and reports of the Expert Advisory Group. Other online sources included: press releases, newspaper and news media reports, Dáil Éireann debates and publications (available online), government departmental websites (e.g. Dept. of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Dept. of Foreign Affairs) and publications (e.g. official centenary programmes for 2016 and 2018), the *Wayback Machine* (Internet Archive) and the National Library of Ireland web archive. *Scopus* and the NLI catalogue were used to perform literature searches of academic output and publication trends, particularly since the start of the decade of commemorations but more generally in the last 20 years since the first release of the Bureau of Military History collection into the public domain, an archival turn seen as having revitalised the history and public perceptions of the Irish Revolution.¹⁴

The following is an outline of these approaches that underpin the structure of each case study, adjusting as required. These come under the following headings: historical and institutional context; publics and intended/expected use; financial; legal; collaborations and partnerships; selection rationale.

¹³ Ibid., 569.

¹⁴ Beiner, “Probing the Boundaries of Irish Memory,” 302.

3.4 Case Structure

3.4.1 Historical and institutional context

Understanding the history of the institution helps us to piece together a prehistory of the digital archive. The origins of the archive and the debates and controversies around its creation, safeguarding and use are all part of the lifecycle and representations of the digital archive we know them today. Historical decisions about selection and collection affect the nature and interpretation of the record as we encounter it in the digital interface.¹⁵ Necessarily, this leads to questions of broader national historical and political context, about historical and contemporary attitudes to accessing documentary heritage, as well as cultural policy, which though ‘never evident on the page before a reader, impacts decisions made decades later’.¹⁶ Academic and historiographical shifts also account for some of the evolution of these attitudes, and for the development of modern archival policy. Ascertaining something of an institution’s track record on access and digital projects gives further depth of understanding to its current digitisation activities. Lastly, and particular to this study, the commemorative context is accounted for and how this reflects project timelines, funding measures, previous commemorations, historical narratives and identities. We might call this the basis of a ‘social history’ of the digital archive as suggested by Mak and teased out in chapter 2.¹⁷

3.4.2 Public(s) & intended / expected use

Can we neatly trace the intended publics, use and usability from the resulting digital archive? We must in a sense work both backwards and forwards in thinking about who an institution serves, seeing from the point of view of the user and the institution. How is this digital archive organised and presented (exhibition, database, genealogical tool)? What kinds of information retrieval are made possible, and what kind of ‘researchers’ (in the broadest sense) or interactions will therefore be supported?¹⁸ Hauswedell *et al* have shown that digitisers’ perceptions about their expected or intended publics are

¹⁵ Paul Conway, “Digital Transformations and the Archival Nature of Surrogates,” *Archival Science* 15, no. 1 (2015): 57.

¹⁶ Gabriele, “Transfiguring the Newspaper,” 9.

¹⁷ Mak, “Archaeology of a Digitization.,” 1517.

¹⁸ Hauswedell et al., “Of Global Reach yet of Situated Contexts,” 153.

inextricable from selection criteria. Outwardly, they found, this is evidenced from the ways in which their digital interfaces mediate the navigation of collections i.e. ‘interface affordances’, as discussed in chapter 2, and that simplicity tends to correlate with less provision of ‘paratextual data’. These factors, echoed by Wernimont, that presuppose users are also part of ‘implicit’ selection criteria for digitisations, and closely tied to intended or expected use.¹⁹

In discerning the intended or expected use of a digital archive Jensen furthers this assertion that digitisations often tend towards simplified interfaces aimed at a broad range of users. As discussed in the previous chapter, the ‘logic’ of digital archives as they are presented to ‘the crowd’ is fundamentally different to the analogue, and this shapes the digital interface that in turn steers our encounters with the digital archive: ‘One cannot avoid the technical infrastructure of the archive as it mediates all interaction with the items it contains’.²⁰ Digital archives also have multiple overlapping uses including but not limited to academic, genealogical or family history research, education (Primary/Secondary), reparation (e.g. of displaced archives) as well as evidentiary, justice, and healing processes, or they may have additional memorial or commemorative functions as with those examined in this thesis.²¹ In the case of the latter, bespoke digitisations of state archives aligned to moments of nationally significant commemorations have the meta function of serving national heritage narratives and ideas about national identity. Inclusivity and accessibility are also key to these affirmations. Such high-profile digitisation may also become a part of, or help to transform, an institution’s public image and justification of its cultural significance in the life of the nation. Social media use and reporting may also be linked with this public image and with broader funding justifications and is part of a broader network of dissemination, which may include academic conferences and papers, publications, blogs, podcast, news media, television and radio productions, political speeches and so on.²²

¹⁹ Ibid., 153-55; Wernimont, “Whence Feminism?” 12.

²⁰ Helle Strandgaard Jensen, “Digital Archival Literacy for (All) Historians,” *Media History*, 2020, 5-7.

²¹ Ekaterina Haskins, “Between Archive and Participation: Public Memory in a Digital Age,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (2007): 401-22.

²² Thylstrup, *The Politics of Mass Digitisation*, 118.

3.4.3 Financial

For Gabriele, ‘a robust understanding of the digital object that appears today is simply impossible’ without an understanding of a library or archives’ policy and funding constraints.²³ Where a digitisation project fits within institutional and state cultural budgets is therefore worth exploring. In the recent history of the National Library and National Archives in particular, the broader state of the national economy has had a direct impact on the digitisation strategies and the digital possibilities for their holdings. Digitisation is expensive and the funding and resources available to develop digital collections are hugely affected by these privations. As discussed in chapter 1, the Decade of Centenaries launched and proceeded amid a prolonged economic recession and period of recovery during which cultural budgets and institutional staff were cut dramatically. Jensen is rare in addressing established national institutional digital archives and digital collections (as opposed to commercial) and draws attention to such situations where:

Shortage of funds for digitisation projects entails that possibilities for attracting external funding and partnerships determine not only what is available online, but also how it is made available, resulting in smart looking and easy-to-use interfaces rather than transparency.²⁴

‘Transparency’ is not meant in a conspiratorial sense, rather that certain contextual details are not necessarily part of the transition from analogue to digital and in the presentation of streamlined, user-friendly interfaces. This re-contextualisation in turn makes accounting for presence and absence in the digital archive more difficult.²⁵ External funding, donations or partnerships in this context may support digitisations, the sources of which also have a bearing on how the digital archive is narrativized and presented, as demonstrated in chapter 3. Equally, funding located and allocated for certain digital commemorative archives may bear greater cultural weight against a backdrop of the privations and social and political unrest during years of economic turmoil such as those in which the Decade of Centenaries was launched, as discussed in chapter 1. How labour

²³ Gabriele, “Transfiguring the Newspaper,” 8.

²⁴ Jensen, “Digital Archival Literacy for (All) Historians,” 3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

and staffing levels may be implicated in delivering commemorative digitisations on time, and whether or not they have been afforded greater resources and expediency than is usual is also raised. As has been observed in other studies, such ‘bespoke funding for projects relating to moments of specific public interest’ may create cultural biases or imbalances in digital availability and towards particular kinds of histories, even as they do valuable work of inclusion and access.²⁶

3.4.4 Legal

It goes without saying that knowledge of national archives legislation will inform a holistic study of any state archive. In some cases, legislative history is integral to the story of the archive in question, the MSPC (chapter 6) in particular necessitating its own particular series of acts to allow for its operation and eventual safeguarding. Commemorations themselves also often create a premise for public donations or for institutions to seek them. In the case of personal papers, we must ask who donated, when and under what circumstances? What stipulations were put in place regarding their access and use? Do they contain sensitive information, and how is this reflected in the levels of access?

More generally we may ask of a digital archive what, if any, copyright restrictions are in place and what are the terms of re-use? Copyright restrictions have a bearing on the extent to which ‘digitised’ means democratised as these digitisations may be accessed only via onsite computers and catalogues until such a time as they pass into the public domain, a caveat that may also apply to national web archive collections.²⁷ Thus, the notion of ‘digitisation’ can feed number-crunching and narratives about an institution’s output, yet bound to legal strictures it does not always neatly translate to access in its fullest sense: ‘The shift from one medium or form to another is never a self-evident or seamless transfer of meaning and representation’.²⁸

²⁶ Hauswedell et al., “Of Global Reach yet of Situated Contexts,” 147.

²⁷ Jane Winters, “Breaking in to the Mainstream: Demonstrating the Value of Internet (and Web) Histories,” *Internet Histories* 1, no. 1–2 (2017): 174.

²⁸ Gabriele, “Transfiguring the Newspaper,” 2.

3.4.5 Collaborations and partnerships

Public memory institutions rely on a multitude of partnerships and collaborations to finance, research and carry out digital projects. These may be inter-institutional through sharing of knowledge, skills, collections and resources between national museums and archives, universities and university archives. Irish historians in particular, and far more than archivists, often have a significant presence in the presentation and narrativization of Irish digital archives whether through commissioned research and essays or involvement in advisory committees. Indeed, this academic ‘advisory model’ as part of the governance structures of cultural institutions or other digitisers has been observed elsewhere and has a bearing on selection rationale.²⁹

Other partnerships may be with learned societies or academies, professional organisations or community groups. They may also involve international libraries and archives. Public memorabilia projects, public collection days, collective metadata creation, and public transcription projects may also form the basis of collaborations in a much broader sense. Conversely, private enterprise can be involved in anything from supplementing labour for limited periods to financing and having a large stake in entire digitisations. This often pertains particularly to large-scale genealogical and newspaper archives and is for the most part not implicated in the commemorative archives in question. Genealogical records have largely been maintained as free public resources in the Republic of Ireland, though not entirely free of private enterprise partnerships to finance these large-scale digitisations. Finally, the state-commemorative impulse can also lead to partnerships between national institutions and commemoration-specific digital projects like *Century Ireland* and *Inspiring Ireland*, the latter a memorabilia and identity project aimed at the Irish diaspora. Closely related are educational collaborations, also common between digitisation projects and usually aimed at primary and second level education. In the recent Irish commemorative context, these collaborations are framed specifically as part of the ‘youth and imagination’ remit of the official government centenary programme.³⁰

²⁹ Hauswedell et al., “Of Global Reach yet of Situated Contexts,” 147.

³⁰ Government of Ireland, “Centenary Programme,” 36.

3.4.6 Selection rationale

Explicit and detailed evidence of the choices that are made in the selection and digitisation of archives is rarely discernible via the digital interface or packaged with collections of interest. Something like a selection rationale may be indicated in annual reports and policy documents, introductory text accompanying collections, and in this research context, matching collections with nationally significant commemorations. Commemoration should indeed be seen as part of the ‘secondary provenance’ and the custodial histories of the digitisations covered in this thesis, as discussed in the previous chapter.³¹ Also touched upon in the literature review, digitisation strategies often favour already popular and high-use collections. Furthermore, curatorial teams in public institutions make bids to government departments to fund and support particular projects, and these bids reflect the needs of the institution as much as the needs of their audiences - what to prioritise and digitise must in a sense be value for money and serve a range of outreach and learning activities across the institution and have use-value beyond the immediate project. Digitisation is also part of preservation strategies that seek to minimize use of already popular but fragile analogue collections. As is made explicit by the National Archives in chapter 3, being of national or research ‘significance’ and the completeness of a collection are among the criteria for digitisation.³² Equally, the coherence or simplicity of a collection from a narrative standpoint may be favourable in responding to national commemorative agendas, and making such bids. And even as curatorial staff are highly cognisant of women and minorities in their approach to digitisations, there are always hierarchies of selection particularly in commemorative contexts that are more often than not upheld by normative accounts of history.

3.4.7 Gender

Finally, gender is introduced as a frame of analysis in scrutinising these digital commemorative productions. Wernimont offers some meditations that have been useful in approaching these case studies from a feminist gender perspective, which is, she admits,

³¹ Conway, “Digital Transformations and the Archival Nature of Surrogates,” 58.

³² National Archives of Ireland, “National Archives Digital Imaging Policy” (Dublin, 2016), accessed August 13, 2020. <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/DigitalImagingPolicyFinal.pdf>.

methodologically difficult. Beyond presence, she asks how might we understand the feminisms of digital archives through the following considerations:

Where should I look to find evidence of feminist engagement when considering digital archives? What metrics should be applied to measure the degree of feminism embodied by a digital archive, and what is the subject of that measurement? Are digital archives feminist because the content is by women, or because the modes of production are feminist, or because the technologies themselves are feminist or used to feminist ends? Is it all three? Do we have to account for both the historical and social contexts from which particular archives arise when thinking about the nature of their feminism?³³

The presence and accessibility of women's records may be a powerful resource in challenging the history, nature and affordances of the digital archive itself. At the same time, women may be there but often we must look harder to find them, and their presence is also often incidental rather than central to digitisations. If the presence of women alone is not enough to decentre the masculinist heritage values that inform our relationship to the present, as Wernimont contends, analysis must further tease out the structures of power embedded in the production and narrativization of digital archives and the ways in which they are mediated and used - the "technosocial" context' of presence.³⁴

*

There are limits to what we can say of the work that these commemorative productions do in the world when we attempt to go beyond how they have been constructed, narrativized and mediatised, and beyond quantitative analytics. Analysis of Twitter data during the 2016 commemorative year provides an alternative entry point for thinking about the work that commemorative heritage does in the lives of those who create and

³³ Wernimont, "Whence Feminism?," 2.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 5, 10.

consume it. As chapter 7 makes clear, in 2016 feminist commemorative Twitter spoke to the same discourse of presence, absence and inclusiveness, and the reclamation of women's stories that have characterised digitisations and the commemorative and academic machine during this decade but particularly the 1916 centenary year. It was indeed a space where many were 'acting out a relationship to the past' from a feminist standpoint.³⁵ Each perspective plugs into the same commemorative assemblage in which a gender critique of the historical record, of the Heritage and of remembrance, coalesced with intensity. It is also a vignette of this paradigm shift in not just the academic but public consciousness about the position of women in the national heritage and origin story.

3.5 Twitter

There are several reasons why Twitter was chosen as a data source for this research that must be attended to. As discussed in chapter 1, I had worked on social media management in a professional capacity during 2016 while in a research and production position at the history website *Century Ireland*. The choice was therefore initially informed by first-hand experience of the extent to which Twitter was a mode of communicating and engaging with the Easter Rising centenary, as well as Irish history and archives more generally, online. Immersion in and cultural knowledge of this space is indeed considered paramount to inquiry from an ethnographic perspective.³⁶

Second to this, and common to justifications of Twitter as a data source, is the fact that Twitter, despite significant restrictions, remains one of the more open social media platforms in terms of accessing data for research.³⁷ Facebook, for example, has become almost closed to data-driven academic research post-Cambridge Analytica scandal, although Bruns points out that the 2016 furore was symptomatic of longstanding platform issues, and the response part of a more gradual 'infrastructural transformation

³⁵ Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, "Cultural Memory and Its Dynamics," in *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (New York: De Gruyter, 2009), 2.

³⁶ Dhiraj Murthy, "The Ontology of Tweets: Mixed-Method Approaches to the Study of Twitter," in *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods*, ed. Luke Sloan and Anabel Quan-Haase (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2016), 561.

³⁷ Shawn Walker, Dan Mercea, and Marco Bastos, "The Disinformation Landscape and the Lockdown of Social Platforms," *Information Communication and Society* 22, no. 11 (2019): 1536.

of the networked publics' and separation from academia.³⁸ Twitter data has, for many years now, been commodified through reselling services as well as restricting free access to Tweet data using its Standard API to the past seven days only.³⁹ And while the Cambridge Analytica scandal concerned Facebook and its subsidiaries, Twitter also responded by altering its API management process; as of July 2018, signing up for a Twitter Developers account (see below) for API access requires an application and authentication process, and agreement to terms of use that restrict the kinds of research that can be carried out.⁴⁰ Twitter offers a subscription-based service with a three-tier paid access model, the upper ends of which are, for most researchers, prohibitively expensive. As a well-funded early-career researcher, I was in a position to pay for such access in order to collect historical Tweets. However, the problematic nature of this increasingly restrictive API and data-selling landscape for the future of academic research, and my privileged position within it must be acknowledged. A body of research is growing around this 'rapidly changing and hostile data environment,' the 'data access gap' between the 'Big Data rich and Big Data poor,' deepened by what has been termed the new 'post-API' reality.⁴¹ Boyd and Crawford invoke Derrida in likening this 'digital divide' to accessing knowledge in the archive, quoting "Effective democratisation can always be measured by this essential criterion', Derrida (1996) claimed, 'the participation in and access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation.'"⁴²

Thirdly, this research treats Twitter as both a data source and a historical source, one that has archival value if not archivable in the traditional sense. Just as digitisations should be considered historically complex in their own right, so too should social media be

³⁸ Ibid., 1533-34; Axel Bruns, "After the 'APIcalypse': Social Media Platforms and Their Fight against Critical Scholarly Research," *Information Communication and Society* 22, no. 11 (2019): 1456.

³⁹ Twitter Inc., "Pricing," Twitter Developers via Internet Archive, accessed September 20, 2020, <https://web.archive.org/web/20190614185712/https://developer.twitter.com/en/pricing.html>.

⁴⁰ Bruns, "After the 'APIcalypse': Social Media Platforms and Their Fight against Critical Scholarly Research," 1549.

⁴¹ Walker, Mercea, and Bastos, "The Disinformation Landscape and the Lockdown of Social Platforms," 1531, 1538; Jessamy Perriam, Andreas Birkbak, and Andy Freeman, "Digital Methods in a Post-API Environment," *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 2019, 1-14; Danah Boyd and Kate Crawford, "Critical Questions for Big Data: Provocations for a Cultural, Technological, and Scholarly Phenomenon," *Information Communication and Society* 15, no. 5 (2012): 673-75.

⁴² Jaques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 4 quoted in Boyd and Crawford, "Critical Questions for Big Data: Provocations for a Cultural, Technological, and Scholarly Phenomenon," 674.

interrogated as historical primary sources or records.⁴³ Myers and Hamilton caution that a greater historiographical awareness of social media as primary sources must include the ways in which social media are narrativized (teleological, technological determinism, technological dystopia), but also ‘how they themselves narrativize and thus help produce the processes of interest’.⁴⁴ This has implications for how we understand the effectivity of platforms such as Twitter when we study its use in commemoration and identity work. Acknowledging the in-betweenness of what it means to be on and of social media then, and the narratives that both produce and constitute them, we might consider Twitter instead as a performative space comprising multiple tensions and contingent on the conventions of its use (character limits, hashtags, likes, retweets, media sharing, etc): ‘Platform characteristics are critical for understanding how users create, share, interact with, and mobilize content as well as for understanding how community is created and maintained in different platforms’.⁴⁵ Salient to this research, it is considered a space in which commemoration, a relationship to the past and by extension collective memory and identities, may be performed, reified and challenged with fleeting intensity. It is an extension of both official and unofficial commemorations that amplify and interlock with online engagement around historically significant moments. At the same time, Twitter’s conventions and culture of use mean that tweets are susceptible to a lack of nuance.

As discussed in the literature review, qualitative studies of Twitter and remembrance have tended to focus on the commemoration and memorialisation of recent traumatic events and less on nationalising, historical commemorations, Clavert’s work on the commemoration of the First World War in France between 2014 and 2019 being a notable exception.⁴⁶ Also discussed in chapter 2, the historical value of Twitter has been recognised in attempts to archive it and recent moves to archive particular feeds as part of web archive curated/themed collections. Platform social media are more difficult to archive in web collections although Twitter is somewhat easier as it is more public, and

⁴³ Cayce Myers and James F. Hamilton, “Social Media as Primary Source,” *Media History* 20, no. 4 (2014): 431-32.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 435-38.

⁴⁵ Lori McCay-Peet and Anabel Quan-Haase, “What Is Social Media and What Questions Can Social Media Research Help Us Answer?,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2016), ch. 2, 12, EPUB pagination.

⁴⁶ Frederic Clavert, “Commémorations, Scandale et Circulation de l’information: Le Centenaire de La Bataille de Verdun Sur Twitter,” *French Journal for Media Research. Special Issue: Le Web 2.0: Lieux de Perception Des Transformations Des Sociétés* 10 (2018); Clavert, “Temporalités Du Centenaire de La Grande Guerre Sur Twitter.”

these are feed, profile, or page-based.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, what we encounter is only a snapshot of a Twitter feed in time, rather than an endlessly scrollable (or searchable) list of Tweets since the creation of a particular account. More recently, there have been initiatives such as *DocNow* and George Washington University's *TweetSet*, platforms that archive and publish Twitter datasets in the form of Tweet IDs to be computationally 'hydrated,' including for example a dataset for the Irish abortion referendum in 2018 of over 2 million tweets.⁴⁸ Twitter largely prohibits the sharing of full datasets except in the form of Tweet IDs with limits to how many can be shared per 30-day period, and only for non-profit academic research, meaning that even in this form there are technical and legal barriers to accessing datasets and replicating research.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, it is indicative of the ways in which attempts continue to be made to capture, preserve and share Twitter data for historical and social science research and activism - or as cultural heritage.

Finally, and in direct relation to this research, two major web archiving projects were carried out specifically to capture the 2016 centenary of the Easter Rising on the web, inclusive of social media content in the form of particular user feeds as opposed to hashtag or keyword-based retrievals. As will be seen in chapter 6, one was carried out by the National Library of Ireland in 2016, pertaining mainly to the Irish internet domain. Another collaborative project between Trinity College Dublin, the British Library, and the Bodleian Library Oxford captured a slightly different collection.⁵⁰ Such collections, assert Kunze and Power, 'will be invaluable primary resources of the future for those attempting to analyse how people interpreted and engaged with the Easter Rising in its centenary year'.⁵¹ Many digitised items featured in centenary or institutional collections, e.g. *Inspiring Ireland*, are themselves artefacts of previous commemorations - medals, posters, memorial cards etc. Twitter is a record of online engagement with the current decade of commemorations and especially the 1916 centenary. It is one sample in the

⁴⁷ Winters, "Breaking in to the Mainstream: Demonstrating the Value of Internet (and Web) Histories," 177.

⁴⁸ "Catalog," Documenting the Now, accessed September 20, 2020, <https://catalog.docnow.io/>; "TweetSets," George Washington University Library, accessed February 20, 2020, <https://tweetsets.library.gwu.edu/>.

⁴⁹ A Tweet ID is the 'unique identification number generated for each Tweet'. Twitter Inc., "Developer Agreement and Policy," Twitter Developers, accessed February 19, 2020, <https://developer.twitter.com/en/developer-terms/agreement-and-policy>.

⁵⁰ National Library of Ireland, "Remembering 1916, Recording 2016" (Dublin, 2016), <http://www.nli.ie/en/udlist/web-archive-collections.aspx>; Svenja Kunze and Brendan Power, "Capturing Commemoration: The 1916 Easter Rising Web Archive Project," *Internet Histories* 1475 (2018): 1-16.

⁵¹ Kunze and Power, "Capturing Commemoration: The 1916 Easter Rising Web Archive Project," 205-6.

multiplicity of web-based sources we now consider archival and of interest to scholars of memory.

To an extent, one could make some assured general statements about the nature of the Irish commemorations on Twitter without recourse to a complex process of digital data collection and analysis. Such assumptions, however, are anecdotal, lack detail and critique and are not based in a systematic application of research methods. The application of digital humanities methods to the study of Irish national commemorations is about interrogating the user-generated records of engagement with them. Furthermore, it is an interrogation of Twitter, as Clavert has suggested, as a space for the mobilisation and appropriation of commemoration: Twitter is part of the mediation of collective memory and identity in late-modern authorised remembrance culture. Studying this attests to the ways in which social media engagement plugs into and instantiates the Irish (digital) commemorative assemblage as a space where heritage, identity and a relationship with the past are performed. Lastly, it substantiates some of these assumptions about how feminisms and feminist identity manifested in this reactive, online space.

3.6 Ethics

It is important to talk about the increasing infrastructural limitations on social media research because it also influences the kind of research that can be conducted, and the kinds of questions asked: ‘The underlying features of social platforms impinge on research designs and data collection, as one cannot ask questions of data that is not possible to collect’.⁵² Closely related is the ‘ethics turn in social media,’ as well as the tightening of general data protection regulations (GDPR) in the EU, which may impact the ways that researchers can report their findings.⁵³ Ahmed *et al* provide a useful overview of the grey area debates around social media research with a focus on Twitter, and is grounded in the approach that ‘traditional ethical principles such as consent, anonymity, and avoiding undue harm should also be applied to social media research’.⁵⁴ Twitter has always

⁵² Walker, Mercea, and Bastos, “The Disinformation Landscape,” 1537.

⁵³ Richard Rogers, “Social Media Research after the Fake News Debacle,” *Partecipazione e Conflitto* 11, no. 2 (2018): 558.

⁵⁴ Wasim Ahmed, Peter A. Bath, and Gianluca Demartini, “Using Twitter as a Data Source: An Overview of Ethical, Legal, and Methodological Challenges,” in *The Ethics of Online Research*, ed. Bath Peter A. and

maintained that any Tweet is public information ‘by default’ unless otherwise restricted through the user privacy settings. Only public tweets - those not protected by user privacy settings - can therefore be collected through the Twitter API. In 2017 it stated that:

Most of the information you provide us through Twitter is information you are asking us to make public... Our default is almost always to make the information you provide through the Services public for as long as you do not delete it, but we generally give you settings or features, like protected Tweets, to make the information more private if you want.⁵⁵

Twitter has since updated its privacy policy to reflect recent currents in social media data re-use and privacy, re-affirming the public nature of Tweets but also that the responsibility for public Tweets and how they may be used elsewhere, lies with the user: ‘You are responsible for your Tweets and other information you provide through our services, and you should think carefully about what you make public, especially if it is sensitive information’.⁵⁶ Elsewhere, individual choice and the burden of liability are similarly built into statements about the function of its APIs, where Twitter data is described as ‘unique from data shared by most other social platforms because it reflects information that users choose to share publicly’.⁵⁷ Such nuances are indicative of a hands-off approach by social media companies that operate open and increasingly scrutinized communication environments, as well as tying with Myers and Hamilton’s assertion that ‘the form of Twitter similarly [to Facebook] embodies classical liberalism by also constituting...the user as an autonomous individual’.⁵⁸

Kandy Woodfield, vol. 2, *Advances in Research Ethics and Integrity* (Emerald Publishing Limited, 2017), 89, ; See also for an earlier critique of “big-data” collection and social media: Danah Boyd and Kate Crawford, “Critical Questions for Big Data: Provocations for a Cultural, Technological, and Scholarly Phenomenon,” *Information Communication and Society* 15, no. 5 (2012): 672-73.

⁵⁵ Twitter Inc., “Privacy Policy,” Twitter via Internet Archive, accessed May 20, 2020, <https://web.archive.org/web/20170615005746/https://twitter.com/en/privacy>.

⁵⁶ 1.2 Public Information, Twitter Inc., “Twitter Privacy Policy,” Privacy Policy, accessed February 24, 2020, <https://cdn.cms-twdigitalassets.com/content/dam/legal-twitter/site-assets/privacy-page-gdpr/pdfs/Twitter-Privacy-Policy-EN.pdf>.

⁵⁷ Twitter Inc., “About Twitter’s APIs,” Twitter, accessed May 20, 2020, <https://help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies/twitter-api>.

⁵⁸ Myers and Hamilton, “Social Media as Primary Source,” 436.

3.7 Privacy

If the ‘process of evaluating the research ethics cannot be ignored simply because the data are seemingly public’, as researchers we cannot operate on the assumption that agreeing to the terms of service of Twitter is a proxy for consenting to be part of a university research project.⁵⁹ Though Twitter is by all accounts considered public domain data, it behoves us to adhere to higher ethical standards than the legal technicalities afforded by terms of service that seek to limit corporate liability on the part of companies who profit from user generated data in what is always an asymmetric agreement.⁶⁰ ‘Participants’ are considered to have given general consent upon agreeing to the terms of service, however, it remains unfeasible to obtain specific informed consent from thousands of users that appear in a set of public domain Tweets collected by hashtag or keyword research. We can nonetheless respect user privacy and data confidentiality in the ways we conduct and present research, beginning with formal approval of a project by the host institution’s ethical oversight.⁶¹ Ethics approval was granted for the conduct of this data collection and analysis by the UCL Research Ethics Committee (Appendices C & D). The analysis and publishing of data collected here is aggregated, does not use full direct quotes or publish usernames without informed consent. Any direct references to tweets use keywords, are significantly reworded or paraphrased so as not to be reverse searchable. An exception is made for accounts operated by publicly-funded entities such as national institutions, where they are of interest, and ‘accounts of public interest’ that have verified (‘blue tick’) status, e.g. *Ireland 2016*.⁶² As the topic of research does not fall under any of the categories of highly sensitive information, potential risk to participants through de-identification, reverse-searching of text or a data storage failure would be low.⁶³ Data has been collected, stored and analysed using an encrypted laptop, and stored securely using the UCL N:Drive research server.

⁵⁹ Boyd and Crawford, “Critical Questions for Big Data,” 672.

⁶⁰ Ahmed, Bath, and Demartini, “Using Twitter as a Data Source,” 88.

⁶¹ In the interest of research integrity and transparency, the ethics application form has also been included. See Appendix D.

⁶² Twitter Inc., “About Verified Accounts,” Twitter, accessed May 20, 2020, <https://help.twitter.com/en/managing-your-account/about-twitter-verified-accounts>.

⁶³ Ahmed, Bath, and Demartini, “Using Twitter as a Data Source,” 102–3.

3.8 Twitter Developers and the Premium API

The data collection was carried out by utilising one of Twitter's Application Programming Interfaces (API): 'Public and open APIs allow researchers to retrieve large-scale data and curate databases associated with sociologically meaningful events'.⁶⁴ An API may be thought of as a pathway between a programme and a database that allows for the extraction of rich data associated with such 'sociologically meaningful events' as national commemorations.⁶⁵ In this case the Premium API (paid) was leveraged to retrieve historical Tweets from 2016 for analysis given that Twitter has restricted free access to Tweets to 7 days in the past from the point of retrieval. As well as offering access to historical Tweets and enhanced metadata, paid Twitter APIs also afford complete access to matching Tweets whereas the free API returns an incomplete sample.⁶⁶ Gnip, acquired by Twitter in 2014, was previously the largest social data reseller.⁶⁷ Twitter Inc. has provided its own data selling service, 'Twitter Developers', since 2017. A subscription-based service with three tiers of access to its APIs - Standard, Premium and Enterprise - Developers includes 'Academic Research' as a significant use case. The Standard API tier is free and geared towards real-time analysis using keywords and hashtags while the Premium tier offers 30-day and full-archive access using more complex queries. The Enterprise tier offers a suite of historical and real-time access and features, and as the most expensive product is described as 'best for well-funded academic research labs or advanced research projects' although the same may be said for the Premium level. The Premium API was used for this data collection and it provides access to the full archive of Tweets since 2006, that is '[F]iltered access to the entire public history of Tweets through Boolean queries'.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Walker, Mercea, and Bastos, "The Disinformation Landscape," 1536.

⁶⁵ For an overview of APIs and their research applications see: Dietmar Janetzko, "The Role of APIs in Data Sampling from Social Media," in *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods*, ed. Luke Sloan and Anabel Quan-Haase (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2016), 146-60.

⁶⁶ Ibid. ch. 10, 13, EPUB pagination.

⁶⁷ Bogdan Batrinca and Philip C. Treleaven, "Social Media Analytics: A Survey of Techniques, Tools and Platforms," *AI and Society* 30, no. 1 (2014): 95.

⁶⁸ Twitter Inc., "Academic Research," Twitter Developers, accessed September 20, 2020, <https://developer.twitter.com/en/solutions/academic-research>.

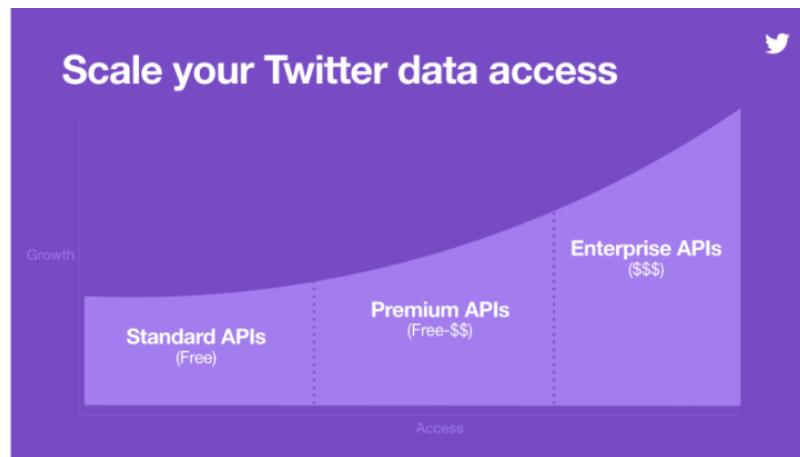


Figure 3-1. Products Overview, Twitter Developers. <https://developer.twitter.com/en/products/products-overview>

The Developers platform provides extensive, if not always clear, documentation for working with the different APIs. One must create their own ‘Application,’ and in this case a Python programme was written to collect historical Tweets. PyCharm was used to write a programme in Python 3 coding language. This DIY route may be lengthy and difficult, but it affords more control over the kind of data collected than out-of-the-box tools, and historical Tweet collection would in any case not have otherwise been possible. Furthermore, Twitter regularly moves the goalposts meaning that social media research is always vulnerable to new hurdles and restrictions created by changes to the Twitter API (another update due at the time of writing), to which such data collection tools do not always respond and regularly become obsolete.

An application must first be made in order to create a Developers account. This requires a Twitter account handle, an institutional affiliation, a description of the project, the kind of data and access required and how it will be used and analysed. It must also be specified for personal, academic or business use. Once approved, an ‘App,’ which may be better understood here as a project, must be created, and this is linked with a personal Twitter account. A Developers account provides the unique ‘keys’ and ‘tokens’ that will be used to authenticate search queries, that is to say unique passwords that facilitate access to the API for carrying out the data collection. These are inserted in the programme code to authorise the retrieval. While access tokens can be generated for free with any Twitter account, the additional ‘Consumer API’ keys provided through Developers are necessary, along with the access tokens, to access historical data. ‘Sandbox’ access is provided once

an account is created, and this is upgraded to the preferred level of access thereafter. Sandbox, as the name suggest, allows limited access to a Twitter API per month where a programme can be tested before being fully implemented. In other words, it is a play area with defined limits for doing messy trial and error work before the real data collection.⁶⁹ A 'Dev Environment' is then created and given a name (Figure 3-2).

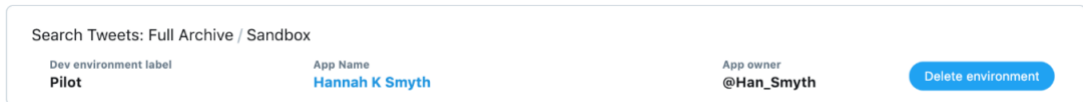


Figure 3-2. Dev Environments. Twitter Developers. 25 January 2019.

This is the 'Label' that must be referred back to within the code written to retrieve the data. Likewise, the 'Product' must be specified (in this case 'fullarchive'). E.g.:

```
api = TwitterAPI("xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx",
                "xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx",
                "xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx",
                "xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx",
                auth_type='OAuth2')

"""

TWITTER PREMIUM API VARIABLES

"""

SEARCH_TERM = '#keywords lang:en -is:retweet'
```

⁶⁹ For example, removal of retweets (using the -is:retweet statement) is not permitted in the sandbox level and the number of Tweets retrieved is capped at 50 requests per month.

PRODUCT = 'fullarchive' # USE THIS FOR FULL HISTORY

LABEL = 'Pilot'

3.9 Methods

3.9.1 Data Collection

Data access is the first in a number of steps researchers have to take as they collect, process, validate, interpret, share, and archive the data. These steps often require robust technical skills, as API endpoints for data collection were designed for programmers building application software that adds to the services offered by social platforms.⁷⁰

The creation of a Python programme for retrieving data through the Twitter API was a collaborative effort between myself and my colleague at UCL, Diego Ramirez. For humanities researchers wishing to conduct social media research that falls outside the standard limitations of free APIs and the affordances of out-of-the-box tools, and who do not possess the skills required to do so in a timely fashion, collaboration with scholars in computer and data science is increasingly necessary and common: ‘collaboration is a normal practice of humanities computing and should therefore be imagined as part of any discussion of method’.⁷¹ Rockwell and Sinclair describe a process of ‘pair work’ that reflects the time Diego and I spent in trial and error - Diego at the keyboard, myself reviewing and reflecting - discussing, testing, wading through documentation and ‘thinking through the code’.⁷² While the technical skills lay entirely with Diego, it was a constant dialogue about how to retrieve the desired data, what form it would take, what

⁷⁰ Walker, Mercea, and Bastos, “The Disinformation Landscape” 1536-37.

⁷¹ Geoffrey Rockwell and Stéfan Sinclair, *Hermeneutica: Computer-Assisted Interpretation in the Humanities* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2016), 6, 7.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 8.

limitations we faced or what limitations to place upon the amount and types of data collected (extending into considerations of ethics and privacy), and what we wanted the data to look like after cleaning and processing in order to start making sense of it, and possibilities for analysis. In this way, we produced a programme to retrieve historical Tweets through Twitter Developers, and supplementary data cleaning and processing programmes, outlined in the following sections.

While Tweets provide a wealth of metadata not all of it will be of use or interest to the researcher, so it was decided to be selective about which metadata to retrieve and what to leave out. This was both pragmatic in terms of the research interests and the management of large amounts of data, but also in reducing superfluous personally identifying data that may constitute a privacy concern.⁷³ As already stated, one Tweet contains a large amount of metadata - one of the reasons Twitter as a data source is so attractive to researchers - but not all of these data are appropriate for the research being conducted.⁷⁴ Ahmed *et al* suggest that such mechanisms for selection should also be built into out-of-the-box social data collection software.⁷⁵ The way this programme has been constructed means that the data returned includes only the specific information asked for rather than the full extent of the Tweet metadata by specifying Tweet attributes in the code.⁷⁶ Requesting the 'entities' attribute returns usernames, user mentions, hashtags, URLs etc. in JSON format that are easily parsed for use later.⁷⁷ In this way, some privacy and data protection issues can be minimized at the request level, as well as eliminating unnecessarily cumbersome data that ultimately is not of interest for this research. The following is a brief overview of the key features of the programme. The most important aspects are the metadata, date parameters, the format of the output data, and the search term query.

⁷³ Ahmed, Bath, and Demartini, "Using Twitter as a Data Source," 94.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Twitter Inc., "Data Dictionary - Tweet Objects," Twitter Developers, accessed September 20, 2020, <https://developer.twitter.com/en/docs/twitter-api/v1/data-dictionary/overview/tweet-object>.

⁷⁷ Twitter Inc., "Data Dictionary - Tweet Entities," Twitter Developers, accessed September 20, 2020, <https://developer.twitter.com/en/docs/twitter-api/v1/data-dictionary/overview/entities-object>.

3.9.2 Python programme design

Twython and Pandas were first installed in PyCharm. Twython gives back unstructured data that is linear and messy, whereas Pandas returns structured data in tabular form that is easier for manipulation i.e., a CSV file that can be read in Excel. Both packages are necessary to understand the full context of the data. A basic piece of code was written and using this with the Standard API an example of the full Tweet metadata structure was retrieved and copied into a separate text file to refer back to when modifying the query as required. This Tweet metadata template provides ‘deep JSON’ (JavaScript Object Notation) or nested information (i.e., multi-level, Russian doll-like), meaning it also shows the elements of the user metadata that may be of interest. The metadata include the Tweet ID (string of numbers), date (date and exact time stamp of when the Tweet was sent), location (the area the user specifies in their bio, e.g. ‘Co. Dublin’), the Tweet favourite count, the number of retweets, and language (see Appendix E for the full Tweet metadata template):

```
dict_ = {"num": [], "id": [], "date": [], "text": [], "location": [], "favorite_count": [], "retweets": [], "language": [],
        "query": []}
```

These parameters set the column headings within the CSV that is produced, such as this test example:

index	request	id	date	text	location	place	coordinates	favorite_cou	retweets	language	quote_count	reply_count	in_reply_to	source	query	entities
499	1 - 2019-11-	8.1533E+17	Sat Dec 31 2	b'Great to h	b'Ireland'	null	null	16	1	en	0	0		<a href="htt	#Womenof!	{'hashtags':
498	1 - 2019-11-	8.1533E+17	Sat Dec 31 2	b'President	b'Waterford	null	null	2	0	en	0	0		<a href="htt	#Womenof!	{'hashtags':
497	1 - 2019-11-	8.1525E+17	Sat Dec 31 1	b'How Irelar	b'United Kin	null	null	0	0	en	0	0		<a href="htt	#Womenof!	{'hashtags':
496	1 - 2019-11-	8.1525E+17	Sat Dec 31 1	b'In the final	b'Dublin, Ire	null	null	56	11	en	2	3		<a href="htt	#Womenof!	{'hashtags':

Figure 3-3. Test example of data returned and structured in CSV format

When these metadata parameters i.e., columns, are modified, we must also modify the ‘for’ loop, which allows for correct iteration and appending of data, to match the new requirements, e.g.:

```
for status in queried_tweets["statuses"]:
    # dict_['user'].append(status['user']['screen_name'])

    dict_["num"].append(num_tweets)
```

```

dict_["id"].append(status["id"])

dict_["date"].append(status["created_at"])

dict_["text"].append(status["full_text"])

dict_["location"].append(status["user"]["location"])

dict_["favorite_count"].append(status["favorite_count"])

dict_["retweets"].append(status["retweet_count"])

dict_["language"].append(status["lang"])

dict_["query"].append(query_string)

num_tweets += 1

```

‘Rate limits’ - the number of requests that can be made through an API per unit of time - are much higher with Premium level access.⁷⁸ There is an upper limit of requests of 60 per minute and a maximum number of Tweets per request of 500 for the Premium subscription plan i.e., up to 30,000 Tweets each time the programme is run. Monthly limits also apply.⁷⁹ Each new request begins from the last Tweet in the previous request without duplicating the last Tweet. The first column in the CSV therefore counts the Tweets in each request and shows where each new request begins, looping from 499-0 each time. Tweets are returned in reverse chronology, starting from the most recent Tweet backwards.

Most importantly, the Premium API ‘Full Archive’ endpoint allows us to request Tweets from a specific time period using the ‘fromDate’ and ‘toDate’ parameters.⁸⁰ As already outlined in the previous section, the product (‘fullarchive’), the project label (‘Pilot’) and the authorisation keys obtained through the Developers account were inserted. As stated above, when the programme is run it creates a new .CSV file into which the data is exported, and which can be modified to begin a new dataset as required (file_name =

⁷⁸ Twitter Inc., “Rate Limits,” Twitter Developers, accessed September 20, 2020, <https://developer.twitter.com/en/docs/rate-limits>.

⁷⁹ Twitter Inc., “Configure Search Tweets: Full Archive,” Twitter Developers, accessed September 20, 2020, <https://developer.twitter.com/en/pricing/search-fullarchive>.

⁸⁰ An ‘endpoint’ refers one end of a communication channel, which moderates the kind of data can be accessed through the API; Twitter Inc., “Search Tweets - Request/Response Behaviour,” Twitter Developers, accessed September 20, 2020, <https://developer.twitter.com/en/docs/twitter-api/v1/tweets/search/api-reference/premium-search#RequestResponseBehavior>.

'output.csv'). Running the programme repeatedly and specifying the same file continues adding data to this file from the point it finished in each previous request (see Appendix F for the final programme used). The final step in this process was to create and insert a 'query' i.e., search terms, using keyword combinations and hashtags to match the request with desired Tweets.

3.9.3 Query design

Boolean search queries were created for requesting Twitter data around distinct topics of commemoration. With a character limit of 1,024 these queries consist of a mixture of hashtags, keywords and keyword combinations using rules such as the 'OR' statement, double quote enclosing (exact match) and parentheses to structure more complex combinations. These were arrived at using the 'snowballing' technique to gather relevant hashtags and keywords via the Twitter interface. Unlike topics or events such as Brexit or the Covid-19 pandemic that have produced many millions of Tweets, sometimes millions by the day, Irish commemorations generate a much smaller number of Tweets. While Twitter 'has a strong hashtag culture that makes it easier gathering, sorting, and expanding searches when collecting data' it would not suffice to follow a small set of hashtags such as #EasterRising and #1916Rising.⁸¹ A broader, but no less specific, query base was required to capture as many Tweets as possible. Keyword combinations such as (women centenary (1916 OR "Easter Rising")) allow us to ask for Tweets with text matching any combination of the words 'women' and 'centenary' (a space is understood as AND) and either '1916' or (the exact phrase) 'Easter Rising'. Whereas 'centenary' or '1916' or even 'women and centenary' would not alone be specific enough to the commemorations in question and would capture irrelevant Tweets. In combination with other specific keywords, they capture the most relevant Tweets. Lastly, the language of Tweets to be collected is specified ('lang:en') and a filtering statement was used to remove a 'bot' identified in the testing stages using the '-from:userhandle' statement. English was specified for consistency, though it is acknowledged that there is a body of Irish language Tweets that will not be captured by this. Hashtags using Irish language e.g., #Mná1916 attached to English-language Tweets were still captured. It is possible to avoid user handles at the request level, which may be desirable for privacy and data protection and

⁸¹ Ahmed, Bath, and Demartini, "Using Twitter as a Data Source," 85.

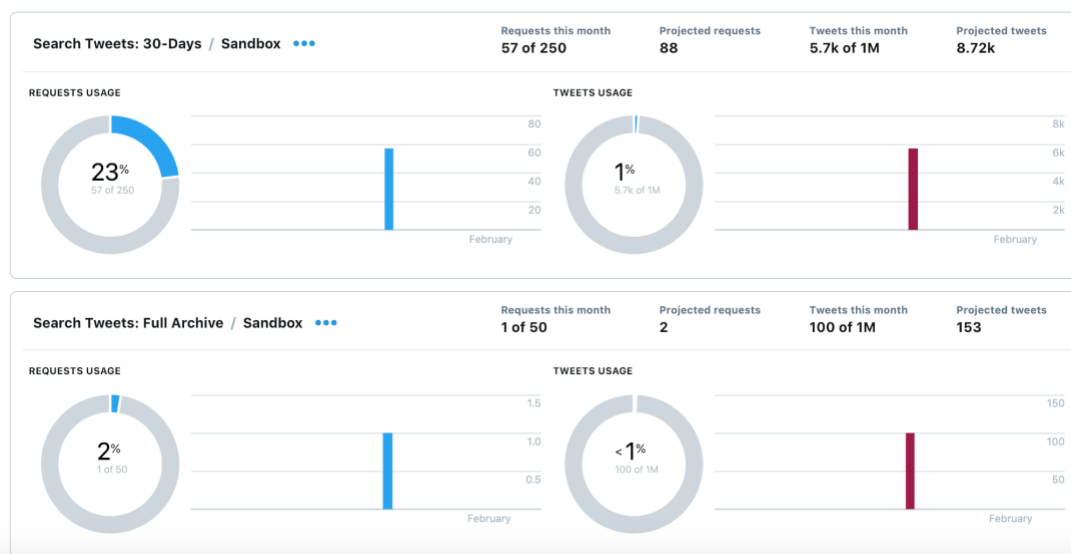
depending on the research project and research questions, by structuring the query to block them out. This is a way of circumventing a large amount of ‘personal identifiers’ by simply not asking for them in the query. User ‘mentions’ will still be returned inside the Tweet text, which can to be removed or replaced during the data cleaning. Similarly, retweets or particular users can be filtered out at the point of retrieval using statements ‘-is:retweet’ or ‘-from:insertuserhandle’ within the search term query if desired (see below). The latter was necessary after the identification of a ‘bot’ in the testing stages whose automated Tweets visibly skewed the data. The following query was constructed to create the ‘Women of 1916’ dataset from 1 August 2015 to 1 January 2017:

```
SEARCH_TERM = '(#Womenof1916 OR #woman0f1916 OR #WomenIn1916 OR
#CumannNamBan OR #Mná1916 OR #Women1916 OR #womenoftherising OR ((women OR
woman OR #irishwmnhist) ("Easter Rising" OR "1916 Rising")) OR "cumann na mban" OR
"Inghinidhe na hEireann" OR "women of 1916" OR (((women OR woman OR #irishwmnhist)
(commemoration OR centenary))(1916 OR "Easter Rising")) OR ((#wakingthefeminists OR
#WTFeminists) (1916 OR #1916rising OR "easter rising" OR #ireland2016 OR #1916centenary OR
#irishwmnhist OR )) OR (1916 women (feminism OR #internationalwomensday OR #IWD2016 OR
equality)) OR (markievicz (constance OR countess)) OR "Margaret Skinnider" OR "Helena
Moloney" OR "Elizabeth O'Farrell" OR "Grace Gifford" OR "Winifred Carney" OR (Rosie Hackett
1916) OR "Rosamond Jacob" OR (irish women revolutionaries) OR (Irish woman revolutionary) OR
((woman OR woman) Irish Citizen army) OR "Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington" OR "Kathleen Clarke" OR
"widows of 1916" OR (#Revolutionarywomen (1916 OR "easter rising")))
)lang:en -from:xxxxxxxxxxxxx'

until:2017-01-01 since:2015-08-01
```

While the Sandbox was used mainly to test and refine the functionality of the Python programme (Figure 3-4) using only two or three hashtags at a time e.g. #Dáil100, the public Twitter search function also has much utility in creating and refining complex

search queries.⁸² As these queries can become very complex with the use of multiple rules and combinations, the public search tool was used to simultaneously build and test the queries before implementing them. Although the character limit is smaller, this allowed



us to check that queries, or sections of queries, functioned correctly and return the expected results, somewhat circumventing the limits of the Sandbox. The Twitter search function recognises the same rules and allows us to check that combinations are correct and the ‘advanced’ search option permits the exploration of search terms and historical Tweets within certain date parameters.

Figure 3-4 Sandbox usage. Twitter Developers. 25 January 2019

3.9.4 Data cleaning and pre-processing

The Tweet statement is the primary vector of analysis here and the most important textual units of data that constitute the Tweet statement are text, user mentions and hashtags, and to a lesser extent URLs, and emojis. A Tweet may contain one or all of these units or entities. The accompanying metadata complements and makes possible different analyses. Different permutations of the cleaning process were tested to allow for various readings, though removing URLs, retweets, and other ‘noise’ in the text were the first priority. A Python programme was written with capabilities to remove HTML, and to remove or

⁸² This also demonstrated that Twitter treats special characters such as the Irish fada (accent) in ‘Dáil’ the same as regular characters unless otherwise specified. #Dáil100 returned exact matches as well as the unaccented #Dail100.

retain retweets, URLs, hashtags and user mentions from Tweet statements as required, and to write the cleaned data to a new file. Emojis are common in Tweets and presented as ‘encoding failures’ in the cleaned text.⁸³ This was dealt with by modifying the decoding command from ‘utf-8’ to ‘utf-8-sig’ in the data cleaning programme and saving all new CSV files as UTF-8 encoded (see Appendix G). After some consideration, hashtags were left in when conducting a qualitative thematic analysis of Tweets in NVivo in order to do a close reading of the full Tweet text and code Tweets thematically. To be cognisant of Twitter as a medium we must account for the embeddedness of such supra-textual features as hashtags, or ‘natively digital objects’, which are also user-generated by design and therefore more meaningful than simple tags, and which constitute a Tweet as a message.⁸⁴

A second programme was written to transform the cleaned data into a manageable format for analysis. Making use of the ‘entities’ collected for each Tweet, user mentions, hashtags and URLs were parsed and tabulated (Figure 3-5). Entities are presented in JSON format in the dataset and simplify the work of extracting items of interest such as hashtags as they are in a way pre-processed. In other words, they provide ‘metadata and additional contextual information about content posted on Twitter’ as a ‘series of defined attributes and values’.⁸⁵ E.g.:

```
{ "hashtags": [ {"text": "insert_hashtag", "indices": [00, 00]}, {"urls": [https://t.co?xxxxxxxxxx",  
"expanded_url": "https://twitter.com/i/web/status/xxxxxxxxxxxxx"], "user_mentions":  
[ {"screen_name": "insert_screenname", "name": "insert_name", "id": 000000000, "id_str":  
"000000000", "indices": [00, 00]}, {"symbols": []}
```

Entities may also include information about media types, urls, and descriptions (e.g. image dimensions), known as ‘objects’. This parsing exercise is useful for aggregating certain types of data within Tweets and exploring them, as well as a critical step in coding Tweets

⁸³ Rockwell and Sinclair, *Hermeneutica*, 27.

⁸⁴ Richard Rogers, *Doing Digital Methods* (London: SAGE Publications, 2019), 162.

⁸⁵ ‘Tweet Objects,’ *Twitter Developers*, <https://developer.twitter.com/en/docs/tweets/data-dictionary/overview/entities-object>; Murthy, “The Ontology of Tweets: Mixed-Method Approaches to the Study of Twitter,” 264.

qualitatively. The date-time format was also modified to DD-MM-YYYY (see Appendix H).

date	time	screen_name/text	mentions	hashtags	location	favorite_count	retweets	urls
31/12/2016	23:55:39	KrampusMir: RT @grchou: grchowanc			The Heights	0	0	
31/12/2016	23:54:27	(hangensea: RT @ireland: irelandinNY		ireland2016	Belfast	0	0	
31/12/2016	23:53:32	grchowanc: 11. Irish nationalists staged		a failed bur	New York, N	9	3	
31/12/2016	23:53:15	dFacil: RT @ireland: irelandinNY		ireland2016	Dublin, Irelar	0	0	
31/12/2016	23:50:40	SfNorthBelt: RT @An_Phc: An_Phoibacht			None	0	0	
31/12/2016	23:50:33	alltheteaaaa: Even milking it for a secur		ireland2016,	Donegal	0	0	
31/12/2016	23:48:57	irelandinNY: And that's a dFacil, etc,		NYFDublin	Nua Eabhrac	33	6	https://twitter.com/i/web
31/12/2016	23:44:32	lizzieDub: RT @NWO: NWO		feministrefle	None	0	0	

Figure 3-5. Parsed entities and reformatted data.

3.9.5 Description of data corpus

Several different queries and resulting datasets were retrieved based on different themes. The largest dataset, ‘Easter Rising 2016’ between 1 January and 31 December 2016, returned circa 400,000 tweets of which c. 140,000 were original tweets. Two smaller, focused datasets retrieved were ‘Women of 1916’ (c. 45.5k Tweets, retweets included) and ‘Seven Signatories’ (c. 10.9k Tweets, retweets filtered out at point of retrieval). These datasets constitute the data corpus.⁸⁶ Time constraints and my own research interests have meant that only the ‘Women of 1916’ dataset has been analysed in detail. It has been nonetheless useful to compare total Tweets and overall engagement for each dataset, and they will be the basis of future research expanding on this area of digital heritage and social media commemoration.

Table 3-1. Tweet corpus summary, 2016 centenary.

DATE RANGE	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL TWEETS	RETWEETS REMOVED
1 Jan - 31 Dec 2016	Easter Rising 2016	399,205	139,809
1 Aug 2015 - 31 Dec 2016	Women of 1916	45,564	10,981

⁸⁶ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, “Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology,” *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 79.

3.9.6 Problems and limitations

The principal limitation of Twitter is that it is not representative of the offline world. Furthermore: ‘Twitter users are not representative of Internet users, and Twitter data are not representative of Twitter users’.⁸⁷ Blank has also explored the socio-economic disparities between Twitter users and non-Twitter users in two different national contexts, suggesting that on the whole Twitter users are more likely to be younger, wealthier, and more highly educated.⁸⁸ From observation, there is a strong academic and journalistic presence in the dataset ‘Women of 1916’ analysed in chapter 7, but also organisational and official accounts, and this has a bearing on the perspectives and the feminisms that are teased out in the analysis. Further to this, keywords and hashtags do not capture every Tweet that talks about a particular phenomenon, meaning that none of the datasets collected are wholly representative of their respective subjects. Tweets may refer to an event or topic in such a way that does not employ such language. No such query-specific collection of Tweets will be complete in this sense, and can also lead to biased samples.⁸⁹ GWU’s *Tweet.Set*, mentioned above, provides the list of hashtags used to create these datasets, which is helpful in understanding the kind of data retrieved and illustrates also the limitations of tailored query-based datasets. The queries for this data collection were designed for my research interests, which have feminist commemoration as an additional focus; other researchers might create different sets of search parameters around the same centenary and the same issue, and create several different datasets. Search queries are, in this way, somewhat idiosyncratic. While the ability to share datasets in the form of Tweet IDs is undoubtedly beneficial, they cannot be altered to include missing hashtags or keywords deemed essential by another researcher. And as discussed in the previous chapter ‘social media posts and their accompanying metadata are fundamentally ephemeral’ highlighted by the fact that any deleted Tweets or accounts will be permanently omitted from a retrospective data collection.⁹⁰ Additionally, the ways in which the Tweet metadata retrieved have been filtered by the researcher produces a more limited representation of the potential dataset. Just as any visualisations or graphical transformations of the dataset elements will be a mediated representation the ‘dataset is already an extraction from a corpus, text, or aesthetic work, and a remediation’. In other

⁸⁷ Ahmed, Bath, and Demartini, “Using Twitter as a Data Source,” 104.

⁸⁸ Grant Blank, “The Digital Divide Among Twitter Users and Its Implications for Social Research,” *Social Science Computer Review* 35, no. 6 (2017): 686.

⁸⁹ Ahmed, Bath, and Demartini, “Using Twitter as a Data Source,” 104.

⁹⁰ Walker, Mercea, and Bastos, “The Disinformation Landscape,” 1537.

words, as Drucker points out, it is already a ‘derivative’.⁹¹ These representational limitations need to be acknowledged and accounted for in both the collection of data and the inferences we make from it.

As mentioned earlier, spam and link-baiting may occur around highly-used hashtags and a case of this was identified.⁹² A ‘bot’ had Tweeted hundreds of variations of the same Tweet based on a line of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic throughout the 2016 year. It was possible to filter out at the point of retrieval by altering the queries thereafter (albeit eating into the query character limit). However, these kinds of automated accounts can interfere with the veracity of analyses and results, as was observed when a simple word frequency analysis was carried out using Voyant Tools in the testing stages.⁹³ Another issue identified was that a not insignificant amount of truncated text was also returned, mostly from retweets, quoted tweets and tweets sharing links via external websites, a reminder that this data is mostly retrieved from pre-280 character Twitter.⁹⁴ The full retweet text can be acquired at the point of retrieval but the issue was identified after the main data collection had been carried out. In terms of ‘noise,’ however, the amount is not out of the ordinary and as it mainly affects retweets, the subsequent qualitative analysis would be little affected as it was carried out on original tweets only.

Lastly, and looking to the qualitative analysis of the data collected, Tweet character limits require us to be reductive in expressing ourselves and our beliefs online, they require that we essentialise our message. As a ‘micro-blogging’ platform, Twitter is therefore a linguistically reductive space in which certain conventions and shared practices have a bearing on the structure, content and complexity of tweets. The potency of such messages, I maintain, is nonetheless valid when we read them with a cognisance of the boundaries and culture of the medium and situate them in their broader social and historical contexts.

⁹¹ Johanna Drucker, “Graphical Approaches to the Digital Humanities,” in *A New Companion to Digital Humanities*, ed. Susan Schreibman, Raymond George Siemens, and John Unsworth (Chichester, England: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 245-46.

⁹² Ahmed, Bath, and Demartini, “Using Twitter as a Data Source,” 104.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ ‘Truncated’ refers to the way that text is cut off after the where the character limit was reached, with remaining text replaced by ellipses.

3.10 Analysis

The previous sections have outlined the methods of collecting the data and the following describes the methods of analysis. The Twitter data collected was interpreted using qualitative thematic analysis aided by NVivo and complemented by visualisations. MS Excel, Voyant Tools and Gephi were used to assist in the interpretation of the data and to produce visual representations of the findings. Visualisations and word frequency tables further evidence and illustrate the dataset as the data must be reported as aggregations. As mentioned, the analysis of Twitter has made use not only of standard textual data but ‘natively digital objects’: hashtags, retweets, user handles, and user mentions.⁹⁵ Retweet networks may, for example, be useful in isolating dominant voices in the commemorative Twitter space, leading to questions of how, or by whom, the agenda may be driven around certain topics.⁹⁶ It also leads to questions about information sources. While network visualisations of complex cultural systems may be reductive, arguably it works well with the retweet/mention system of Twitter, itself a reductive medium of communication.⁹⁷

With this in mind, any analysis of Twitter data must be prefaced by critical reflection on the ways in which meaning can be derived from computer-assisted explorations of textual data. Following Drucker’s critique, the problems and limitations of automated methods and visualisations that are at their core unnatural to humanistic inquiry are recognised in this analysis.⁹⁸ Automation of certain tasks allows us to probe and get to know the data in more focused ways. What the results of these automations and visualisations mean, however, is not self-evident, and it is up to the researcher to contextualise, interpret and map them against other analyses in more nuanced ways. ‘We use tools not to get results but to generate questions... [computers] do not produce meaning - we do’.⁹⁹ It follows the assertion by Sinclair and Rockwell that text analysis tools are ‘Hermeneutica’ -

⁹⁵ Rogers, *Doing Digital Methods*, 162.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁹⁷ Drucker, “Graphical Approaches to the Digital Humanities,” 247.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁹⁹ Stéfán Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, “Text Analysis and Visualization: Making Meaning Count,” in *A New Companion to Digital Humanities*, ed. Susan Schreibman, Raymond George Siemens, and John Unsworth (Chichester, England: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), 288.

interpretive aids for ‘thinking through’ data, and which can ‘help us try to formalize claims and to test them’.¹⁰⁰ This analysis was also entered into less with presumptions of ‘discovering’ something that would have been impossible through a traditional reading and more with the expectation that it would confirm or substantiate certain hunches and hypotheses that were already formed, and generate new ways of thinking about and interpreting them.¹⁰¹ As Boyd and Crawford outline, ‘big-data’ research is, from the formulation of a hypothesis, an interpretive process. As demonstrated in the previous sections, data collection and cleaning process are themselves subjective procedures where data is ordered, some is retained and some is jettisoned as per the needs of the researcher.¹⁰²

3.10.1 Thematic Analysis

The focus of the in-depth analysis was on a dataset of c. 10,000 Tweets named ‘Women of 1916’. Similar dataset sizes have been used in other qualitative analyses of Twitter, including randomised samples from a larger corpus, between 7,000 and 10,000 original tweets.¹⁰³ However, many studies have used smaller samples, ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand tweets.¹⁰⁴ Smaller sample sizes are more manageable for conducting in-depth qualitative thematic analysis, as was carried out in this study. This was also a practical concern in that NVivo software is prone to crashing when working with very large amounts of data, risking loss of work, as was discovered in this process. Having a ‘control corpus’ - that is to say a dataset/text/corpus produced around the same time as the dataset being studied - allows for further comparison and validation.¹⁰⁵ The ‘Easter Rising 2016’ dataset was used as a control dataset as a backdrop to the smaller ‘Women

¹⁰⁰ Rockwell and Sinclair, *Hermeneutica*, 5, 41.

¹⁰¹ Sinclair and Rockwell, “Text Analysis and Visualization,” 282.

¹⁰² Boyd and Crawford, “Critical Questions for Big Data,” 667.

¹⁰³ See: Wasim Ahmed et al., “Novel Insights into Views towards H1N1 during the 2009 Pandemic : A Thematic Analysis of Twitter Data,” no. 36 (2019): 60-72; David Farrell-Banks, “1215 in 280 Characters: Talking about Magna Carta on Twitter,” in *European Heritage, Dialogue and Digital Practices*, ed. Areti Galani, Rhiannon Mason, and Bethany Rex (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), 86-106.

¹⁰⁴ See: Meg Mcguire, “Commemoration in 140 Characters: How Twitter Is Remediating How We Commemorate Resonant Events,” (ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2013). Available at: <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/docview/1461807681?pq-origsite=primo>; Rantasila et al., “#fukushima Five Years On”; Samuel Merrill, “Walking Together? The Mediatized Performative Commemoration of 7/7’s Tenth Anniversary,” *Journalism* 20, no. 10 (2019): 1360-78.

¹⁰⁵ Rockwell and Sinclair, *Hermeneutica*, 39.

of 1916'. Retrieved using different search terms, they are drawn from the same national commemorations and roughly the same time period.

NVivo software was used to conduct text queries and thematic, iterative coding of tweets. NVivo is a 'qualitative computing' software package that supports exploration, organisation, annotation, indexing and coding of qualitative data. Pickard argues the usefulness of the software increases the larger the dataset as it facilitates more broad-gauge analysis and therefore more reliable findings.¹⁰⁶ The coding process was informed by Creswell and Poth's guide to methods of qualitative inquiry, as well as examples of qualitative thematic analysis of Tweets using NVivo such as Ahmed's 2018 doctoral thesis 'Using Twitter data to provide qualitative insights into pandemics and epidemics' and Ahmed *et al* on the 2009 H1N1 pandemic.¹⁰⁷ NVivo includes a feature for directly capturing and storing social media data for analysis (NCapture) and though this was not possible for this research as it pertained to historical tweets it indicates the utility of NVivo for working with this kind of data.¹⁰⁸

The dataset was first converted to XLSX file format for reading in NVivo. Hashtags and mentions were retained in the dataset version examined in NVivo so as to understand each Twitter statement accurately. It is difficult to carry out text analysis and thematic coding of tweets without the contextual information that hashtags or mentions provide to the logic of the statement. It also makes for more accurate coding where a keyword appears as a hashtag. These 'natively digital objects' are therefore treated as units of analysis in a qualitative reading of the data. As a body of Tweets does not present a linear narrative that can be inspected in the same way as interview transcripts or policy documents for example, word frequencies and text queries were used to identify recurrent topics and as a springboard to thematic coding. A word frequency table was generated (top 2,000 words, three or more letters) and text queries were performed on keywords and stemmed words, generating documents with relevant tweets. These were saved

¹⁰⁶ Alison Jane Pickard, *Research Methods in Information* (London: Facet Publishing, 2013), 278-80.

¹⁰⁷ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 183-95; Wasim Ahmed, "Using Twitter Data to Provide Qualitative Insights into Pandemics and Epidemics" (Sheffield University, 2018). Available at: [http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/20367/1/Final PhD Thesis 11 MAY.pdf](http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/20367/1/Final%20PhD%20Thesis%2011%20MAY.pdf); Ahmed et al., "Novel Insights into Views towards H1N1 during the 2009 Pandemic: A Thematic Analysis of Twitter Data."

¹⁰⁸ Creswell and Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 213.

iteratively as ‘nodes’ and sub-nodes i.e. coded in order to study the ‘key word in context’.¹⁰⁹ Some Tweets were added to these nodes ad hoc as appropriate, rather than through text queries. The initial thematic coding was done inductively and code labels assigned *in vivo*. These were added to, revised and rearranged into themes and sub-themes, eventually amalgamating into five major areas of interest, with conceptual labels assigned by the researcher. As Braun and Clarke summarise ‘data is not coded in an epistemological vacuum’.¹¹⁰ Although coded inductively and data-driven, the themes arrived at cannot be separated from the theoretically driven research questions, the process of data collection that resulted in this specific dataset and the philosophical assumptions of the researcher. Coding became an increasingly interpretive method as the organisation of data progressed. The interpretive analytical focus was primarily on top-level themes of interest to the broader thesis and research questions:

...a thematic analysis at the latent level goes beyond the semantic content of the data, and starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations and ideologies that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data.¹¹¹

Qualitative coding in this way also meant that I returned to digital humanities methods like text analysis and visualisation more critically: I could now explore the aggregate data in a more focused way using a set of terms and themes and armed with a greater familiarity of the heterogeneous data and its limitations, map these readings to other types of analysis, and evidence the findings visually. I contend that this was also a process of validation that adds credibility to the findings. Five major themes emerged from this process of reviewing, reflecting and contextualising with relevant literature, as will be elaborated in chapter 7. Before turning to these, the three institutional case studies will be addressed in chapters 4-6. The preceding chapter outlines the first of these, that of the Decade of Centenaries collections at the National Archives of Ireland.

¹⁰⁹ Rockwell and Sinclair, *Hermeneutica*, 51-53.

¹¹⁰ Braun and Clarke, “Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology,” 84.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

4 The National Archives of Ireland: Decade of Centenaries Collections

4.1 Introduction

'Decade of Centenaries' is a bespoke microsite within the National Archives of Ireland (NAI) website domain. It was launched in April 2016 as part of the digitisation programme of the state commemorations of 1916 and was one of the flagship digitisation projects outlined in the government centenary programme and carries the *Ireland 2016* logo. It consists of four archival collections added over the course of 2016 and supplemented by image galleries using content from partnered institutions. The Decade of Centenaries collections are placed first in 'Explore Our Collections' on the NAI homepage.

The NAI is the most important record keeping institution of the State. A relatively young institution in its current legislative form, the NAI is an inheritance of the State Papers Office (founded 1702) and Public Records Office (founded 1867) which operated prior to the enactment, in 1988, of the 1986 National Archives Act. This Act was the first of its kind since the foundation of the State in 1922.¹ The pre-history of the NAI as we know it today is rooted in centuries of British colonial administration and public governance in Ireland. The development of the National Archives has been formatively shaped by the events and legacy of the years 1916-1923. The Public Records Office of Ireland (PROI) was handed over to the Free State in April 1922 during the transition period after the ratification of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. The PROI had been centralising records from around the country into the Four Courts building ever since.² The Four Courts was occupied by anti-Treaty forces shortly after the handover in April 1922, and in June the

¹ National Archives Advisory Council, "The National Archives Advisory Council First Report" (Dublin, 1990), 8; All public reports by the NAAC are available at "Annual Reports of the National Archives Advisory Council." National Archives of Ireland. Accessed April 1, 2019. <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/what-we-do/publications/annual-reports-national-archives-advisory-council/>.

² Gerard O'Brien, *Irish Governments and the Guardianship of Historical Records 1922-72* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 21.

ensuing enfilade by Free State forces led to an explosion that destroyed most of its archival contents, some of which dated back to the 17th century. The loss was enormous and efforts to salvage and find copies of the records continue to this day, discussed later. At the time of transition, more recent records of British governance, policing and of Fenianism in Ireland were also being removed in droves from Dublin Castle, previously the seat of British administration in Ireland. An unknown number of ‘sensitive’ documents were apparently burned in the grounds of the Castle days after the Treaty was ratified, as seen elsewhere in the retreat of empire.³ Others were removed to London, and though many were returned gradually over the years, others still were also lost to accidental destruction in a basement flood at Whitehall in 1927.⁴

Perhaps the greatest impression upon the development of a national archives and access policy, however, was the combination of a desire to control the historical narrative of the revolution - and its participants’ reputations - and decades of neglect of both physical archival facilities and of policy reform by successive Irish administrations, a situation that was not unique to the Irish context.⁵ Holland has described the period 1922-69 as ‘a tundra in archival terms’ where access to state archives was strictly controlled and their interpretation vetted.⁶ Moreover, until the 1970s this ‘dearth of Irish repositories militated against historical curiosity in primary sources’.⁷ Anxieties over controlling the narrative of the recent past stemmed in no small way from the fact that many who were active in the revolution and civil war went on to permeate the ranks of the Civil Service, others becoming Ministers, Taoisigh and Presidents. Requests for access to some of the State Papers relating to 1916 for ‘inspection by writers, historians and the public generally’ with a view to ‘setting down a clear historical record of the event’ were flatly refused in 1966, shortly before the fiftieth anniversary of the Rising, except in the case of ‘bona fide’ historians (for which no definition could be provided) and only via recourse to the Office of the Taoiseach who would ‘continue to offer to supply, where possible, information by way of answers to specific questions about the 1916 Rising’. Haunted by the Four Courts

³ Ibid., 17.

⁴ Ibid., 85.

⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁶ Holland, “From Louisburgh to Ladsmith: Archives in Ireland and South Africa in a Century of Conflict and Change,” 132; O’Brien, *Irish Governments and the Guardianship of Historical Records 1922-72*, 72-108.

⁷ Ruth Dudley Edwards and Ailsa C. Holland, “Teaching Archival Studies in an Irish University,” *Archivaria*, no. 4 (1977): 24.

fire, a suggestion of microfilming the documents and storing them in the National Library was less about access than preservation and safeguarding ‘lest any catastrophe should destroy the originals’.⁸ Such fear of repeated loss may indeed have informed attitudes to these jealously guarded records. Moreover, there appears to have been a deep concern for guarding against undesirable or embarrassing information about (or indeed information perceived as potentially endangering) living veterans or immediate relatives, and by extension Irish governments.⁹

In 1990, the first report of the National Archives Advisory Council (NAAC), the statutory body reporting to the Taoiseach and the Houses of the Oireachtas, stated that ‘In a nation somewhat preoccupied with its history, the records of the past are housed in a premises which are at best inadequate and inappropriate for the safe storage of documents’.¹⁰ The present-day Bishop Street premises was allocated to the NAI in 1989 after which PRO and SPO records, as well as other records from various buildings around Dublin city centre, were transferred. Despite improvements in policy and attitudes since 1986 this national cultural institution and its identity as such continued to suffer from a lack of human and capital resources. Memories of the 1922 fire and of the civil war that ensued again found their way into arguments for resources that would enable the statutory functions of the NAI to be carried out when the NAAC presented its strategic plan (1996-2001) to the then Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht in 1995:

⁸ See exchange between Taoiseach Sean Lemass and deputies Dillon and Dunne. “Dáil Éireann Debate - Tuesday, 1 Feb 1966, Vol. 220 No. 4. Ceisteanna—Questions. Oral Answers. - Easter Rising Records.,” Houses of the Oireachtas, accessed October 22, 2020, <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1966-02-01/2/>.

⁹ O’Brien, *Irish Governments and the Guardianship of Historical Records 1922-72*, 101; “Oral Answers. - Easter Rising Records.”

¹⁰ National Archives Advisory Council, “The National Archives Advisory Council First Report,” 8.

Often we lament the loss of so many records in the Four Courts fire in 1922... What better way to seal a fine fissure of the civil war in the year that we celebrate the bicentenary of the Four Courts building than by ensuring a proper depository for this prime part of the national heritage which is the National Archives.¹¹

Commemoration was being directly linked with the public profile of the NAI and its heritage value early in its inception, expressed also in a previous report agitating for exhibition space in which to display records pertaining to the Famine and the 1798 Rebellion, whose sesquicentenary and tercentenary commemorations were anticipated for 1998.¹² ‘Archives as heritage’ was first specifically prioritised, though not for the first time alluded to, in a 1998 NAAC report.¹³ In a 2013 Dáil committee on genealogical heritage Catriona Crowe, representing the NAI, made plain that a lack of space at the Bishop Street premises necessitated travelling and online exhibitions.¹⁴

In 2008, a few years shy of the Decade of Centenaries, a merger of the NAI with the National Library of Ireland and the Irish Manuscripts Commission was proposed by the then government, arising amid the onset of a financial crisis. Archivists, historians and other heritage professionals railed against the proposal and it inspired a symposium in 2010 entitled ‘Archives in Crisis’ at Trinity College Dublin.¹⁵ Concerns were expressed over the dire state of the National Archives and archives all over Ireland. Freedom of access to records and democratic transparency, and proposals for the future of archives

¹¹ Speech by Mr. Justice Hugh O’Flaherty, Chairman of the National Archives Advisory Council, to the Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, Miachael D. Higgins, National Archives Advisory Council, “The National Archives Advisory Council Fifth Report” (Dublin, 1996), Appendix i.

¹² National Archives Advisory Council, “The National Archives Advisory Council 4th Report” (Dublin, 1994), 12.

¹³ National Archives Advisory Council, “7th Report of the National Archives Advisory Council 1998” (Dublin, 1998).

¹⁴ Catriona Crowe, “Joint Committee on Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht Debate - Thursday, 12 Dec 2013. Capturing the Full Value of Our Genealogical Heritage: Discussion (Resumed),” Houses of the Oireachtas, accessed September 2, 2020, https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/joint_committee_on_environment_culture_and_the_gaeltacht/2013-12-12/3/#spk_4.

¹⁵ Peter Crooks, “Archives in Crisis,” *History Ireland* 18, no. 3 (2010): 10-11.

in Ireland were put forward.¹⁶ At this time there had been no sitting Chairperson for the NAAC since 2007, meaning that the body could not be in session, and that the State was in breach of statute.¹⁷ The body did not publish an annual report for the years 2006 - 2010 inclusive. The NAAC was also not consulted on the proposed merger, another breach of statute.¹⁸ The report for 2011-12 by the reconvened NAAC was unequivocal: ‘The Council is perplexed at the lack of support to the National Archives as the primary repository of records of Government in Ireland’.¹⁹ A 2012 report of the NAAC further described the inability to accession documents from 1983 due to lack of space as ‘shocking’ and the storage conditions of the Bishop Street warehouse as ‘a national disgrace’.²⁰ The understaffing and underfunding of the NAI is remarked upon throughout published reports of the NAAC as far back as 1990, including at the height of the so-called ‘Celtic Tiger’ period of economic prosperity in Ireland. Not so long ago then, and even in more prosperous economic circumstances, it appears there was little material concern for the archival landscape among the ranks of Government. A *volte face* has been performed in recent years, necessitated somewhat by its commitment to a Decade of Centenaries from which it largely turned a profit in terms of public relations. ‘Project Ireland 2040,’ announced in 2018, has since afforded the NAI considerable funding to redevelop storage and operational facilities to bring structural conditions to an acceptable standard.²¹ Additional staff were hired from 2016, still yet falling short of minimum requirements to maintain and develop its obligations and services. Recent state injections of finance across the cultural heritage sector are principally rebalancing the funding deficit in an already neglected sector.²² For example, in 2016 a survey of Irish museums highlighted cuts of up to 40% in the museum sector alone and the post-recessionary impact of reduced budgets and restructuring. The very public funding crisis and closure of galleries at the National Museum of Ireland in 2014 laid bare the impact of these cuts

¹⁶ “Archives in Crisis: A Symposium Debates the Future of Archives in Irish Society,” Trinity College Dublin, accessed August 21, 2018, https://www.tcd.ie/news_events/articles/archives-in-crisis-a-symposium-debates-the-future-of-archives-in-irish-society/.

¹⁷ Crooks, “Archives in Crisis,” 11.

¹⁸ National Archives Advisory Council, “Report of the National Archives Advisory Council 2011” (Dublin, 2012), 5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ The National Archives Advisory Council, “Annual Report 2012” (Dublin, 2012).

²¹ Government of Ireland, “Project Ireland 2040: Investing in Our Culture, Language & Heritage 2018-2017” (Dublin, 2018), 20-23, accessed August 20, 2018.

https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2018/04/capital_plan_april3-8.pdf.

²² Emily Mark-Fitzgerald, “Known Unknowns: Research on Irish Museums since 2008,” *Cultural Trends*, no. 3 (2017): 18.

on institutional functions.²³ The lead investigator of the survey cited a ‘high frequency of museums reporting staff, collections, and facilities under severe strain...’ as well as ‘shifts in the nature of museum employment towards part-time, temporary, and seasonal contracts, despite an overall increase in museum workers at local museums’.²⁴ These economic considerations are unglamorous but they bear upon the motivations, choices and outcomes of digitisation projects, commemorative or otherwise: ‘Digitisation is an expensive process and decisions have been made about which records are the most important to make widely available through this process’.²⁵ Since the research for this chapter began, the NAI has gone through a website upgrade as well as the aforementioned structural funding.²⁶ ‘Digitisation’ was indeed a cornerstone of this national funding strategy, making specific reference to the 2016 commemorations: ‘The importance of digitisation was really underlined during the 2016 centenary year, some of our Cultural Institutions made a wealth of material available online for the first time’.²⁷

A variety of financial, commemorative and institutional demands operate to inform digitisation policies - the backend, somewhat black-boxed processes to these front-end commemorative productions.²⁸ Successive annual reports make clear that many of the NAI special projects are only possible through external collaborations and with external funding sources, right down to hiring temporary staff for relieving cataloguing backlogs.²⁹ While funding for special projects appears at be at a premium, plans to address the immense storage and structural issues facing the NAI, and several of the other national cultural institutions, have recently been implemented as a priority. Work has been underway at its Bishop Street premises and in 2017 during the second stage of the

²³ Pamela Duncan and Martin Wall, “National Museum Considers Closures and Entrance Fees to Deal with 2015 Funding Crisis,” *The Irish Times*, October 31, 2014.

²⁴ Mark-Fitzgerald, “Known Unknowns,” 14.

²⁵ Catherine Bishop, “The Serendipity of Connectivity: Piecing Together Women’s Lives in the Digital Archive,” *Women’s History Review* 26, no. 5 (2017): 769.

²⁶ Government of Ireland, “Project Ireland 2040: Investing in Our Culture, Language & Heritage 2018-2017,” 21.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 36.

²⁸ Smyth, Nyhan, and Flinn, “Opening the ‘Black Box’ of Digital Cultural Heritage,” 301.

²⁹ John McDonagh, “Report of the Director of the National Archives 2016” (Dublin, 2016) accessed July 29, 2019, <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/National-Interactive-Archives-Report.pdf>; John McDonagh, “Report of the Director of the National Archives 2017” (Dublin, 2017) accessed July 29, 2019, https://www.nationalarchives.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/18-092-National-Archives-Report-08.01.19_V08-002.pdf.

National Archives Amendment Bill the Minister for Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht stated that:

As the centenary of the destruction of the public record office approaches in 2022, the new National Archives repository will be available to house our State archives and this will be an appropriate response to the loss of so much of our cultural heritage in the destructive fire in 1922.³⁰

As late as 2012, after the proposed amalgamation with the National Library was abandoned, the NAAC stated that ‘It is sincerely hoped that this very welcome development will be the start of the recognition of the National Archives in the preservation and availability of Ireland’s history’.³¹ The National Archives was constituted in 1986 but it has been made clear in successive annual reports that it has struggled to impress upon both government administrations and the public its national significance: ‘Members of the Council have constantly sought to reiterate the same message. This is: that the importance of the National Archives has been unrealized’.³² Successive reports also indicate a view that certain digitisations, as well as cataloguing projects, had raised the public profile of the National Archives: ‘The success of the recent projects, mentioned previously, has helped to raise the public profile of the National Archives’. These projects included the Census 1901/1911 records, digitised records of the Chief Secretary’s Office and the Soldiers Wills collection.³³ As will be seen again in chapter 6, high-profile digitisation appears to have helped to raise the profile of the NAI and re-impress upon the public its function and identity as a cultural and memory institution, as well as one

³⁰ The Bill was signed into law in 2018 and allows for the early release of government records, subject to the approval of the minister for Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht, where it is deemed in the public interest or of historic value. “National Archives (Amendment) Act 2018,” Houses of the Oireachtas, 2018, <https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/act/2018/12/eng/enacted/a1218.pdf>; “Seanad Éireann Debate - Tuesday, 29 May 2018 Vol. 258 No. 6. National Archives (Amendment) Bill 2017: Second Stage,” Houses of the Oireachtas, accessed September 2, 2020, <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/seanad/2018-05-29/9/?highlight%5B0%5D=state&highlight%5B1%5D=paper&highlight%5B2%5D=1916&highlight%5B3%5D=british>.

³¹ The National Archives Advisory Council, “Annual Report 2012,” 5.

³² National Archives Advisory Council, “National Archives Advisory Council Reports 2014 and 2015” (Dublin, 2016), 6.

³³ National Archives Advisory Council, “Report of the National Archives Advisory Council 2011,” 6; The National Archives Advisory Council, “Annual Report 2012,” 5-6.

that is vital to democratic governance, transparency and human rights. The link between archival access and the democratic mandate of the NAI was reiterated in 2017, and digitisation has increasingly been emphasised as key to this: ‘The act of making archives publically available reinforces democracy and the link of the citizen to the State’.³⁴ A subtext of this statement is also the relationship between the archives and national identity work. ‘Digital imaging’ and digitisation are also fundamental in assisting (that is not to say a stand in for) the preservation of certain archives at the NAI, a common logic in allocating resources and minimising demand for physical access to deteriorating, high-use analogue collections.³⁵ And as the above suggests, ‘funding for digitisation may be tied not only to concerns about access and preservation, but also to the need to increase visibility to ensure viability’.³⁶

The NAI digital imaging policy, that is to say digitisation and its processes, outlines the principles that determine what will be considered for digitisation in broad terms and these will be useful in thinking about the following digitisations.³⁷ These are: demand, significance, scope, condition and metadata. These criteria indicate that priority is given to high-use documents or those for which ‘digital availability would increase their use’; collections of ‘national or research significance’; entire collections or a complete series from a collection rather than berry-picking across collections; documents that are in adequate physical condition to weather the digitisation process; and documents/collections that have been formally accessioned, fully processed and listed using appropriate metadata standards (ISAD(G), IGAD or Dublin Core).³⁸ While these are broadly practical, from the perspective of commemoration the requirements of being of high-use and of national and research significance are parameters of interest and they chime with the literature discussed in chapter 2 and with findings in the two remaining case studies, which demonstrate an emphasis on extensive metadata creation. Though not explicitly stated, completeness of a series or collection may also be an intellectual consideration in respect of the ‘perceived integrity and value of the archive’ as seen with,

³⁴ McDonagh, “Report of the Director of the National Archives 2016,” 4; National Archives of Ireland, “National Archives Digital Imaging Policy.”

³⁵ National Archives of Ireland, “National Archives Digital Imaging Policy”; Helle Strandgaard Jensen, “Digital Archival Literacy for (All) Historians,” *Media History*, 2020, 4.

³⁶ Moravec, “Feminist Research Practices,” 187.

³⁷ The document is dated to February 2016 but was uploaded to the public website in 2019.

³⁸ National Archives of Ireland, “National Archives Digital Imaging Policy.”

for example, newspaper digitisation policies.³⁹ The policy itself is part of the NAI remit on public access to archives and transparency of procedures, and it specifically recognises ‘the increasing demand for access to archives from the public’ and a desire to ‘ensure that collections of high public interest are prioritised for digitisation’.⁴⁰

For the ninetieth anniversary of the signing of the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty the NAI created a dedicated microsite consisting of a fully digitised Treaty document, several digitised letters between delegates and annotated versions of the Treaty from both sides, as well as timelines, videos, image galleries and resource pages.⁴¹ Some of the work towards the digital response to the centennial decade was thus already underway in 2011, with just under 30,000 people accessing the Treaty exhibition in 2012.⁴² In 2014 the NAI ‘identified and progressed a number of projects to develop our participation in the Decade of Centenaries’.⁴³ The ‘Decade of Centenaries’ microsite eventually produced is one of several featured on the NAI homepage, alongside its Genealogy, Chief Secretary’s Office Registered Papers 1818-1922, and Anglo-Irish Treaty 1921 microsites. It introduces four distinct collections and with the exception of one that is hyperlinked from the primary NAI site, each collection space is divided between context (introduction, essays, extracts, galleries) and discovery (browse - chronological; search by predefined categories). The website was created by *Roomthree Design*.⁴⁴

³⁹ Tessa Hauswedell, Julianne Nyhan, and M H Beals Melissa, “Of Global Reach yet of Situated Contexts: An Examination of the Implicit and Explicit Selection Criteria That Shape Digital Archives of Historical Newspapers,” *Archival Science* 20 (2020): 149.

⁴⁰ National Archives of Ireland, “National Archives Digital Imaging Policy.”

⁴¹ “Treaty Exhibition,” National Archives of Ireland, accessed August 20, 2017, <http://treaty.nationalarchives.ie/>.

⁴² The National Archives Advisory Council, “Annual Report 2012,” 4.

⁴³ John McDonagh, “Annual Report of the Director of the National Archives 2014” (Dublin, 2015), 2, accessed July 29, 2019.

http://opac.oireachtas.ie/AWData/Library3/AHGdoclaid210512280116_161956.pdf.

⁴⁴ Now part of Communicraft, who also designed the new National Archives main website: “National Archives of Ireland,” Communicraft, accessed September 15, 2020, <https://www.communicraft.com/projects/national-archives>.

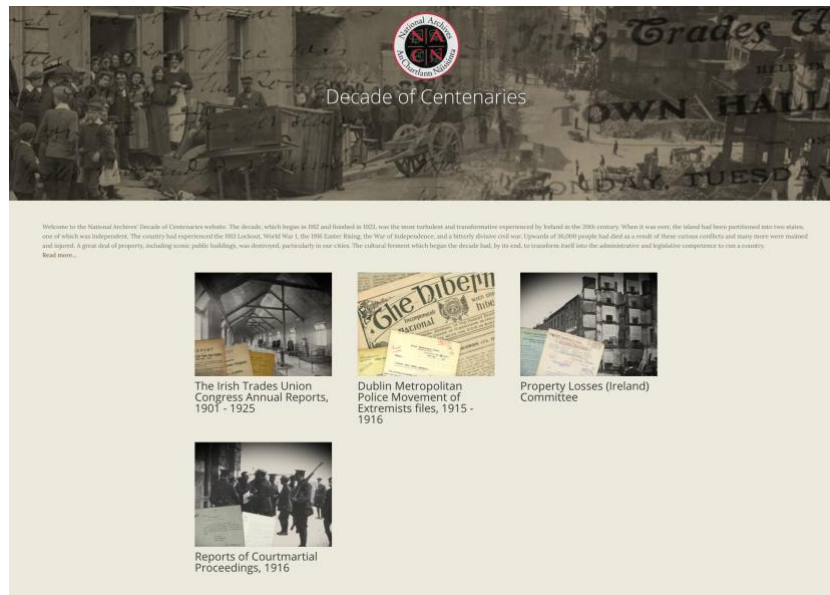


Figure 4-1 Decade of Centenaries collections, National Archives of Ireland. <http://centenaries.nationalarchives.ie/centenaries/>

4.2 Content

The ‘Decade of Centenaries’ microsite hosts four collections, three of which were launched in 2016, one in 2015. These collections are described as adding to the ‘wealth of primary resources’ with special reference to the BMH and MSPC collections, the subject of chapter 6, that are ‘already transforming the scholarly and public landscape for the period’.⁴⁵ Each collection comes with its own set of findability parameters that determine interaction with these documents and their contents. Two are accompanied by essays from historians, two supplemented with image galleries, two with search options ranging from keyword to predefined category, two arranged by browsing chronologically and with thumbnail images. The image galleries are supplied from partnered institutions such as Trinity College Dublin and Dublin City Archives. Some of the digital surrogates are displayed as PDFs marked up as text-searchable using optical character recognition.⁴⁶ There is a preponderance of 1916 Rising-related material in this series of collections with three out of four explicitly linked with the Easter Rising and its immediate aftermath. The Director’s report for 2016 characterises the site as such: ‘A new Decade of Centenaries microsite was launched with a number of on-line exhibitions hosted on this dealing with

⁴⁵ National Archives of Ireland, “Decade of Centenaries,” accessed August 15, 2017, <http://centenaries.nationalarchives.ie/centenaries/>.

⁴⁶ National Archives of Ireland, “National Archives Digital Imaging Policy” (Dublin, 2016), accessed August 13, 2020. <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/DigitalImagingPolicyFinal.pdf>.

specific issues of the 1916 Rising⁴⁷. The accompanying text attests that the collections go beyond the immediate subject matter to reveal broader social and cultural realities of the period, perhaps best demonstrated in the Trade Unions Congress collection.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, 1916 is the central focus in the way these collections are presented. It has been indicated that these collections will be updated going further into the centenary decade, though there has not been (at the time of writing) an addition since the initial 2016 set. Cronin has drawn attention to the fact that ‘the rate of digitization’ slowed after its peak in 2016, and that several institutions, as of 2017, had ‘ceased their digital efforts’.⁴⁹ This is partially true in respect of such carefully curated commemorative collections, websites and microsites, for which the intensity of releases seen in 2016 has eased (with the exception of the Military Service Pensions project). Nonetheless, the NAI continues to be involved in multiple centennial digital projects that increasingly figure in bolstering its public profile, as will be discussed below.

The following will address the four collections presented in this digital commemorative archive: Reports of the Irish Trade Unions Congress, 1901-1925 (ITUC), the Dublin Metropolitan Movement of Extremist Files (DMP), the Property Losses (Ireland) Committee Files (PLIC), and the 1916 Courtmartial Files. Certain collections (both pre- and post-2016) that have been digitised yet are not part of this centennial curation will also be considered.

4.3 Reports of the Irish Trade Unions Congress, 1901-1925 (ITUC)

Launched in July 2016, the ‘Reports of the Irish Trade Unions Congress, 1901-1925’ (ITUC) were digitised as a ‘result of a partnership between the National Archives and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions’ (ICTU). The collection constitutes the executive reports and ITUC and Labour Party congress debates. The series is part of a wider set of records held by both the NAI and ICTU and digitisation and access was facilitated by the NAI.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ McDonagh, “Report of the Director of the National Archives 2016,” 19.

⁴⁸ National Archives of Ireland, “Decad. Centen.”

⁴⁹ Cronin, “Irish History Online,” 282.

⁵⁰ Decade of Centenaries, “Introduction - Irish Trades Union Congress Annual Reports,” accessed August 29, 2018, <http://centenaries-ituc.nationalarchives.ie/introduction/>; National Archives of Ireland, “Decad. Centen.”; “Guide to Sources on Women’s History,” National Archives of Ireland via Internet Archive, accessed October 22, 2020,

The reports are described as constituting ‘a major archive covering all aspects of political, economic and social life in Ireland’ including suffrage and a ‘record of the thinking and actions of the Irish labour movement during probably its most important decade’.⁵¹ The collection spans the major commemorative milestones of the period and beyond, and evidences many of ‘labour’s forgotten men and women’.⁵² The reports pertain to the annual meetings of the ITUC, which were held in different counties each year making the geographical spread of interest, and are representative of c. 2-2.5% of the working population at the time.⁵³ The reports are presented as hyperlinked thumbnail images in chronological order, one for each year between 1901 and 1925 with the exception of 1915 when the congress it was not held due to wartime constraints. Thylstrup defines thumbnails as consisting of ‘a set of algorithms executed to provide visual cues that might aid the user in navigating and exploring information-rich environments. They are often compressed versions of pictures or videos, whose compact size reduces loading time’.⁵⁴ Navigation of these records is by browsing each report by date, and though all are text-searchable PDFs there is no possibility of a keyword database search across all reports.⁵⁵ Ostensibly an exhibition rather than a searchable database, this seems a missed opportunity for facilitating research within these dense and voluminous reports. Two essays as well as extracts from each report accompany the collection. Both essays deal primarily with the political and international dimension of these reports and the trade union movement, with extracts highlighting text of particular interest. During the centenary of the labour lockout in 2013, O’Toole noted an apparent appetite for the history of labour strife that resonated with ongoing economic crisis: ‘Irish people today have a very real sense of what economic stagnation means, and can make connections between their own lives and those of the 1913 workers, just as those tracing family

<https://web.archive.org/web/20171104032835/http://www.nationalarchives.ie/research/research-guides-and-articles/guide-to-sources-on-womens-history/>.

⁵¹ “Irish Trades Union Congress Annual Reports,” Decade of Centenaries, accessed August 15, 2017, <http://centenaries-ituc.nationalarchives.ie/>.

⁵² Leah Hunnewell, “Irish Labour Internationalism: The ITUC’s Transnational Relationships 1900-1920,” Decade of Centenaries, accessed August 16, 2017, <http://centenaries-ituc.nationalarchives.ie/406-2/>.

⁵³ Padraig Yeates, “Irish Workers and the Revolution: On the Road to God Knows Where,” in *Reflecting on a Decade of War and Revolution in Ireland 1912-1923: Historians on 1916* (Dublin, Mansion House: Universities Ireland, 2016), accessed November 27, 2017. <http://universitiesireland.ie/1912-1923-reflecting-on-a-decade-of-war-and-revolution-in-ireland-historians-on-1916/>.

⁵⁴ Nanna Bonde Thylstrup and Stina Teilmann, “Thumbnail Images: Uncertainties, Infrastructures and Search Engines,” *Digital Creativity* 28, no. 4 (2017): 281.

⁵⁵ This is not specified in introducing the collection, or any of the collections, and was tested using ‘CTRL+F’.

connections do in Flanders'.⁵⁶ In a speech made at the launch of the microsite, then treasurer of ICTU Joe O'Flynn echoed this sentiment:

Meanwhile members of the public may be surprised to find how little has changed in some respects. Amidst the political debates on Home Rule, the First World War, Partition and other divisive issues, readers will find regular calls on local authorities to tackle the housing crisis and governments to end profiteering and speculation by big business.⁵⁷

Crowe, head of Special Projects at the National Archives during this time, commented that labour strife was indeed one of the least problematised aspects of history in this decade of commemorations.⁵⁸ The text introducing the reports broadens the appeal of these records emphasising that while 'industrial relations occupy an important place in these reports, so do pressing social concerns such as housing conditions, public health and political questions such as Home Rule and female suffrage'.⁵⁹ Tenement life, living and working conditions and education are all features of these records. In this respect the ITUC reports are a significant addition and stand out in giving weight to organised labour and socialism in this period, and the collection was previously only 'available to a handful of specialists in labour history'.⁶⁰ Hunnewell's accompanying paper, which addresses labour internationalism, opens by stating that this digitisation 'marks an important development in Ireland's economic, social, political and cultural history' pointing to the neglect of regional studies of labour organising and a lack of biographical studies of labour figures and that this collection supports 'neglected bottom-up historical narratives' of social life at the time.⁶¹ O'Flynn further described this addition as:

⁵⁶ Tina O'Toole in Dominic Bryan et al., "Ireland's Decade of Commemorations: A Roundtable," *New Hibernia Review* 17, no. 3 (2013): 67.

⁵⁷ Joe O'Flynn, "Launch of the Irish Trade Union Congress and Labour Party Archive" (Dublin, July 20, 2016), 1, https://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/ituc_launch_general_secretary_joe_oflynn.pdf.

⁵⁸ Catriona Crowe, "Closing Remarks," in *Reflecting on a Decade of War and Revolution in Ireland 1912-1923: Historians on 1916* (Mansion House, Dublin: Universities Ireland, 2016) accessed November 27, 2017. <http://universitiesireland.ie/1912-1923-reflecting-on-a-decade-of-war-and-revolution-in-ireland-historians-on-1916/>.

⁵⁹ National Archives of Ireland, "Decade of Centenaries"

⁶⁰ Padraig Yeates, "Irish Trades Union Congress Archive," Decade of Centenaries, accessed August 16, 2017, <http://centenaries-ituc.nationalarchives.ie/essay/>.

⁶¹ Hunnewell, "Irish Labour Internationalism: The ITUC's Transnational Relationships 1900-1920."

...an important antidote to the continuing emphasis on purely political and military issues that continues to perpetuate much of the mythology that keeps us prisoners of an imagined past and, in the process, has the continuing potential to divide us.⁶²

The first layers of this digital collection nonetheless direct the user to the relationships between Irish trade unionism and revolutionary politics through its positioning in relation to the other three collections and the accompanying introductory text. Already in the timing and presentation of this collection, launched in 2016, 1916 frames the path to encountering this digital collection. An ICTU webpage announcing the launch of the reports in this vein declares that:

They provide new insights on life during the Decade of Centenaries that will inform and stimulate debate on the impact that the Irish Revolution had on trade unionists, their families and the communities in which they lived.⁶³

That this collection appeared in a research guide on women's history previously available on the NAI website, and that 'suffrage' was included as a point of interest in the collection's introductory text, demands attention. Delia Larkin, founding member and first General Secretary of the Irish Women Workers' Union (IWWU) in 1911, and Louie Bennett, suffragist and pacifist, were among the delegates and speakers in reports from 1912.⁶⁴ Helena Molony, heavily involved in republicanism through *Inghinidhe na*

⁶² O'Flynn, "Launch of the Irish Trade Union Congress and Labour Party Archive."

⁶³ Irish Congress of Trade Unions, "Launch of National Archives Decade of Centenaries Online Portal with Irish Trade Union and Labour Party Archive, 1901-1925," July 20, 2018, <https://www.ictu.ie/press/diary/2016/07/20/launch-of-national-archives-decade-of-centenaries-online-portal-with-irish-trade-union-and-labour-party-archive-1901-1925/>.

⁶⁴ "19th Annual Irish Trades Union Congress Report (1912)"; See for example Bennett's assertions on housing and supporting Irish industries. National Archives of Ireland, "26th Annual Report of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (1920)," *Decade of Centenaries*, 133–35; Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women*, 124; All reports referenced hereafter available at National Archives of Ireland. "Annual Reports." *Decade of Centenaries*. Accessed October 5, 2017. <http://centenaries-ituc.nationalarchives.ie/annual-reports/>.

h'Éireann and Cumann na mBan as well as being a member of James Connolly's Irish Citizen Army, succeeded Larkin as secretary of the IWWU, putting forward a motion in a 1917 report calling upon all women workers to join their own trade union or the IWWU and welcoming 'the co-operation of all Irish women who are prepared to accept the principles of the Irish Labour Movement and to share in the glorious task of building up an independent and self-reliant democracy in Ireland'. Molony would later become the second female President of the Congress.⁶⁵ Other women interspersed in these reports 'whose participation in politics was not confined to the pursuit of nationalism' include Madeleine French-Mullen and Marie Perolz.⁶⁶ As Pašeta has extensively demonstrated, many feminist Irish women were, at one stage or another or simultaneously, involved in or in sympathy with the politics of republicanism, socialism and suffrage, many mobilised and shaped by their work during the 1913 Lockout.⁶⁷

Electoral reform ('adult suffrage') is raised in several reports. In a 1909 report Mary Galway explicitly put forward a motion to amend an upcoming Bill on electoral reform to include 'the extension of the franchise to all adults, male and female'.⁶⁸ Galway, who represented textile workers in Belfast and was an advocate of women's suffrage, became a member of the Parliamentary Committee (later the 'National Executive') of the ITUC from 1907-12 making her 'the most prominent woman trade unionist in Ireland'.⁶⁹ She advocated repeatedly for female factory inspectors in the linen industry.⁷⁰ In a 1912 report during a motion on adult suffrage one delegate debated that 'In his opinion, the effect of the resolution, if put in operation with regard to the women voting in parliamentary elections, would be the destruction of that nobility of character for which their women were prized—and rightly prized—all over the world'. Galway countered that women should have the right to vote even if the majority of Irish women so far had not demanded it and that:

⁶⁵ "23rd Annual Report of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (1917)" 81; McCooole, *No Ordinary Women*, 206.

⁶⁶ McCooole, *No Ordinary Women*, 25, 172, 221.

⁶⁷ Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women*, 122-27.

⁶⁸ "16th Annual Irish Trades Union Congress Report (1909)," *Decade of Centenaries*, 28.

⁶⁹ Denise Kleinrichert, "Labour and Suffrage: Spinning Threads in Belfast," in *Irish Women and the Vote: Becoming Citizens*, ed. Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward, Revised (Irish Academic Press, 2018), 191-92; See 14th to 19th annual reports. *Decade of Centenaries*, "Annual Reports."

⁷⁰ "19th Annual Report (1912)," 53.

...those who obeyed the laws of the land should have some part in framing them. She denied the assertion that the extension of the vote to women would have the effect of destroying home life. She held, on the contrary, that it would have the effect of making more intelligent and better mothers, and would cause them to take a greater interest in the welfare of their country.⁷¹

In 1913, James Connolly's indictment of the treatment of militant suffragettes and suppression of their publications by the Liberal government is one of the first extended commentaries on the suffrage question as it pertained to women specifically, and characterising their enfranchisement as 'human rights'. The report relays that 'He wished to say also that, personally, he was in accord with the action of the women in demanding their rights and all should recognise that until the women were made equal with them politically they could only be half free.'⁷² Connolly reasserted his support for the Irish Women's Franchise League, and their militancy, the following year in an exchange over a proposed deputation from the Irish Women's Reform League to the Congress. To a suggestion that he would support a woman that would use her vote against the principles of the Unions Connolly reportedly replied that 'He was out to give women the vote, even if they used it against him as a human right'.⁷³ The 1916 report that eulogises Connolly, since executed for his part in the Easter Rising, also prioritised the enfranchisement of all adults, male and female, in its address on electoral reform.⁷⁴ According to Pařeta, many suffragists were increasingly attracted to the labour movement due to its open support of the vote for women in contrast with the intractable Irish Party, though officially the Irish Women's Franchise League (IWFL) outwardly maintained a non-party political stance, and not all suffragists were so enamoured with socialism.⁷⁵ Likewise, Ryan has demonstrated the alignment of *The Irish Citizen* (a feminist newspaper established by Hanna Sheehy Skeffington of the IWFL) with the IWWU, as well as its sympathies,

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² "20th Annual Irish Trades Union Congress Report (1913)," *Decade of Centenaries*, 66-67

⁷³ "21st Annual Irish Trades Union Congress Report (1914)," *Decade of Centenaries*, 79

⁷⁴ Ibid., 54.

⁷⁵ Pařeta, *Irish Nationalist Women*, 123.

steered by its editors Skeffington and Louie Bennett, for the plight of working women, but equally as evidence of ‘class politics’ in the suffrage movement.⁷⁶

It is clear that the gender politics of adult suffrage are evidenced in these archives in ways that intersected and sometimes clashed in this male-dominated arena, however, ‘suffrage’ is only nominally alluded to in accompanying interpretive text and featured extracts. There are a much smaller contingent of the voices the documents contained, though the matters arising around wage disparities, tenement life, working and living conditions, education, health and more debated in these reports applied to women as much as men. Extracts for the 1914 report pertain to the 1913 Lockout, the rebellion featuring in the 1916 report with a short address on the women imprisoned and parts of a eulogy for James Connolly, including the statement: ‘We must look at life in all its aspects from the point of view of “the bottom dog” - the oppressed - be it nation, class or sex’.⁷⁷ An extract on female factory inspectors features for the 1917 report. No foregrounding of the enfranchisement of women (or ‘adult suffrage’) is made in the extracts for 1917, 1918 or 1919. If select extracts are intended to highlight matters of interest or significance and help the user locate them in the documents, women workers and gender politics feature little in the distillation of these twenty reports.

4.4 The Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) Movement of Extremist Files

The extended title of this collection is ‘Chief Secretary’s Office, Crime Branch: Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) Movement of Extremists 29 May 1915 - 20 April 1916’. The Extremist Files originate from a wider series of records pertaining to the Chief Secretary’s Office (CSO), which includes the CSO Registered Papers (CSO/RP) 1818-1922. As Eichhorn posits, ‘when institutional archives engage in digitisation projects, what users encounter online is typically either a single high-use collection, or selected materials from several high-use collections’.⁷⁸ These files had been digitized in 2015, ‘already launched and very popular,’ before the DoC microsite was created, although they were always

⁷⁶ Louise Ryan, “The ‘Irish Citizen,’ 1912-1920,” *Saothar* 17 (1992): 109.

⁷⁷ “22nd Annual Irish Trades Union Congress (1916),” *Decade of Centenaries*, 22.

⁷⁸ Kate Eichhorn, “Beyond Digitisation: A Case Study of Three Contemporary Feminist Collections,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 42, no. 3 (2014): 231.

intended for integration in these commemorative collections.⁷⁹ These intelligence reports were created by the Detective Branch of the DMP known as the ‘G’ Division, which tailed suspects’ movements in and outside Dublin, gathering intelligence and observing premises.⁸⁰

Ireland was something of a testbed for the development of British domestic and imperial policing. The force that would become the DMP in 1836 was inherited from a police service established there - the first in the British Isles - in the 1780s.⁸¹ The unarmed DMP, in conjunction with the armed Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) in the rest of the country, were involved in collecting intelligence on nationalists since the Fenianism of the mid-19th century, and intensified after 1900 in the lead up to the Rising, with some men ‘followed around the clock’ from 1915.⁸² The DMP had also been central to the suppression of street riots precipitated by the Labour Lockout in the autumn of 1913.⁸³ O’Halpin describes the period 1914-16 as ‘a distinct phase’ of British intelligence in Ireland, complicated by the commencement of the First World War, and concomitant threat of German intrigue in separatist plotting that would come into play in the charging and sentencing of the Easter rebels during the closed military trials, more of which to follow.⁸⁴ The ‘G’ division specialised in political movements and subversion. It comprised no more than 12 men who shadowed extremist suspects, surveyed premises and attended political meetings undercover.⁸⁵ Contrary to previous intelligence gathering on Irish nationalists, neither the RIC nor the DMP succeeded in infiltrating the three ‘most dangerous’ organisations, the Irish Volunteers (IV), the Irish Citizen Army (ICA) and the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB).⁸⁶ As O’Halpin points out, the apparent failure of the Irish police forces to anticipate the rebellion’s outbreak was due in part to the fact that ‘the plans of the inner circle of the conspirators who initiated the Easter rebellion

⁷⁹ National Archives of Ireland, “Decad. Centen.”; McDonagh, “Annual Report of the Director of the National Archives 2014,” 3.

⁸⁰ Eunan O’Halpin, “British Intelligence in Ireland, 1914-1921,” in *The Missing Dimension: Governments and Intelligence Communities in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Christopher Andrew and David Dilks (London: Macmillan, 1984), 54.

⁸¹ Paul McMahan, *British Spies and Irish Rebels: British Intelligence and Ireland, 1916-1945* (Boydell Press, 2008), 4.

⁸² Anastasia Dukova, *A History of the Dublin Metropolitan Police and Its Colonial Legacy / Anastasia Dukova*. (London, United Kingdom : Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 134.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁸⁴ O’Halpin, “British Intelligence in Ireland, 1914-1921,” 54-55.

⁸⁵ McMahan, *British Spies and Irish Rebels*, 4; O’Halpin, “British Intelligence in Ireland, 1914-1921,” 55.

⁸⁶ O’Halpin, “British Intelligence in Ireland, 1914-1921,” 58.

were unknown not only to the authorities but to the chief of staff of the Irish Volunteers, Eoin MacNeill.⁸⁷ This inner circle, within the highly secretive and male-only IRB, included the Proclamation signatories and some of the other executed men. The failures, according to McMahon, were also attributable to the complacency of the Castle authorities and the failure to share certain information on the part of British authorities.⁸⁸ Three DMP officers were killed during Easter Week 1916 and several more wounded.⁸⁹ An unarmed officer, shot (allegedly by a jubilant Markievicz) at the gates of Dublin Castle, was one of the rebellion's first victims and this incident and the failed attempt to take the Castle first alerted the authorities to the outbreak of rebellion.⁹⁰ The police force thus falls somewhere between the narratives of British intelligence and suppression of the Rising and the human cost of conflict.

It is only in the last twenty or so years that certain records of intelligence and security matters have become more readily available, whether at TNA or Dublin, extending the possibilities of historicising the intelligence matters between Britain and Ireland.⁹¹ County-by-county police reports held in British archives and that included intelligence on Irish rebel movement were, however, being used by 1966.⁹² Alongside these DMP reports both the Bureau of Military History and the Military Service Pensions Collection are counted among such previously closed archives, the former including testimony not only by republican activists but also former RIC officers.⁹³ The 'Extremist Files' hyperlink to the main NAI website via thumbnail and were released weekly between June 2015 and April 2016, corresponding to the historical date of the record creation. Arranged, as with the ITUC reports and similar to the NAI 'document of the month', as a browsable chronology of thumbnails and not keyword searchable. Prior knowledge or a fine-combed manual search of the documents is required to sift through these documents. Each file is

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ McMahon, *British Spies and Irish Rebels*, 14, 22.

⁸⁹ Dukova, *A History of the Dublin Metropolitan Police and Its Colonial Legacy* / Anastasia Dukova., 135.

⁹⁰ O'Halpin, "British Intelligence in Ireland, 1914-1921," 60.

⁹¹ McMahon, *British Spies and Irish Rebels*, 3.

⁹² Michael Laffan, "Easter Week and the Historians," in *1916 in 1966: Commemorating the Easter Rising*, ed. Mary E Daly and Margaret O'Callaghan (Royal Irish Academy, 2014), 338.

⁹³ Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland, 1900-2000*. (London: Profile Books, 2004), 206-7.

given a pop-out summary and further links to the digital surrogate (Figure 4-2, Figure 4-3).⁹⁴

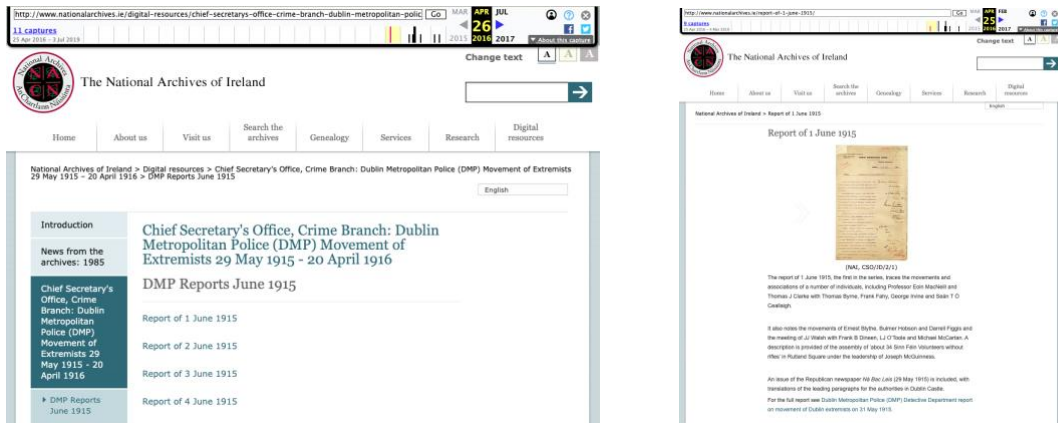


Figure 4-2. DMP Movement of Extremist Files, National Archives of Ireland 2016 via Internet Archive, The WayBack Machine. Accessed 25 September 2019



Figure 4-3. (L) New National Archives of Ireland website: DMP Movement of Extremist Files. (R) Report 10 March 1916, CSO/JD/2/227. Accessed 25 September 2019.

These files represent a specific selection that align to the immediate history of the Easter Rising pertaining to Republican movements during the 11-month period covered. The reports include intelligence gathered from the Annual Convention of Irish Volunteers and the funeral of Jeremiah O'Donovan-Rossa in 1915, as well as copies of nationalist

⁹⁴ Files referenced hereafter are available at “Chief Secretary’s Office, Crime Branch: Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) Movement of Extremists June 1915,” National Archives of Ireland, accessed September 2, 2020, <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/article/chief-secretarys-office-crime-branch-dublin-metropolitan-police-dmp-movement-extremists-29-may-1915-20-april-1916/>.

publications such as *The Spark* and *The Worker's Republic*, and refer to over 230 individuals 'principally members of the Irish Volunteers, the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Sinn Féin'.⁹⁵ An accompanying explainer - 'Who were the 'extremists'?' - provides short bios on 34 male extremists mentioned in the reports.⁹⁶ These include a number of the signatories of the 1916 Proclamation (Tom Clarke, the mastermind of the rebellion, is mentioned in almost every report) and of those subsequently executed such as Ned Daly and Michael O'Rahilly. Bulmer Hobson of the IRB and Eoin MacNeill, also feature frequently. Though no biography is included, Constance Markievicz appears in several reports, mainly in relation to the activities of Na Fianna Eireann, for example a commemorative event to mark the first anniversary of the Howth gun-running led by Na Fianna Eireann ('Sinn Fein Boy Scouts') 'under the command of Countess Markievicz,' Patrick Ryan and Herbert Mellows, but also preparations for the O'Donovan Rossa funeral in July 1915, and other unspecified meetings.⁹⁷ A special report on the funeral procession makes no mention of Cumann na mBan who were involved in its organisation or of any particular women in attendance, though mixed gender organisations such as the ICA were also reported present.⁹⁸ While some reports refer to meetings of the IWFL in Phoenix Park, another to Hanna Sheehy Skeffington's protest (deemed 'of no importance') against the imprisonment of John Milroy and Seán MacDiarmada in October 1915, nationalist women are less apparent in these reports in part due to the fact that the IRB and IV, the key organisations surveyed, were all-male and in the case of the IRB, extremely secretive. Though actively preparing for an insurrection, very few women were party to the actual plans in the time leading up to the rebellion.⁹⁹ It also suggests that they were, as during the subsequent rebellion and the War of Independence, considered less of an immediate threat in part by reason of their gender. They are likelier to appear in more generalised or implicit observations: one report refers to 'a few ladies,' likely Cumann na mBan members, in attendance at the commemoration of the Manchester Martyrs in Dublin, led by the IV in November 1915; others are flagged in publications of

⁹⁵ Dublin Metropolitan Police, Movement of Extremists 3 January 1916, CSO/JD/2/175.

⁹⁶ National Archives of Ireland, "Who Were the 'Extremists'?" accessed August 29, 2018, <http://www.nationalarchives.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Biographical-information-DMP-Revised.pdf>.

⁹⁷ Dublin Metropolitan Police, Movement of Extremists 26 July 1915, CSO/JD/2/44; Movement of Extremists 24 July 1915, CSO/JD/2/43.

⁹⁸ Movement of Extremists 30 July 1915, CSO/JD/2/49.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 12 July 1915, CSO/JD/2/32; 21 June 1915, CSO/JD/2/16; Pařeta, *Irish Nationalist Women*, 172.

‘anti-British character’ such as Louie Bennet’s article ‘The Union of Democratic Control in Ireland’ in an October 1915 issue of *The Worker’s Republic*.¹⁰⁰

Another larger collection of DMP records, prisoner books covering the period 1905-1918, was also released in 2016 through University College Dublin (UCD) Archives. Three of these four volumes were recovered by a north Dublin community activist group in 2015, digitised and donated to the Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU), and subsequently handed over to An Garda Síochána (Irish National Police Force). Three were digitised by Eneclann (a company that provides heritage research and digitisation services), the remaining volume by UCD, and offering to provide ‘an open access, online digital publishing platform’ for all four volumes.¹⁰¹ The conditions of the original handing over by this group to SIPTU was ‘that a donation be made to support a local youth project, and the second was that the information contained in them would go online, free to the public’.¹⁰² That the management of these digital volumes was entrusted to a university rather than the National Archives, connected as a state body to the national police force, may speak to its limited resources. And while the UCD Digital Library hyperlinks to the Extremist Files in its description of the Prison Books, the NAI has not reciprocated. The books are, far more than the Extremist files, evidence of the experiences of ordinary people during this period and the gendered experience of the fallout of the Easter Rising: Yeates has observed that it was mostly women that were arrested for looting in the aftermath of the Rising.¹⁰³ This fact points to the chaos of the Rising and the desperation for food and supplies, also challenging normative views of femininity and female behaviour at the time.

4.5 The Property Losses (Ireland) Committee Files

Launched in April 2016, the Property Losses (Ireland) Committee (PLIC) files are a collection of claims made to the Chief Secretary of Ireland’s Office over destruction to

¹⁰⁰ Movement of Extremists 22 November 1915, CSO/JD/2/141; 22 October 1915, CSO/JD/2/117.

¹⁰¹ Eneclann, “Eneclann,” accessed October 16, 2018, <http://www.eneclann.ie/>; UCD Digital Library, “Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) Prisoners Books,” accessed October 17, 2018, <https://digital.ucd.ie/view/ucdlib:43945>.

¹⁰² UCD Digital Library, “DMP Prisoner Books.”

¹⁰³ Yeates, “Historians on 1916.”

property during the 1916 rebellion. It was rediscovered uncatalogued at the NAI in 2012, and the Decade of Centenaries microsite describes it as documenting damage ‘from the most humble, like a milkman’s stock, to the grandest, like Clery’s Department Store’.¹⁰⁴ A collection that speaks to the destruction of much of Dublin city during Easter Week 1916 and its aftermath, it is further introduced as ‘a unique and interesting perspective on the social and political history of the time’ using the claims of Lizzie Walsh and Hanna Sheehy Skeffington to illustrate. Over 6,500 files were catalogued and digitized to a searchable database and consist of compensation applications made by businesses and individuals for damage or loss of property as a result of the rebellion in Dublin city, although some claims pertain to the fighting in Galway, Wexford and Enniscorthy. They are searchable by claimant, location, business and keyword using free-text or alphabetical search. The collection is accompanied by an image gallery from the Trinity College Dublin and National Museum of Ireland archives, rarely seen (prior to their digitisation) images of the devastation that provide a visceral snapshot of the ruins of the city centre.¹⁰⁵ The photographs supplied by Trinity College Dublin (TCD) are from an album donated by Thomas Johnson Westropp, another of which was donated to the National Library of Ireland.¹⁰⁶ In 2013, the NAI began a conservation and cataloguing project to make available for research a similar collection, the ‘Post-Truce (Damage to Property (Compensation) Act 1923) compensation files’ (FIN/COMP/2). This collection consists of more than 19,000 files including the records of claims made during the Civil War for property damage during the period of conflict 1921-23 and covering 26 counties, becoming available for public inspection in 2015.¹⁰⁷ A 2016 Report from the NAI identified these for possible digitisation with ‘specific Department funding,’ which in the event would logically join the Decade of Centenaries collections.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ ‘About the Collection (PLIC),’ Decade of Centenaries, accessed October 25, 2018, <http://centenaries.nationalarchives.ie/centenaries/plic/about.jsp>; Barry Kennerk, “COMPENSATING FOR THE RISING: The Papers of the Property Losses (Ireland) Committee, 1916,” *History Ireland* 21, no. 2 (2013): 33.

¹⁰⁵ National Archives of Ireland, “Property Losses (Ireland) Committee - Galleries,” Decade of Centenaries, accessed September 3, 2020, <http://centenaries.nationalarchives.ie/centenaries/plic/galleries.jsp>.

¹⁰⁶ A TCD Google Arts & Culture exhibition presents and details the origins of the photographs. The Library of Trinity College, “The Ruins of Dublin, 1916 - a Photographic Record by Thomas Johnson Westropp,” Google Arts & Culture, accessed September 3, 2020, <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/the-ruins-of-dublin-1916-a-photographic-record-by-thomas-johnson-westropp-trinity-college-dublin-library/0AICSjZuexeEKA?hl=en>.

¹⁰⁷ McDonagh, “Annual Report of the Director of the National Archives 2014,” 5.

¹⁰⁸ McDonagh, “Report of the Director of the National Archives 2016,” 27.

An overview of the history of this collection, from an archival perspective, is best articulated of the four, from the motivations and creation of these records, to the kinds of claims that were made and by whom, to their accession, conservation and preparation for digitisation, and it includes hyperlinks to administrative documents of interest and to details of their phased conservation. This is the only collection to provide detailed instructions on how to navigate the collection, which is crucial for effectively using these records.¹⁰⁹ This covers not just the search functions but how to understand the contents and context of the records themselves in conducting research. Only the PLIC/1 series of records were digitised, four more (PLIC/2 - PLIC/4) were catalogued but not digitised, which is, somewhat unusually, acknowledged. These files containing accounts and correspondences are described as of ‘routine’ nature.¹¹⁰ A mixture of typed and handwritten, the PDF surrogates are not text-searchable. Though not searchable by gender, and though male applicants are in the majority particularly but not exclusively for business damages, women account for a significant number of compensation applicants. A number of women made claims for loss of paintings at the Royal Hibernian Academy, others for ‘personal effects,’ clothes, bicycles, furniture and more that were damaged by fire, looted or used to build barricades during the fighting such as in the case of Margaret Boland.¹¹¹ Though the introductory text to this collection, as well as comments at the launch, makes reference to the well-known artists John Lavery and Jack B. Yeats, Milligan has used the PLIC series to reconstruct a sense of the ‘lost exhibition of 1916’ at the Royal Hibernian Academy that was destroyed by fires on Abbey Street through the claims of many largely unknown artists ‘many of whom were female’.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ National Archives of Ireland, “The Property Losses (Ireland) Committee - About the Collection,” Decade of Centenaries, accessed September 3, 2020, <http://centenaries.nationalarchives.ie/centenaries/plic/about.jsp>; National Archives of Ireland, “The Property Losses (Ireland) Committee - How to Search,” Decade of Centenaries, accessed September 3, 2020, <http://centenaries.nationalarchives.ie/centenaries/plic/howtosearch.jsp>; Jensen, “Digital Archival Literacy for (All) Historians,” 8.

¹¹⁰ See catalogue entry: “Property Losses Ireland Committee,” National Archives of Ireland, accessed September 3, 2020, <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/search-the-online-catalogue/advanced-search/#!/details/110993328>.

¹¹¹ Agnes Conyers, PLIC/1/117; Violet Watson, PLIC/1/852; Margaret Boland, PLIC/1/6187

¹¹² “NAI Releases 1916 Rising Compensation Claims Online,” Irish Genealogy News, 2016, <https://www.irishgenealogynews.com/2016/04/nai-releases-1916-rising-compensation.html>; Katherine Milligan, “The Cultural Cost of 1916: The Property Losses (Ireland) Committee and the Royal Hibernian Academy,” Inspiring Ireland, accessed September 7, 2019, <https://inspiring-ireland.ie/cultural-cost-of-1916-property-losses-ireland-committee-and-royal-hibernian-academy>.

Notwithstanding the emphasis on the materiality of 1916, and as Milligan says the ‘cultural cost’ of the destruction of Dublin, these files are additionally intended as a genealogical tool. At the launch of the collection in 2016, the then Director of the NAI stated that the files ‘will enable historians and family members to research the impact of the fighting on peoples’ lives and the claims they made in an attempt to rebuild them’. Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs Heather Humphreys likewise commented that they provide ‘insight into the very personal cost of the Rising’ and ‘a window into the homes of 1916, as people claimed for personal effects, both small and large’.¹¹³

Code ↕	Description ↕	Surname ↕	Business ↕	Location ↕	Scope and Content ▼
PLIC/1/2663	Reverend JH Atkinson, 11 Brighton Vale, Monkstown, Dublin.	Atkinson	Royal Hibernian Academy	Brighton Vale; Monkstown; Abbey Street Lower	Claim for £1 1s for destruction of painting by fire at the Royal Hibernian Academy, Abbey Street Lower, Dublin. Payment of 21s recommended by Committee.
PLIC/1/2174	Arthur H Orpen, 33 Anglesea Street, Dublin, and Oriel Grove Avenue, Blackrock, Dublin.	Orpen	Royal Hibernian Academy	Anglesea Street; Oriel Grove Avenue; Abbey Street Lower	Claim for £10 10s for a framed and glazed painting destroyed by fire at the Royal Hibernian Academy, Abbey Street Lower, Dublin. Full payment recommended by the Committee.
PLIC/1/2149	Philip H Miller, Marlow, Buckinghamshire, England.	Miller	Royal Hibernian Academy	Marlow; Buckinghamshire; England; Abbey Street Lower	Claim for £10 10s for a painting destroyed by fire at the Royal Hibernian Academy, Abbey Street Lower, Dublin. Payment of £5 5s recommended by the Committee.
PLIC/1/6298	WH Hope, The Studio, 59 St Peter's Road, Croydon, Surrey, England.	Hope	Royal Hibernian Academy	St Peter's Road; Croydon; Surrey; England; Abbey Street Lower	Claim for £10 10s for destruction of painting on exhibition by fire at the Royal Hibernian Academy, Abbey Street Lower, Dublin. Payment of £8 recommended by Committee.
PLIC/1/1218	J Thomson Dunning, 27 Bolton Studio, Radcliffe Road, London, England.	Thomson Dunning	Royal Hibernian Academy	Bolton Studio; Radcliffe Road; London; England; Abbey Street Lower	Claim for £10 10s for painting destroyed by fire while on exhibition at the Royal Hibernian Academy, Abbey Street Lower, Dublin. Payment of £3 recommended by Committee.

Figure 4-4. PLIC/1 search result by location, A-Z.

What is not curated alongside the PLIC series is the closely related personal injury claims of the wounded and bereaved civilians caught up in the conflict of Easter Week 1916, which would have been made via the Rebellion Victims Committee. There are nonetheless traces of the rebellion victims in this collection. For example, Michael Smyth’s file detailing the loss of his animals and other effects at 174 North King Street claims that he saw two men, George Ennis and Michael Noonan, shot dead by British Army soldiers in his own room (part of an incident known later as the King Street

¹¹³ “NAI Releases 1916 Rising Compensation Claims Online.”

Massacre).¹¹⁴ Small in number, the files consist of letters written to the Chief Secretary's Office (CSO) mostly by widowed dependants, either directly or via solicitor. Just over half of the 485 people killed during the Easter Rising were non-combatant civilians, a large number of whom were labouring men but also around 40 women and 40 children, the last an aspect of the Rising that garnered public interest with the best-selling publication of 'Children of the Revolution' by broadcaster Joe Duffy in 2015. The files are part of the CSO Registered Papers 1818-1922 (CSO/RP). Yeates drew attention to this in 2016:

...we're still waiting for the personal injury claims to go online, much smaller files, by the way, much smaller number, but these are the people that actually lost their lives, lost their limbs, families lost their breadwinners. The amounts involved are miniscule compared with the 2.5 million that employers got.¹¹⁵

The full scope of the CSO/RP files are in the process of being catalogued and given online finding aids for which work is ongoing and proceeding chronologically.¹¹⁶ There is no evidence that they were specially identified for the centenary of 1916, yet some of these personal injury claims exists as digital surrogates, created ad hoc, on the NAI website. One example has been presented as a 'Document of the Month' and a handful of documents can also be found on the *Century Ireland* website, digitised to order, such as a list of rebellion fatalities and a personal injury claim.¹¹⁷ Traces of these personal injury claims, trauma-laden perspectives on the Rising and its aftermath, exist in the digital

¹¹⁴ Michael Smyth, PLIC/1/3820.

¹¹⁵ Yeates, "Historians on 1916."

¹¹⁶ National Archives of Ireland, "Home," Chief Secretary of Ireland's Office Registered Papers - Francis J. Crowley Bequest, accessed October 11, 2018, <http://www.csorp.nationalarchives.ie/index.html>; National Archives of Ireland, "Select Chronology," Chief Secretary of Ireland's Office Registered Papers - Francis J. Crowley Bequest, accessed October 11, 2018, http://www.csorp.nationalarchives.ie/context/chronology.html#_ftn1.

¹¹⁷ National Archives of Ireland, "2016: October Document of the Month," accessed October 11, 2018, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180424202142/http://www.nationalarchives.ie/digital-resources/documents-of-the-month/2016-2/october-document-of-the-month/>; Century Ireland, "Easter Monday - the Rising Remembered," accessed October 9, 2018, <https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/easter-monday-the-rising-remembered>; Century Ireland, "Civilians Shot during Rising," accessed October 9, 2018, <https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/from-the-archives-civilians-shot-during-rising>.

sphere but have not been curated as part of the dedicated NAI centenaries collections. Indeed, *Century Ireland* has at times proved ‘a digital platform for specific items where none previously existed’ according to Duncan, giving the CSO/RP records as an example.¹¹⁸

Ó Corráin has shown how the readiness of the British government to shoulder the responsibility for compensating businesses and property owners affected by the rebellion cannot be separated from the ongoing Home Rule negotiations, but especially the public and political discontent fomented by secretive military trials resulting in the executions of 15 men and the mass imprisonment of rebels in British gaols, for which pacification was required.¹¹⁹ This emphasises the dialogical relationship between the PLIC and 1916 Courtmartial Files in this series of digitisations.

4.6 The 1916 Courtmartial Files

The digitised 1916 Courtmartial Files were launched at Richmond Barracks in Dublin by the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, on the 22 September 2016.¹²⁰ They are the official records of the proceedings of 15 of the closed military trials of those who took part in the Easter Rising, which were held mainly at Richmond Barracks Dublin, but also one at Dublin Castle Hospital, and two at Cork Detention Barracks in May 1916. As some trials considered multiple defendants in the same sitting, there are 21 given names for defendants in this small collection. These ‘in camera’ (no access by press or the public) military trials culminated in the execution of 15 men, which in turn helped to change public opinion in Ireland in favour of the Easter rebels and Irish separatism.¹²¹ This

¹¹⁸ Mark Duncan, “Public History in the Digital Age: Century Ireland and the Decade of Centenaries,” *Studia Hibernica* 46, no. 1 (2020): 112.

¹¹⁹ Daithí Ó Corráin, “They Blew up the Best Portion of Our City and ... It Is Their Duty to Replace It: Compensation and reconstruction in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising,” *Irish Historical Studies* 39, no. 154 (2014): 272-95.

¹²⁰ Universities Ireland, “Reflecting on a Decade of War and Revolution in Ireland 1912-1923: Courts Martial Records of 1916 Leaders,” accessed October 10, 2018, <http://universitiesireland.ie/easter-rising-courts-martial-records-of-1916-leaders-online/>; See also: “Post Truce Compensation Files Added to NAI Catalogue,” Irish Genealogy News.

¹²¹ Roger Casement, the last to be executed after the Rising, was tried publicly in London in August 1916, where his death sentence was also carried out.

intervention by the British authorities and swift retribution was crucial to the chain of events on the road to independence.

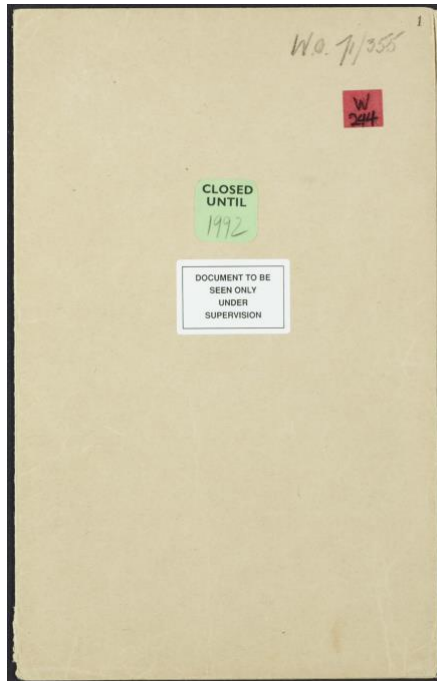


Figure 4-5 Cover of court martial file of Seán MacDiarmada. National Archives of Ireland

In 2006, reference was made to archives of the 1916 Rising held at Kew (likely referring in part to the courts-martial files, and their accessibility) raised in relation to the marking of the Rising’s anniversary:

If one wants to find out about people who participated in the Rising, one must go to approximately six or seven different locations, including the archives in Kew, outside London. The material held there would be more appropriately held in this country so people in the lower echelons can find out about the Rising without having to travel to the UK.¹²²

¹²² Catherine Murphy, TD, Willie O’Dea, “Dáil Éireann Debate - 23 February 2006. Commemorative Events. Answer to Questions No. 6, 52 and 166,” Houses of the Oireachtas, accessed March 12, 2019, <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/2006-02-23/speech/238/>.

Unfortunate as the expression 'lower echelons' is, the sentiment has to do with wider access to this Irish documentary heritage such as this collection, so central to the rebellion and its aftermath.

For the centenary, digital surrogates of the courts-martial files were purchased from TNA through funding from the Universities Ireland group, which facilitates all-island university co-operation.¹²³ The digital files are thus presented under TNA licensing.¹²⁴ The original courts-martial files reside at the UK National Archives in Kew, part of a War Office series (WO 71) 'Judge Advocate General's Office: Courts Martial Proceedings and Board of General Officers' Minutes' partially covering the period 1668-1993.¹²⁵ This digitisation originally came about through a partnership between TNA and Ancestry to make them freely available for the centenary, announced in May 2016. This further included a number of 'intelligence profiles' on Irish rebel movements (1914-1922). According to Rhona Murray of Ancestry, the courts-martial files were removed from Dublin to the War Office in London sometime after independence and later transferred to TNA under the 1958 Public Records Act.¹²⁶ TNA advertises online access to the 15 files via Ancestry who provide enhanced viewing options, as well as on site using Kew computers. TNA maintains a significant public-private partnership with this genealogy service in digitising other collections such as census records whereby Ancestry finance digitisation of the records in return for exclusively placing them behind a paywall on their website, while free access is provided onsite via TNA computers only, a significant geographical barrier to most. The NAI are committed to free and complete access to the digitised collections they host but in practice it has been made clear that funding limitations have necessitated such partnerships with companies like *findmypast.ie* (Eneclann) and Ancestry who usually operate a time-limited commercial exploitation agreement for carrying out digitisations. Many of the genealogical records that became available in 2016 (see below; see also chapter 5) had previously been accessible through these third-party subscriptions or onsite at the NAI, while some collections could be made available online immediately.¹²⁷

¹²³ Decade of Centenaries, "The 1916 Courtmartial Files," accessed October 10, 2018, <http://court martial.nationalarchives.ie/index.html>.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ "WO 71 Judge Advocate General's Office: Courts Martial Proceedings and Board of General Officers' Minutes," The National Archives UK.

¹²⁶ Rhona Murray, "1916 Courts Martial and Executions: Source Material," *The Irish Times*, May 3, 2016.

¹²⁷ Crowe, "Joint Committee on Environment, Culture and the Gaeltacht."

These public-private relationships are common but little evidenced in the para-text of these digitisations.¹²⁸ That these digital courts-martial files are the product of a TNA-Ancestry collaboration primarily in the first instance is nowhere evidenced by the NAI or Universities Ireland.

That the President of Ireland launched this digitisation in 2016 lends credence to the cultural and historical weight of these records in these commemorations. While the files are best known for their relation to the 15 executed men, they also include files pertaining to a number of lower-ranking rebels who were tried during the same proceedings. Various accounts give different numbers but an essay accompanying this centenary collection puts the complete number of rebel trial records at 170, 169 men and one woman, Constance Markievicz. Though many received death sentences, most were commuted to penal servitude subsequent to the public and political response to the first 15 executions. The files of the executed were first released to the public in 1999, and only these appear in the WO 71 series, though more are in the public domain. The Ireland subseries also contains cases relating to ‘Irish rebellion, 1920-1921’, i.e. the War of Independence period. While the files of the executed were released, the remaining files were previously thought to have been routinely destroyed by the Public Record Office (UK). This turned out not to be the case for some.¹²⁹ In 2014, legal historian Seán Enright published several of the proceedings beyond those of the executed, using the BMH witness statements and other sources to reconstruct the proceedings where they otherwise have not survived. These included some not presented in this centenary collection such as that of Markievicz, around whose interview swirled ridicule regarding her behaviour until official records were released, and which in the end did not tally with the somewhat derisive recollections of Lieutenant William Wiley, a Kings Counsel in the trials.¹³⁰ The incongruous evidence was examined as part of the an RTÉ documentary that dramatized the trials ‘in light of new evidence’ for the ninetieth anniversary of the Rising in 2006.¹³¹ An official account of her trial can be found in a separate file series at TNA, used by Enright, as well as courts-

¹²⁸ Gabriele, “Transfiguring the Newspaper,” 1.

¹²⁹ Seán Enright, *Easter Rising 1916: The Trials* (Sallins, Co. Kildare: Merrion, 2014), 3-4.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 3-4, 185-89.

¹³¹ “Hidden History: 1916: The Man Who Lost Ireland (18th April 2006),” RTÉ Press Centre, accessed October 11, 2020, <https://presspack.rte.ie/2006/04/18/hidden-history-1916-the-man-who-lost-ireland/>.

martial registers.¹³² Other trial records, according to Enright, were secured by a few surviving rebels, some of which were used in a legal challenge against the trials, and these eventually ‘surfaced’ in the National Library. The remaining records were donated to the BMH.¹³³

Dispute over access to these records began soon after their creation when demands were made by Irish MPs in Westminster for their publication in the months following the executions. These demands were based around the contested legality of the in-camera trials.¹³⁴ Correspondences attached to the files of Éamonn Ceannt and Ned Daly further demonstrate such demands for access, the former’s widow and the latter’s mother having made requests for copies of the proceedings in 1917, both of which were refused.¹³⁵ The possibility of the trial proceedings being published died with the Asquith government in December 1916. Objections to their publication were subsequently made on the basis of an implication of illegality that would reflect badly on the judgement of General Maxwell who signed off on the sentences, the weakness of prosecution evidence in some cases, potential danger to witnesses and members of the court, and fear of the public reaction in Ireland.¹³⁶ Opening the way for public scrutiny of the same court martial system on the Western Front, as Enright reminds us, was also a significant consideration.¹³⁷ In 1966, the Rising jubilee year, a renewed political debacle over the return of these files from Kew ensued for some time, sparked by an appeal by an immediate relative of one of the executed leaders.¹³⁸ The papers were withheld on the grounds that they could create embarrassment for surviving individuals and relatives on both the Irish and British sides, a claim that was rebuffed by the Irish Government until apparently corroborated by a reputable historian.¹³⁹ Again the weakness of the evidence, but also the potentially unpatriotic or unchivalrous nature of some of the rebels’ defence were at play in this exchange. The concession is characteristic of the behaviour of successive Irish administrations in the attempt, as O’Brien has accounted, ‘to delay almost indefinitely the

¹³² See: IRELAND: Activities of Countess Markievicz, HO 144/1580/316818; Field General Courts Martial (Registers) WO 213/8, The National Archives Kew.

¹³³ See: Note 21 in Enright, *Easter Rising 1916: The Trials*, 225.

¹³⁴ Brian Barton, *The Secret Court Martial Records of the Easter Rising*, 2nd ed. (Stroud: The History Press, 2010), 37.

¹³⁵ WO71 348; WO71 344, The 1916 Courtmartial Files.

¹³⁶ Barton, *The Secret Court Martial Records of the Easter Rising*, 38-39.

¹³⁷ Enright, *Easter Rising 1916: The Trials*, 3.

¹³⁸ O’Brien, *Irish Governments and the Guardianship of Historical Records 1922-72*, 100-101.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

development of an objective academic appraisal of many aspects of Irish history’, whether the records were within their jurisdiction or otherwise.¹⁴⁰ Considering the anxiety historically attached to these potentially unflattering records on the part of the British State as much as the Irish, the spirit of cooperation in the recent arrangement negotiated between the NAI and TNA must be put in the context of the Peace Process and improved British-Irish relations reached prior to 2016.¹⁴¹ The production of this very selective online collection for a primarily Irish audience does not, however, constitute a repatriation and more a (paid) goodwill gesture.¹⁴²

Recent developments in archival theory around absence and affect brings a fresh dimension to the story of these records. Gilliland and Caswell have called for acknowledgement of the ‘roles of individual and collective imaginings about the absent or unattainable archive and its contents’ and the ‘affect associated with the imagined records,’ that is to say, records which could not be known because they are/were embargoed. These records, for as long they remain either inaccessible or their contents purely speculative, the records as imagined or anticipated ‘can inspire all sorts of narratives, suppositions, aspirations, longings, fears and distrust’ that in turn shape the archives.¹⁴³ As with the BMH and MSPC (see chapter 6), the classified status and inaccessibility of these files produced such affects, which played out in individual disputes and the diplomatic politicking around them. For immediate relatives of the executed, the mysterious files undoubtedly represented immense personal longing for closure: a descendant of Michael Mallin in 2017 launched a campaign to restore, as he understood it, the reputation of Mallin tarnished by what they claim was a fabricated court martial record that sought to discredit him as unchivalrous by falsely stating that Markievicz was first in command at St Stephen’s Green so that he would escape execution;¹⁴⁴ the affective afterlife of these files continues through personal grapples with the veracity of these documents. On the other hand, suspicions and fears in the event seem to have dictated

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 11.

¹⁴¹ Queen Elizabeth’s ‘historic’ 2011 visit is often cited as representing these improved relations.

¹⁴² James Lowry, “Radical Empathy, the Imaginary and Affect in (Post)Colonial Records: How to Break out of International Stalemates on Displaced Archives,” *Archival Science* 19, no. 2 (2019): 188.

¹⁴³ Anne J. Gilliland and Michelle Caswell, “Records and Their Imaginaries: Imagining the Impossible, Making Possible the Imagined,” *Archival Science* 16, no. 1 (2016): 54-55.

¹⁴⁴ Ronan McGreevy, “Son (103) Seeks to Vindicate Father Executed in Easter Rising,” *The Irish Times*, June 18, 2017, 6.

the conviction of the Irish Government's demands for their release in the 1960s as much as they did the British willingness to acquiesce.

As with physical archives, we must also be aware of and interrogate what is not present.¹⁴⁵ The content of these files, as demonstrated, has been mired in controversy and speculation. As these records of the courts-martial proceedings were removed to London shortly after the the processes of secession had begun, the term 'displaced archives' has some application. A basic definition of displaced archives given by Lowry refers to records not just removed from their place of creation but also claimed by others, and a removal seemingly justifiable by the collective status of the removers i.e. states or regimes.¹⁴⁶ This definition varies, but here, as in Lowry's example, it refers specifically to such removals that occur 'during decolonisation and where their ownership is disputed by the former colonies, now independent nations'.¹⁴⁷ Arguably, the process of decolonisation was underway in 1916 in Ireland at a cultural and ideological level if not yet materially. McGarry has alternatively characterised the revolutionary period 1912-23 as 'a decade-long negotiation over the terms of British withdrawal'.¹⁴⁸ The record of these transfers is, however, better catalogued and accounted for than such removals in other non-western former colonies.

4.7 Dissemination & Engagement

The NAI website interface was upgraded in March 2019.¹⁴⁹ Data concerning the NAI online presence is inconsistently reported in its public documentation such as NAAC and Director's reports. Some data is provided from 2013 to present, becoming more detailed in recent reports, though significantly less detailed than similar public reports produced by the National Library, as will be seen in chapter 5. There were 18 million hits to the

¹⁴⁵ Bishop, "The Serendipity of Connectivity," 771.

¹⁴⁶ James Lowry, "Radical Empathy, the Imaginary and Affect in (Post)Colonial Records: How to Break out of International Stalemates on Displaced Archives," *Archival Science* 19, no. 2 (2019): 187.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Fearghal McGarry, "Revolution, 1916-1923," in *The Cambridge History of Ireland: Volume 4: 1880 to the Present*, ed. Thomas Bartlett, vol. 4, The Cambridge History of Ireland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 294.

¹⁴⁹ @NARIreland (National Archives Ireland) Twitter, March 21, 2019, <https://twitter.com/NARIreland/status/1108739981198217216>.

primary NAI website and over 560,000 unique visitors in 2014.¹⁵⁰ Though analytics are not provided for the year 2015 in the previous 2014-15 report by the NAAC, a Director's Report for 2016 states that 'the investment in digitisation and provision of digital content saw a marked increase in on-line visitors'.¹⁵¹ In 2016, the NAI reported 13.1 million hits and 376,400 individual visitors to its 'parent site', and over 2.68 million combined visitors to all its websites. For 2017 it reported an increase to 2.8 million.¹⁵² These figures, however, mark an overall drop in online visitors since 2014. For comparison, reading room footfall was 8,746 in 2016.¹⁵³ As with the National Library of Ireland, genealogy is a key public service of the NAI and the Census 1901/1911 database continues to outstrip other digital resources. It garnered 146 million hits in 2014 and previous reports show that it has been the most visited of the NAI online collections.¹⁵⁴ A country breakdown for 2016 shows that after Ireland, four territories with historically strong diasporic links are the next largest countries of origin of website visitors (Figure 4-6).

	Country	Sessions	% Sessions
1.	Ireland	1,220,275	39.38%
2.	United Kingdom	869,056	28.04%
3.	United States	580,598	18.74%
4.	Australia	179,148	5.78%
5.	Canada	119,964	3.87%
6.	New Zealand	32,634	1.05%
7.	Spain	12,566	0.41%
8.	France	11,228	0.36%
9.	Russia	9,870	0.32%
10.	Germany	7,880	0.24%

Figure 4-6 'Global visitors to www.nationalarchives.ie by country of origin' Director's Report 2016.

Six new genealogical collections were added to this site in September 2016 including marital, property valuation and shipping records, the earliest stretching back to 1596.¹⁵⁵ The Irish diaspora is the major audience and user-base for such genealogy records. Family

¹⁵⁰ McDonagh, "Annual Report of the Director of the National Archives 2014," 3.

¹⁵¹ McDonagh, "Report of the Director of the National Archives 2016," 15.

¹⁵² McDonagh, "Report of the Director of the National Archives 2017," 5, 32, 6.

¹⁵³ McDonagh, "Report of the Director of the National Archives 2016," 5.

¹⁵⁴ McDonagh, "Annual Report of the Director of the National Archives 2014," 3; It is unclear if this figure accounts for hits since the collection went online, as it represents a jump of over 100 million on preceding years. The popularity of these records may also skew overall trends in online access. The National Archives Advisory Council, "Annual Report 2012," 4.

¹⁵⁵ "Genealogy," National Archives of Ireland, accessed October 2, 2019, <https://genealogy.nationalarchives.ie/>.

history was a key concern of the *Ireland 2016* programme with the creation of the ‘Family Research 2016’ resource using both its Decade of Centenaries and genealogical collections, hosted by Irish Genealogy and aimed at secondary school children. All of the case studies and learning resources in this educational website centre on three men, two connected to 1916, one from a working-class family living in Dublin’s tenements. The case study of Seán MacDiarmada, a Rising leader and Proclamation signatory, which also makes use of records digitised in the National Library’s 1916 Digital Collections that are examined in chapter 5, attends to Míne Ryan firstly as his love interest (‘Part 2: love and war’), Cumann na mBan and Sinn Féin activist second. It does come with an acknowledgement that unlike the “‘widows of the 1916 leaders’”, whose stories became well known, little is remembered of her unique involvement in the Rising’.¹⁵⁶

4.7.1 Social Media

The NAI have been active on Twitter and Instagram since June 2015 and September 2018 respectively. The NAI Twitter following has increased from 2,000 in 2016 to 9,500 at the time of writing (2020) and the organisation has published a social media policy document outlining the parameters of use.¹⁵⁷ The 2016 centenary appears to have been an impetus to develop a greater social media presence, increase ‘access’ and ‘integrate with other initiatives’:

Our approach to social media was developed in 2016 to better integrate with other initiatives. In particular, publicising weekly release of Dublin Metropolitan Police secret files from the run up to Easter 1916 now held in the National Archives.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Irish Genealogy, “Research Profile: Seán Mac Diarmada,” Family History 2016, accessed August 19, 2020, <https://www.irishgenealogy.ie/en/2016-family-history/learning-resources/sean-mac-diarmada>.

¹⁵⁷ McDonagh, “Report of the Director of the National Archives 2016,” 32; National Archives of Ireland, “Social Media Policy,” 2019, <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Social-Media-Policy.pdf>.

¹⁵⁸ McDonagh, “Report of the Director of the National Archives 2016,” 14.

4.7.2 Collaborations & Education

A considerable amount of the core archival material presented in this case study originates from outside the NAI holdings - two out of four collections. Conversely, much of the commemorative digitisation work of the NAI is spread outwardly between different partnered institutions or collaborative projects. The NAI is represented on the steering committee for the Military Service Pensions project and has long advised the Military Archives.¹⁵⁹ More recently, the NAI is a collaborator on the Trinity College Dublin-based *Beyond 2022: Ireland's Virtual Record Treasury* - a project now featured prominently on the NAI website domain as a key collaboration - and a further survey of material salvaged from the PROI fire of 1922 in partnership with the Irish Manuscripts Commission.¹⁶⁰ *Beyond 2022* seeks to virtually reconstruct the PROI building and the archival collections lost to the 1922 Four Courts fire, so often referenced in regards to the current state of the NAI. It was recommended in a guidance report by the Expert Advisory Group on Commemorations (EAG) in 2018 that *Beyond 2022* should be a key legacy initiative of the Decade of Centenaries, emphasising its democratic function:

An all-island and international legacy project of this stature, which combines historical research, archival conservation and technical innovation, would be a lasting and meaningful legacy, democratising access to invaluable records and illuminating 7 centuries of Irish history.¹⁶¹

The NAI has also been closely involved in digitising papers of the early Free State. These populate the extensive and high quality *Dáil100* website for the commemoration of the

¹⁵⁹ McDonagh, "Report of the Director of the National Archives 2017," 29; National Archives Advisory Council, "10th Report of the National Archives Advisory Council 2001" (Dublin, 2006), <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/NAAC-10th-Report-English-2001.pdf>.

¹⁶⁰ "Beyond 2022: Ireland's Virtual Record Treasury," National Archives of Ireland, accessed August 19, 2020, <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/article/beyond-2022-irelands-virtual-record-treasury/>; "Survey of Material Salvaged from the Public Record Office of Ireland in 1922," National Archives of Ireland, accessed August 19, 2020, <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/article/survey-material-salvaged-public-record-office-ireland-1922/>.

¹⁶¹ Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations, "Decade of Centenaries Second Phase Guidance," 19.

first Dáil in January 1919 in preparation for the centenary of the foundation of the State.¹⁶² It is unclear if this project supersedes the proposed addition of these papers to the NAI DoC collection as it has been stated that the full record of the First Dáil of 1919 would be added to this microsite. The combination of this and the National Library of Ireland ‘Towards a Republic’ initiative (see chapter 5) will mean that digitised archives will be in place for the upcoming centenary of the legal foundation of the State in 1922, and the link between this and the first Dáil was strongly emphasised by the EAG.¹⁶³

Many individual CSO/RP files have also been digitized specifically to illustrate stories published on *Century Ireland*, one of the flagship DoC digital projects, as one of its institutional partners.¹⁶⁴ These files were selected for digitisation during periodic visits to the NAI and based on projected stories for publication on the *Century Ireland* website. They are specific to the publishing agenda of *Century Ireland* but largely fall in line with major historical events. They are thus dispersed among the historical news stories of *Century Ireland*, or the NAI ‘Document of the Month’ series.¹⁶⁵ This particular collaboration is an exception to its own digital imaging policy that prioritises complete collections or series. In 2012 the Digital Repository of Ireland (DRI) reported similarly ad hoc digitisation practices among many of the institutions it surveyed in Ireland, whereby a ‘selection strategy’ was being carried out for specific user demands, projects or online exhibitions. A lack of funding for more comprehensive digitisation strategies, including the long-term preservation of digital data, was cited as a reason for this.¹⁶⁶ Education packs produced through *Century Ireland* also make use of records from these collections: a DMP report for 2 September 1916 and the half-copy of the Proclamation used in Sean MacDiarmada’s court martial.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² “About us,” Dáil100, accessed August 19, 2019, <https://www.dail100.ie/en/about-us>; “An Chartlann Náisiúnta - Cnuasach Taifead ó Thréimhse Tosaigh Dháil Éireann,” Dáil100, accessed August 19, 2019, <https://www.dail100.ie/en/national-archives/>.

¹⁶³ Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations, “Decade of Centenaries Second Phase Guidance,” 13.

¹⁶⁴ “About Century Ireland.”

¹⁶⁵ Century Ireland, “Hunger Striking Prisoners Released under Cat and Mouse Act,” accessed August 29, 2018, <https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/hunger-striking-prisoners-released>.

¹⁶⁶ Aileen Carroll and Sharon Webb, “Digital Archiving in Ireland: National Survey of the Humanities and Social Sciences” (Maynooth: National University of Ireland Maynooth, 2012), 18.

¹⁶⁷ “Object: Half-Copy of the 1916 Proclamation (National Archives of Ireland),” Century Ireland, accessed July 18, 2018, <https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/object-half-copy-of-the-1916-proclamation>; “Object: CSO Report - Movement of Extremists (National Archives of Ireland),” Century Ireland, accessed July 18, 2018, <https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/object-cso-report-movement-of-extremists>.

The NAI has further contributed 50 items to date to the *Inspiring Ireland* project, including documents from the collections discussed above. These are primarily from the PLIC series as well as from the 1911 census, joining those from the BMH and the MSPC collections.¹⁶⁸ One ‘suffragette document’ is provided in high resolution from the General Prison Boards series, to be further discussed.¹⁶⁹ Elsewhere, in an *Inspiring Ireland* themed exhibition ‘Women and the Rising,’ one DMP Movement of Extremists file appears alluding to the entanglement of suffragist and nationalist Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington within these activities, drawn out more explicitly through closer reading, description and linking with related sources, including her PLIC application file.¹⁷⁰ As Thylstrup points out ‘the information deluge generated by digitisation has enhanced the necessity of curation, both within and outside institutions’ and that these ‘curatorial practices are now ever more engaged in epistemic meaning-making’.¹⁷¹

4.8 Beyond ‘Decade of Centenaries’

What is not included in this digital commemorative archive must also be attended to in this reading of digitisation as an act of cultural mediation. The Soldiers’ Wills project was a three-year undertaking to conserve and digitise what is the only official set of documents pertaining to the First World War housed by the NAI.¹⁷² The collection is not linked within the DoC microsite, however it was digitised and placed online within the timeline of this commemorative decade. Remembrance of the First World War, and the Battle of the Somme in particular, has been the focus of a reconciliatory political agenda vis-à-vis Northern Ireland from the outset of the official commemorations. Thousands of Irishmen and women served as soldiers and nurses on the British side. As discussed in chapter 1, it is only in the last 30 years that the First World War has become a widely accepted narrative within modern Irish historiography and remembrance, and not solely

¹⁶⁸ “Search : National Archives of Ireland,” *Inspiring Ireland*, accessed July 18, 2018, https://www.inspiring-ireland.ie/search/collections?f%5B0%5D=field_dri_institute%3A572.

¹⁶⁹ “Object Detail: Suffragette Document,” *Inspiring Ireland*, accessed August 16, 2020, <http://www.inspiring-ireland.ie/object-detail/5999n6951>.

¹⁷⁰ *Inspiring Ireland*, “Object Detail: Movement of Extremists 21 June 1915,” accessed October 16, 2018, <http://inspiring-ireland.ie/object-detail/jw827c55h>.

¹⁷¹ Thylstrup, *The Politics of Mass Digitisation*, 71.

¹⁷² National Archives of Ireland, “Soldiers’ Wills: About the Records,” accessed June 7, 2018, <http://soldierswills.nationalarchives.ie/search/sw/about.jsp>.

in reference to the opportunity it presented for rebellion in 1916. As Crowe has remarked ‘The abandonment of that amnesia has been one of the most significant historiographical and personal events that we’ve had here in the last while’.¹⁷³ Containing over 9,000 files and released in two phases between 2012 and 2013 in advance of the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War, this collection constitutes an ‘important historical record of the men who served, their social and economic background and give valuable information on relatives and relationships’.¹⁷⁴ Many of them are also therefore, though searchable only by name of the Wills’ owner, records of relationships to women - sisters, mothers, fiancées, wives etc. to whom possessions and property were willed. Just under 16,000 people accessed the Soldier’s Wills collection in 2012.¹⁷⁵

INFORMAL WILL.

W.O. No.: E 219313/1 DOMICILE. Irish

Record No. 202/375 865 ¹⁶/₁₇

The enclosed document dated Jan 1st 1916 and signed

Name Thomas Fahy and signed Pte Fahy

Regtl. No. and Rank 12421 Pte appears to have been written or executed by the person named in the margin while he was "in actual military service" within the meaning of the Wills Act, 1837, and has been recognised by the War Department as constituting a valid will.

q/c S/1 Bn
Regt. Royal Dublin Fusiliers

Died at France

Date of Death 28.6.16

WAR OFFICE.

Date 31/1/17

R. J. J. J.
for the Assistant Financial Secretary.

H. 30200.

NAI/2002/119

Figure 4-7. Will of Thomas Fahy, Royal Dublin Fusiliers. NAI/2002/119

The wills are presented as a genealogical database within the NAI genealogy microsite. The 1901/1911 censuses and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission are

¹⁷³ Crowe, “Closing Remarks.”

¹⁷⁴ Decade of Centenaries, “8 November 2012: Launch of Online Access to Soldiers Wills,” accessed June 7, 2018, <http://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/online-access-to-soldiers-wills-launch/>; National Archives of Ireland, “Soldiers’ Wills: About the Records.”

¹⁷⁵ The National Archives Advisory Council, “Annual Report 2012” (Dublin, 2012), 4, <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/NAAC-Report-English-2012.pdf>.

hyperlinked and suggested as research sources complementary to the Wills collection.¹⁷⁶ The location of the soldiers' wills here is logical yet conspicuously absent as a linked collection in the centennial microsite, as with the DMP files. These records, placed in a genealogical context, are tools of personal narrative and identity, interlinked such that users might 'exploit organic relationships' between different sets of records.¹⁷⁷ Elsewhere, physical exhibition cases at the National Archives premises brought together some of this material in 2016:

...highlights were the portion of our 1916 Proclamation, compensation files from the Property Losses Ireland Committee (PLIC) collection and fragments of the flag flown over Jacobs Biscuit factory during Easter week. Also included was material from the Soldiers Wills collection to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme in July.¹⁷⁸

Yet their place within the national commemorations is not emphasised in the digital interface that outlives physical exhibitions. With the exception of the DMP files, these collections are not related outwards in a network of hyperlinks to other collections, institutions or resources, which has implications for their use and interoperability with NAI collections and the wider landscape of commemorative digital archives. Gilliland draws parallels between systems of hyperlinks with the archival *fonds* that are applicable to the digital archive:

An advantage in the Web environment is that hyperlinks are explicit rather than largely implicit, as is the case with paper records. As a result, those who manage and use these resources can more easily identify and exploit organic relationships. A Web page without its hyperlinks may be less valuable to users because of its diminished evidential content.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ National Archives of Ireland, "Soldiers' Wills: About the Records."

¹⁷⁷ Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland, *Enduring Paradigm, New Opportunities: The Value of the Archival Perspective in the Digital Environment, Library Hi Tech*, vol. 18 (Washington D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources, 2000), 18.

¹⁷⁸ McDonagh, "Report of the Director of the National Archives 2016," 12.

¹⁷⁹ Gilliland-Swetland, *Enduring Paradigm, New Opportunities*, 18.

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One of the great achievements of the decade was votes for women, granted in 1918 to some women. The full franchise was extended to all over the age of 21 in the 1922 Constitution. Women's votes in 1918 may have made a difference to the outcome of the crucial general election of that year, which gave Sinn Féin a decisive victory over the Irish Parliamentary Party, and led directly to the War of Independence.¹⁸⁰

If the intention to address the centenary of partial female suffrage within these centenary collections, as with the Dáil records, is to be taken from the above statement in this introductory text, we can attend to the means by which this was brought about in this centennial series. Documents from the General Prisons Board Suffragette Papers (GPB) series (NAI, GPB/SFRG/1) were specified in the government outline for the centenary in 2018. These papers documenting the treatment of suffrage prisoners between 1908-1919 contain a modest 45 files.¹⁸¹ Thirteen of these were digitised and placed online in December 2018 as an 'online exhibition' titled 'Suffragettes and Prison Conditions in Ireland' curated similarly to the DMP files.¹⁸² Dating between 1912 and 1914 they are presented as pop-up thumbnails following a detailed introduction. Relevant census returns from 1911 (previously digitised) are also included. Thumbnails are low resolution by definition, have an indexical function for visual material, and are navigational intermediaries.¹⁸³ Each thumbnail in this exhibition leads to a description, archival reference and links to transcriptions where applicable (and with some broken links), however, no full-scale digital surrogate of the original documents are provided.

Elsewhere, another digitisation, that of the minute books of the 'Dublin Women's Suffrage Association / Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association (1876-1913)' taken by Anna Haslam is located in the 'research guide' section of the NAI

¹⁸⁰ National Archives of Ireland, "Decadade of Centenaries."

¹⁸¹ National Archives of Ireland, "General Prisons Board Suffragette Papers, GPB/SFRG/1," accessed August 29, 2018, <http://www.nationalarchives.ie/search-the-archives/>.

¹⁸² "Suffragettes and Prison Conditions in Ireland," National Archives of Ireland, accessed October 22, 2019, <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/article/suffragettes-prison-conditions-ireland/>.

¹⁸³ Thylstrup and Teilmann, "Thumbnail Images: Uncertainties, Infrastructures and Search Engines," 281, 286.

domain. Presented as a series of chronological hyperlinks following introductory text and accompanied by an essay by Mary Cullen, the minute books detail the evolution of the association and ‘continuous activism and organisation’ throughout the years in question concerning local electoral reform, social reforms, political work and voter empowerment dating back to the 19th century.¹⁸⁴ The books stand out as specifically evidencing this movement from the perspective of some of the women involved rather than incidental to another movement or collection. This ‘online exhibition’ of digitised documents was originally created in 2009, and is thus not a new digitisation.¹⁸⁵ Another online exhibition that has not been migrated to the new NAI website dates from 2006, the ninetieth anniversary of the Rising. This concerned Jacob’s Biscuit factory, a rebel garrison during the Rising and now the site of the National Archives, and which employed a majority of women by 1913 including trade unionist Rosie Hackett.¹⁸⁶ A commemorative event was held on Easter Monday 2016 to mark this historic connection.¹⁸⁷

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With popularity, prestige, or profit being a benchmark for costly digital projects, particular strands of historical research are marginalised within the cyberinfrastructure.¹⁸⁸

Pašeta commented in 2016 that the historicising of Irish women of the revolutionary period was still of the ‘tacked on’ nature and is an area that remains ‘interesting but ultimately separate’.¹⁸⁹ Suffrage activism - running parallel to and intersecting with the major political developments of this decade - perhaps especially so. The revamped NAI

¹⁸⁴ “Historical Records: Minute Book of the Dublin Women’s Suffrage Association / Irish Women’s Suffrage and Local Government Association (1876–1913),” National Archives of Ireland, accessed August 14, 2020, <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/article/minute-book-dublin-womens-suffrage-association-irish-womens-suffrage-local-government-association-1876-1913/>.

¹⁸⁵ “‘Anna Haslam’s Minute Book’ (2009),” National Archives of Ireland via Internet Archive, accessed August 15, 2020, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180424232345/http://www.nationalarchives.ie/digital-resources/online-exhibitions/anna-haslams-minute-book-2009/>.

¹⁸⁶ “‘Jacob’s Biscuit Factory, 1916’ (2006),” National Archives of Ireland via Internet Archive, accessed August 15, 2020, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180424231412/http://www.nationalarchives.ie/digital-resources/online-exhibitions/jacobs-biscuit-factory-1916-2006/other-material/>.

¹⁸⁷ McDonagh, “Report of the Director of the National Archives 2016,” 23.

¹⁸⁸ Jensen, “Digital Archival Literacy for (All) Historians,” 4.

¹⁸⁹ Pašeta, “Where Were the Women in 1916.”

website does not include suffrage as a major political milestone in its prelude to this centenary portal and the absence of either of these suffrage digitisations in this bounded series of commemorative collections is immediately apparent.¹⁹⁰ That the suffrage collections outlined were digitised - to varying quality and extent - means that they are at the minimum considered of 'national significance'. Neither set are, however, linked or featured in the core DoC collections and Gilliland's hyperlink logic is again applicable to this disconnection. The advent of partial female suffrage is framed on the landing page - the first layer of interpretation that greets the user - primarily in relation to the 1918 'Sinn Féin' election victory. From a content management perspective, to integrate these documents should be a straightforward task of hyperlinking thumbnails, as has been done for the DMP files. This would make such archives findable and explicitly part of this digital commemorative logic given the primacy of this microsite. Bishop has called into question the affordances of digital archives and how particular interpretations of history may be supported by the placing, arrangement and display of hyperlinks and documents.¹⁹¹ Gilliland similarly asserts that 'the value of an individual record is derived in part from the sequence of records within which it is located'.¹⁹² Without reducing the logics of analogue and digital archives - the differences between which, Jensen reminds, are not often accounted for and which have different interactive effects - the curatorial logic of connecting cultural objects and narratives in a prestigious series of digital collections is worth consideration.¹⁹³ Interlinking of sources has been carried out by the NAI in previous online exhibitions and other digital commemorative activities, though the practice is overall inconsistent. As Bishop further contends, the 'accidentally on purpose' methodology of finding women in the archive requires a wide-ranging approach to sources and social historical research, while also requiring feminist historians to read 'against the grain,' marginal as women are in national historical narratives.¹⁹⁴ In an abundant 'cyberinfrastructure' that is not uniformly navigable by every type of researcher, maximising hyperlink networks and findability are simple yet powerful ways to broaden the possibilities for and depth of access to knowledge, making explicit under-voiced identities and narratives.

¹⁹⁰ "Our Archives: Decade of Centenaries," National Archives of Ireland, accessed August 14, 2020, <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/article/decade-of-centenaries/>.

¹⁹¹ Bishop, "The Serendipity of Connectivity," 771.

¹⁹² Gilliland-Swetland, *Enduring Paradigm, New Opportunities*, 18:18.

¹⁹³ Jensen, "Digital Archival Literacy for (All) Historians," 2.

¹⁹⁴ Bishop, "The Serendipity of Connectivity," 768.

4.9 Conclusion

Of the public submissions to the EAG on the second phase of the DoC, the role of women and of the labour movement were both referenced as significant themes proposed to be addressed, demonstrating a desire on the part of local authorities and members of the public for these historical narratives and identities to be part of the commemorative story.¹⁹⁵ Two of these commemorative collections represent a pluralising answer to a previously narrow focus on elite revolutionaries in the narrative of 1916. This is in keeping with a public history-informed approach to these commemorations that has emphasised citizen participation and ‘ordinary’ lives in this historical period. The four collections balance key revolutionaries (courts-martial and DMP files) with the labour movement and civilian experience. It is also apparent that some of these collections, as is the case for the MSPC (chapter 6), are additionally intended as genealogical resources that, framed by authorised commemoration, link personal identity exploration with the national heritage. Some of these digitisations, the PLIC and courts-martial records, are ostensibly incomplete, made explicit in the former, implicit in the latter. The framing and choices of digitisations also reinscribe the primacy of 1916 in a self-described decennial set of collections. The ITUC reports alone speak to a decade of change, have an all-island geographical remit and are somewhat unique in the landscape of digital sources for addressing the role of the labour movement, in which suffragist and nationalist women were keenly involved, while the remaining three recentre the Easter Rising. The PLIC collection opens up the civilian experience of the destruction of Dublin from the perspective mostly of businesses, institutions or property owners, but also artists, workers and displaced residents, compensated in the aftermath of 1916, a number of whom were women. The courts-martial records and the controversies of their creation and custodial history continue to resonate for relatives a century later, other records resonate in their own absence. Those of the reparations for injury and loss of life to civilians, which disproportionately affected poorer, labouring families and tenement dwellers, and those left behind by civilians who were killed, remains to be addressed.¹⁹⁶ These are also people

¹⁹⁵ Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations, “Decade of Centenaries Second Phase Guidance,” 7.

¹⁹⁶ Hannah Smyth, “Unpublished M.Phil. Dissertation. Commemoration from Below: Mapping the Civilian Fatalities of the 1916 Rising.” (Trinity College Dublin, 2015).

for whom records are considerably less abundant than those of wealth, education or status. Women are present in three of these centennial digitisations to varying degree of foregrounding or acknowledgement. With the exception of supplementary photographs to the ITUC reports, the presence of women in these collections is ultimately either secondary or part of a neutral curatorial voice that provides brief acknowledgement. Broadly an ‘add women and stir’ style characterises these collections, which is to say a gender ‘neutral’ approach that includes women as historical subjects and records creators without gender - and without using gender as a searchable identity category - as a fundamental frame of analysis in curating this series of collections, and the commemorative moment they represent.¹⁹⁷ Presence is important, but interpretive aids and search capabilities signpost what is considered worthy of notice in a collection, and when we consider the audience beyond academic research or significant prior knowledge the work of discovery is somewhat different. The contents and interface affordances of these curated collections through which these records may be navigated speaks to the fact that broadening access and knowledge of archives to non-academic users underpins these digitisations.¹⁹⁸ This overt simplicity and sometimes lack of search capabilities also recreates, in the case of the DMP and ITUC reports, a more traditional or ‘serendipitous’ mode of reading the archive, albeit remotely.

The wider digital efforts of the NAI against a long-term backdrop of chronic under-resourcing cannot be discounted in any analysis of such cultural productions. The suite of genealogical records (the 1901/1910 censuses in particular) are invaluable in locating women and are widely promoted by the NAI, genealogy websites and other cultural institutions alike and frequently specified as sources for women in Irish history. However, this thesis is a consideration of commemorative digital archives, which are deliberate and situated cultural productions underpinned by the affective, cultural and financial capital of commemoration. Placed top of a list of digital collections on the NAI homepage, this makes the DoC collections the first port of call for engaging with records from this period and directs our attention to this user-oriented interface whose aesthetic affordances and aura are also unmatched in any of this institution’s other digital collections. Exhibitions are one of the many ‘user tools’ considered by Irish institutions engaged in digital

¹⁹⁷ Julia Flanders, “Building Otherwise,” in *Bodies of Information: Intersectional Feminism and Digital Humanities*, ed. Elizabeth Losh and Jacqueline Wernimont (University of Minnesota Press, 2018), 290.

¹⁹⁸ Jensen, “Digital Archival Literacy for (All) Historians,” 8.

archiving as adding value to their collections.¹⁹⁹ They can also be costly especially when bespoke sites are created through third parties. The relatively simple interface affordances of these four collections, with the exception of the PLIC series, may nonetheless correlate to this ongoing resourcing issue. At the outset of this chapter this chequered financial history was outlined and it is clear that a considerable amount of collaboration and partnerships underpin these four collections as did commemoration funding. Resource allocation and the cultural logic of commemoration, and of digitisation itself, have a bearing on the ways in which certain archives are chosen for such processes, how they come to be and how they are presented and curated in the cyberinfrastructure of heritage institutions. Continuing this line of thought, the following chapter will discuss another flagship digitisation of the 2016 centenary year, that of the National Library of Ireland, which took up the mantle of the Seven Signatories of the Proclamation of 1916 whose infamous court martial records were addressed in this chapter.

¹⁹⁹ Carroll and Webb, “Digital Archiving in Ireland: National Survey of the Humanities and Social Sciences,” 39.

5 The National Library of Ireland: 1916 Digital Collections

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the courts-martial records of the executed leaders of the Easter Rising were introduced, launched by the President of Ireland in a state event to underline the national significance of these records. In December 2015 the National Library of Ireland (NLI) had already launched its 1916 Digital Collections featuring the personal and family papers of the Seven Signatories of the ‘Proclamation of the Irish Republic,’ seven of the men who were executed in May 1916.¹ The papers of Éamonn Ceannt were the first to be released in late 2015, followed by the remaining six signatories in phases until the centenary of the Easter Rising in March 2016. A physical exhibition, ‘Signatories,’ went on display in the entrance hall of the Library on Kildare Street, Dublin, displaying select archives from the seven collections. This set of collections contains c. 23,000 records, some of which were collected and originally catalogued by or during the 1960s, although relevant material continued to be collected in the intervening years up to the centenary. The archives were first re-catalogued by adding enhanced metadata in 2014 during a project to prepare them for digitisation by 2016.² The 1916 Digital Collections exhibition page encompasses these flagship archives as well as a web archive themed collection of the 2016 year, various stand-alone exhibitions and a contextual microsite originally produced for the ninetieth anniversary of the Rising.

The NLI has its origins in the Royal Dublin Society - its headquarters at Leinster House, now the seat of the Irish Parliament - and the Dublin Science and Art Museum Act of 1877.³ It is no great mystery that, as Thylstrup says, the ‘national museums and libraries we frequent today were largely erected during eras of high nationalism, as supreme acts

¹ “1916 Digital Collections,” National Library of Ireland, accessed July 1, 2019, <http://www.nli.ie/1916/>.

² National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2014” (Dublin, 2014), 13; All public documentation by the NLI is available at “Reports and Policy Documents (PDFs).” National Library of Ireland. Accessed July 1, 2019. <https://www.nli.ie/en/udlist/reports-and-policy-documents.aspx>.

³ Gerard Long, “The National Library of Ireland,” in *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland: Volume 3: 1850-2000*, ed. Alistair Black and Peter Hoare, vol. 3, The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 266-68.

of cultural and national territoriality'.⁴ A somewhat different trajectory in post-colonial nations where such cultural apparatuses were already in place, the NLI predates independence from the United Kingdom, its establishment falling within the boundaries of nineteenth-century British imperialist nationalism, but today is self-described as constituting 'the most outstanding collection of Irish documentary material in the world and offers an unparalleled record of Ireland's history and heritage'.⁵ Although the Library's collections began to accumulate material of Irish interest pre-1921, it was unsurprisingly in the first decades of independence that the institution began consciously reshaping itself as a repository of Irish documentary heritage, beginning with the conferring of legal deposit status in 1927 and deliberate drives to survey and collect material of Irish historical significance thereafter.⁶ Croke maintains, in his study of the 1916 collections at the National Museum, that in the early years of the new state many nationalists remained suspicious of all the national institutions inherited from the British administration.⁷ Equally, management at the National Museum could be suspicious of the value of a permanent collection of personal relics of the 1916 generation underwritten by patriotism.⁸ In some contrast, Long contends that the 'cultural introspection associated with the Free State was not particularly evident in the Library, though a gradual shift towards almost exclusive specialisation in material of Irish interest took place over the following decades'.⁹ As with any new nation, it was important to establish a national collection of historical significance and the NLI states that the period 1916-23 is 'particularly well documented' within its current manuscript collections of political interest.¹⁰ Items digitised and available online for the period 1910-1923 number c. 23,450 at the time of writing and accounting for approximately 19% of overall digital availability on the NLI online catalogue.¹¹ During the period following independence in 1922 until

⁴ Thylstrup, *The Politics of Mass Digitisation*, 20.

⁵ The National Library of Ireland, "Collection Development Policy, 2009-2011" (Dublin, 2011), 1.

⁶ Long, "The National Library of Ireland," 272.

⁷ Pat Cooke, "History, Materiality and the Myth of 1916," in *Making 1916: Material and Visual Culture of the Easter Rising*, ed. Lisa Godson and Joanna Brück (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 208.

⁸ Joye and Malone, "Making 1916," 183-84.

⁹ Long, "The National Library of Ireland," 271-72.

¹⁰ Thylstrup, *The Politics of Mass Digitisation*, 20; National Library of Ireland, "Manuscripts: Political Interest," accessed July 25, 2019, <https://www.nli.ie/en/udlist/manuscripts-collections.aspx?article=cd469706-25f0-4389-9b11-dbfac6cfac3c>.

¹¹ Current Filters: Online Availability: Digitised; Published / Created: [1910 TO 1923]. "National Library of Ireland Catalogue," National Library of Ireland, accessed October 9, 2020, <http://catalogue.nli.ie/Search/Results?daterange%5B%5D=publishDate&publishDatefrom=1910&publishDateto=1923&lookfor=&type=AllFields&submit=FINN&filter%5B%5D=digitised%3A%22Digitised%22>.

the 1970s, government policy on archives has been described as ‘minimalist to the point of apathetic’ and there is evidence that the National Library was recommended to become the de facto national archives in place of the Public Records Office that was reconstituted after its destruction at the outbreak of the Civil War in June 1922.¹² It was also at one time suggested that the Bureau of Military History 1916-1921 records (chapter 6) be moved to the National Library for indexing and further collecting. However, this was warned against by at least one civil servant involved due to the perception that the NLI could not protect the confidentiality of the records, as well as the government, from historians’ demands for access.¹³

In 2006, the National Library of Ireland (NLI) began a process of modernisation and ‘transition to an autonomous national cultural institution with a separate identity’ following the implementation of the ‘National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997’ in 2005.¹⁴ The Library set upon a phased action plan titled ‘Towards 2016,’ a title echoed in its 2015 annual report describing the first release of 1916 Digital Collections and the opening of the related ‘Signatories’ exhibition.¹⁵ The ten-year plan does not specify the centenary commemorations as the end goal in its perfunctory descriptions, but it nonetheless set in motion a series of measures to bring the Irish National Library up to date with international standards and to create a greater digital infrastructure within which to eventually house its centenary and other digital collections. There was also an emphasis on acquiring new 1916 material upon the ninetieth anniversary, and published annual reviews show that the Library continued to acquire this and other material from the revolutionary period in the intervening years up to and including the centenary year.¹⁶ In 2016, the NLI acquired material relating to Kilmainham Gaol as well as Grace Plunkett and Éamonn Ceannt, titular revolutionary figures, through the Irish Embassy in Britain.¹⁷ Previous acquisitions include an original copy of the 1916 Proclamation, some papers of hunger-striker Thomas Ashe, and the papers of nurse Elizabeth O’Farrell, who delivered the surrender to British forces during the Rising, and Julia Grennan, suffragette and

¹² Holland, “From Louisburgh to Ladsmith: Archives in Ireland and South Africa in a Century of Conflict and Change,” 132-33.

¹³ O’Brien, *Irish Governments and the Guardianship of Historical Records 1922-72*, 151.

¹⁴ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2007” (Dublin, 2008), 18, 25.

¹⁵ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Review 2015” (Dublin, 2016), 20.

¹⁶ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2006” (Dublin, 2007), 13; National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2016” (Dublin, 2017).

¹⁷ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2016,” 8.

nationalist.¹⁸ The NLI also produced an award-winning online exhibition for the ninetieth anniversary of the Rising ‘1916: Personalities and Perspectives’ that went live on Easter Monday 2006, now linked with the current 1916 Digital Collections.

At the outset of the decade of commemorations the NLI was facing a potential merger, as discussed in chapter 4, and its 2012 annual report specifically outlined the funding deficit in its digitisation programme:

Spend on digitisation has, of necessity, dropped by 89% since 2008, to €32,629 in 2012, at the very time when the digitisation of the collections should be accelerating; the lack of available funds for outsourcing means that the entire digitisation programme is now the responsibility of four dedicated in-house staff members and only a fraction of the programme can be completed each year.¹⁹

The 2014 report is similarly direct in stating a 47% decrease in overall funding and a 24% decrease in staff since 2008, the onset of the global financial crisis.²⁰ Also in 2014, the NLI digitisation manager commented on the gap between user expectations of digital access and the economic and practical reality: “That’s just not possible [instant accessibility online]. We have to proceed on a selective basis. It is a very work-intensive process because a lot of work goes into it before it goes for digitisation. The amount of work that goes into the cataloguing and digitisation of the process is critical - and we are on a very tight budget.”²¹ The comments accompanied the announcement of a large set of digitised images that included a photograph collection of Tom and Kathleen Clarke, released on the ninety-eighth (historical) anniversary of the Rising.²²

¹⁸ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2011” (Dublin, 2012), 29; National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2008,” 2009, 10.; National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2016,” 43.

¹⁹ The National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2012” (Dublin, 2013), 8.

²⁰ National Archives Advisory Council, “National Archives Advisory Council Reports 2014 and 2015,” 6.

²¹ Ronan McGreevy, “National Library Expands Online Archive with 10,000 Images,” *The Irish Times*, April 24, 2014.

²² “National Library of Ireland Launches 10,500 Newly Digitised Items,” National Library of Ireland, accessed September 21, 2020, <https://www.nli.ie/en/list/latest-news.aspx?article=8a2509be-b660-4520-a935-0572a61d3835>.

Despite these financial difficulties, the NLI has since been one of the most actively digital of the national cultural institutions during the Decade of Centenaries, and in its 2017 report the NLI stated that ‘Digitisation is an increasingly important tool in the democratisation of access to the national collections.’²³ The year 2014 was a particularly active one for the Library in terms of its involvement in the commemorations as well as ‘planning for and building towards 2016’ specifically.²⁴ In terms of digital activities, it ran a ‘World War One Roadshow’ at Trinity College Dublin in July 2014. Marking the outbreak of the First World War, the roadshow involved a ‘community collecting’ event where the public were invited to bring their private collections - letters, diaries, medals etc - related to the war for cataloguing and digitisation, and inclusion in the international Europeana digital archive.²⁵ In the same year *Inspiring Ireland* launched its first iteration in March, for which the NLI was centrally involved in contributing digital content and ‘expertise’ and subsequently in running public collection days such as during the ‘Road to the Rising’ event on Easter Monday, 2015.²⁶

In anticipation of the Easter Rising centenary, during 2014 the NLI carried out a project of metadata creation ‘for the digitisation of a selection of the collections of the signatories to the 1916 proclamation relating to the Decade of Commemoration’.²⁷ The project labour was outsourced to a team of cataloguers and involved writing administrative and technical descriptions for the selected collections ‘of, or relating to, the seven Proclamation signatories,’ some of which had been summarily catalogued in the 1960s with inadequate detail for digitisation.²⁸ Significantly more material was catalogued than planned and the papers of Sir Hugh Lane and some photographic collections from the National Photographic Archive were also added.²⁹ According to the NLI annual report for 2014 this metadata project ‘aimed to facilitate access to the collections, promote knowledge of the collections and provide direct support to the Government’s programme of centenary commemorations, including the lead-up to the centenary of the 1916 Rising’.³⁰ Top of the list of activities focusing on the ‘Seven Signatories’ in the official

²³ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Review 2017” (Dublin, 2018), 14.

²⁴ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2014,” 20.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 21.

²⁷ Ibid., 43.

²⁸ Ibid., 13.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

government Centenary Programme, published in 2015, was the NLI 1916 digitisation project that followed these preparations.³¹ A total of €193,327 was spent on the ‘Decade of Commemorations Cataloguing Project,’ €5,082 on ‘2016 Commemorations’ outreach, as well as €81,210 on ‘Digital Acquisitions’ (web archiving and digitisation) for the year 2016.³² Capital grants from government via the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht account for the majority of NLI funding under the 1997 Act, however, the NLI also received an additional €50,000 from the ‘Commemoration Fund’ in 2016 and €90,000 in 2015. According to an NLI report for 2016, these Oireachtas Grants were ‘a contribution to the costs of the 1916 Signatories Exhibition, which was launched in Easter 2016’ likely covering both the digital and physical aspects of the exhibition.³³ This ‘Commemoration Fund’ capital represents approximately 0.93% of all Oireachtas Grant funding to the NLI for the years 2015-16. A Heritage Council of Ireland grant of €7,000 in 2014 also provided for the conservation treatment of the Pearse Papers manuscripts that would feature in the 2016 commemorative digitisations.³⁴ Cataloguing and metadata creation work carried out at the NLI during these years and since has also covered other relevant collections at the NLI such as the Irish National Aid and Volunteer Dependents Fund Papers and the extensive papers of Hanna Sheehy Skeffington.³⁵

5.2 Signatories

The value ascribed to the ‘signatories’ collections derives from their creators’ or contributors’ centrality to the story of the Easter Rising and its commemoration over the past one hundred years. They are an archetypal example of the ‘links between nationalism and masculine values, whereby great men become patriotic symbols for nationhood’.³⁶ The Proclamation of the Irish Republic is a proto-constitutional document that was read out by Patrick Pearse in front of the General Post Office (GPO) on 24th April 1916. This public reading to a paltry crowd on Dublin’s O’Connell St (then Sackville St) is a central moment in remembrance of the Rising, and the repetition of this oratory act is a hallmark

³¹ Government of Ireland, “Centenary Programme,” 10.

³² National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2016,” 42-43.

³³ *Ibid.*, 36.

³⁴ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2014,” 44.

³⁵ Metadata provided shows the most recent transaction and a history of transactions by date and with the identity of the archivists (fields 005 and 039 in ‘MARC’).

³⁶ Laurajane Smith, “Heritage, Gender and Identity,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian Graham and Peter Howard (Abington: Routledge, 2008), 162.

of official commemorations of the insurrection. The GPO, the site of the original reading of the Proclamation, is also the greatest physical locus of the insurrection, its memory and commemoration, one of the many shrines to the Rising and Irish nationalism and serving on multiple occasions during the Decade of Centenaries as an official commemorative venue. The document itself (Figure 5-1) and its ‘mass-reproduced image’, has since become totemic of the event and ideas about national sovereignty in the Irish national consciousness.³⁷ The Seven Signatories of the document - Tom Clarke, Sean MacDiarmada, Thomas MacDonagh, Patrick Pearse, Éamonn Ceannt, James Connolly, and Joseph Plunkett - were executed at Kilmainham Gaol after the surrender of the Rising and following a series of secretive military courts-martial by the British administration, as discussed in chapter 4. Seven other men were also executed at Kilmainham Gaol, one (Thomas Kent) in Cork and later one (Roger Casement) in London Pentonville Prison. Their martyrdom and the mass imprisonment of surviving rebels eventually helped to alter the initially hostile public opinion towards a week-long insurrection that raised much of Dublin city centre to the ground and killed hundreds of civilians. The sixteen executed men, and especially the seven signatories, are one chapter in a genealogy of Irish separatist martyrdom, the ‘dead generations’ to which the Proclamation itself refers, and the idea of ‘blood sacrifice’ to which some of them, but especially Pearse, subscribed, echoing the militarisation of European society in the context of the First World War.



Figure 5-1 The Proclamation of the Irish Republic, 1916. Source: www.dail100.ie; (R) Aerial view of the military parade at the General Post office on O'Connell Street Dublin. 'Nation Honours Men of 1916'. The Irish Independent, 11 April 1966.

³⁷ Higgins, *Transforming 1916*, 7.

As Witoszek noted in a Troubles-era paper: ‘in Ireland death is the locus which symbolizes unity and identity’.³⁸ The success of the Rising was its failure, a paradox sealed by the execution of these men who were duly immortalised in its aftermath and the decades following independence, their ghosts and the spectre of an unfulfilled Proclamation haunting political and commemorative discourse throughout the twentieth century. A typical anniversary of 1916 involves certain essentials that revolve around the Proclamation and the executed: a military parade culminating at the GPO, at which a reading of the Proclamation, wreath-laying at Kilmainham Gaol and Arbour Hill, the latter where the words of the Proclamation are carved into a limestone wall overlooking the fourteen graves.³⁹ As discussed in chapter 1, the fiftieth anniversary of the Rising in 1966 is the only national commemoration of the event comparable to the recent centenary due to its scale and organisation. A copy of the Proclamation was delivered to schools around the country in advance of the anniversary and just as streets across Ireland were renamed for Irish (male) historical figures after independence, in 1966 railway stations around the country were rechristened in the name of each Proclamation signatory.⁴⁰ A series of sell-out commemorative stamps depicting each of them, and additionally Roger Casement, was also released for this anniversary, and honorary degrees were conferred upon relatives of each signatory.⁴¹ As Crowley points out, the mass-reproduced image of Pearse more than any other signatory became, in the first fifty years since the rebellion, a ‘quasi-state symbol’.⁴² Maintaining an active ‘1916 Relatives Association’ descendants of the Signatories and others who took part in the Rising hold a special position within its contemporary commemorations, specifically named in the ‘consultation, engagement and planning process’ for the commemorations signalled in the Centenary Programme.⁴³ They were, as in years previous, part of a state reception at Dublin Castle that followed the

³⁸ Nina Witoszek, “A Funerary Culture?,” *An Irish Quarterly Review* 76, no. 302 (1987): 214.

³⁹ The ‘Proclamation Wall’ was completed in 1956, around the 40th anniversary of the Rising. Roger Casement, one of the most famous of the executed, lies at Glasnevin Cemetery in the ‘Republican plot’ having been exhumed from the London Pentonville Prison grounds, re-patriated and re-interred in 1965. Thomas Kent, buried in Cork, is counted among the executed, although he was not directly involved in the Rising.

⁴⁰ Higgins, *Transforming 1916*, 2013, 48-49.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 46; “Honorary Degrees for 1916 Relatives,” *The Irish Times*, January 31, 1966; “Irish Postage Stamps: Special Issue to Commemorate the 1916 Rising,” *The Limerick Observer*, March 26, 1966.

⁴² Brian Crowley, “Pearse’s Profile: The Making of an Icon,” in *Making 1916: Material and Visual Culture of the Easter Rising*, ed. Lisa Godson and Joanna Brück (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 129.

⁴³ Two of the objectives of the association’s constitution are ‘To ensure that the Irish State will always commemorate the 1916 Easter Rising in a manner befitting its importance as a seminal event in Irish history’ and ‘to ensure that their [relatives] contribution is appropriately recognized in State Commemorations’. “About Us,” The 1916 Relatives Association, accessed August 15, 2019, <https://1916relatives.com/about-us/>; Government of Ireland, “Centenary Programme,” 14.

military parade in 2016, and a separate ‘special’ state event was organised during Easter Week for relatives.⁴⁴ Writing with regard to the award of military pensions (see chapter 6) but entirely salient, Coleman points out that the ‘special recognition given to descendants of 1916 veterans by the Irish State during the Rising centenary commemorations reflects the significance that being a recognised veteran of the Easter Rising still holds in Irish society.’⁴⁵ There was, nonetheless, relatively little scholarly writing about the Signatories until the 1960s, when more archival sources were becoming available to historians, and in 1986 Foster described the history of the period 1916-1922 as still ‘largely unknown and unwritten’.⁴⁶ Another historiography and (de-)mythologizing of the Rising and its leaders is unnecessary here. What matters is that the place of the men of 1916 in the hierarchy of remembrance, which long overshadowed critical reflection on the Rising, has undoubtedly been disrupted since the second half of the twentieth century and during this commemorative decade. Aside from the revisionism of the 1980s and 1990s, and the emergence of women’s, gender and public history in Ireland, this cannot be divorced from a political will to distance the Irish State from the physical-force nationalism that characterised the Troubles, a shift that began mid-century and which is now at odds with the spirit of the Good Friday Agreement and the peace process in the North.⁴⁷ Jewesbury has gone so far as to describe the detailed ideologies of the leaders now as ‘mute “heritage”’ with no mainstream political influence.⁴⁸ This is perhaps to suggest that the moment of heritagisation marks a transition to a new and less burdensome imaginary.

If, as Dolan suggests, there has been in the past a somewhat false assumption that all subsequent generations of nationalist Ireland were sustained by the memory of its historical martyrs, it would nonetheless be wrong to suggest that the public appetite for these canonical figures had utterly diminished by the outset of this decade of commemorations.⁴⁹ Throughout the mixture of mythologizing, ambivalence, revisionism and reconciliation over the past one hundred years this narrative of triumph in defeat has

⁴⁴ Government of Ireland, “Centenary Programme,” 14, 17.

⁴⁵ Marie Coleman, “‘There Are Thousands Who Will Claim to Have Been “out” during Easter Week’: Recognising Military Service in the 1916 Easter Rising,” *Irish Studies Review* 26, no. 4 (2018): 503.

⁴⁶ Roy Foster, “‘We Are All Revisionists Now,’” *The Irish Review*, no. 1 (1986): 5; Laffan, “Easter Week and the Historians,” 337.

⁴⁷ Daniel Jewesbury, “The Constitution of a State yet to Come: The Unbroken Promise of the ‘Half-Proclamation,’” in *Making 1916: Material and Visual Culture of the Easter Rising*, ed. Lisa Godson and Joanna Brück (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 49.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Witoszek, “A Funerary Culture?,” 214; Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War*, 2.

endured, reinvented and repackaged by the national commemorative impulse. In 2016 it was a spirit of ‘courage, dignity and ideals’ embodied in the protagonists of 1916 that the government emphasised in its ‘vision’ for the centenary and for Ireland.⁵⁰ Launched in 2014, the *Ireland 2016* centenary programme was to have five overarching ‘strands’ around remembrance, reconciliation, imagining, presenting, and celebration.⁵¹ However, the moment was overshadowed by a promotional video accompanying this launch that drew much ire for its poor Irish-language translations and failing to mention either the Rising or the executed men, presented as for the tourist market more than a commemorative reflection.⁵² This was also read as an attempt by the Irish Government to dissociate a purportedly benign national heritage from revolutionary violence.⁵³ Re-published in 2015 the official Centenary Programme acknowledged the ‘special focus’ on the seven signatories in 1966 and now re-framed itself in sevens with seven programme strands based on the original subset of focus areas outlined in 2014: State Ceremonial, Historical Reflection, An Teanga Beo (The Living Language), Youth and Imagination, Community Participation, Global and Diaspora.⁵⁴ There were also seven themed concerts over seven nights on Easter Week 2016, seven Junior Certificate History prizes named after each signatory, and a schools education package on the signatories produced by the NLI alongside their digital collections.⁵⁵ Seven ‘flagship capital projects’ were also funded and carried out for the centenary year. These mainly involved the restoration and expansion of certain buildings of significance to the Rising, such as the Military Archives, Richmond Barracks, and Kilmainham Gaol Courthouse, and the development of new exhibitions such as at the GPO and Tenement museums.⁵⁶ There were seven rebel garrisons in Dublin during the Rising, however not all of these remain intact and restoration efforts were

⁵⁰ Government of Ireland, “Centenary Programme,” 5.

⁵¹ Decade of Centenaries, “12 November 2014: Launch of ‘Ireland 2016’ Programme to Mark Centenary of Easter Rising, GPO, Dublin,” accessed August 12, 2019, <https://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/12-november-2014-launch-of-ireland-2016-programme-to-mark-centenary-of-easter-rising-gpo-dublin/>; For the original programme brochure see: “Ireland 2016,” Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht via Internet Archives, accessed August 12, 2020, https://web.archive.org/web/20150905222708/http://www.ahg.gov.ie/en/PressReleases/2014/November2014PressReleases/Material/_IRELAND2016_Brochure.pdf.

⁵² Éanna Ó Caollaí, “Don’t Mention the War - 1916 Video Fails to Mention Rising,” *The Irish Times*, November 13, 2016, accessed 15 August 2019. <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/don-t-mention-the-war-1916-video-fails-to-mention-rising-1.1999460>.

⁵³ Richard S. Grayson and Fearghal McGarry, “Introduction,” in *Remembering 1916: The Easter Rising, the Somme and the Politics of Memory in Ireland*, ed. Fearghal McGarry and Richard S. Grayson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

⁵⁴ Government of Ireland, “Centenary Programme,” 3, 10.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 22-24.

largely not directed towards them, with the exception of the GPO, though they remain sites of unofficial commemoration.⁵⁷ There was also a strong emphasis on the Proclamation in 2016 with a copy again delivered to every school in the country along with the national flag by members of the Irish Defence Forces and an official ‘Proclamation day’ on 15 March, echoing the gesture in 1966.⁵⁸ The Centenary Programme publication is itself interspersed with portraits of the seven signatories and short biographies, and opens with a reproduction of the Proclamation, a common graphical device in the material culture of commemoration and modern invocations of the Rising. The symbiotic relationship between the Proclamation, its signatories, and the memory of the Rising itself was now manifest in framing the official programme for the 2016 centenary year. None of this is to suggest that the signatories were amplified solely due to one public relations gaffe - their commemoration was always going to be essential to the centenary. What is of interest is that it was perhaps an unintended litmus test of the public historical consciousness, and it certainly prompted some re-appraisal of the programme to come. In any case, this iconic heptad was now certain to provide the symbolic scaffolding for the official programme of activities in 2016, and places the NLI 1916 Signatories collections, the centrepiece of the 1916 Digital Collections, at the heart of the commemorative archival response to the centenary; they are prestige collections.

5.3 Content

The landing page for the 1916 Digital Collections and related material is divided into five sections: Digital Collections, Events, Exhibitions, 2016 Web Archive, and (external) Links. With a front-end page that pulls together various relevant historical content created by the NLI, the 1916 Digital Collections page makes for a quasi-exhibition, book-ended by digital archives. The ‘Digital Collections’ consist of the papers and ephemera relating to the Seven Signatories of the Proclamation, displayed as thumbnails that redirect to the NLI online catalogue. External links provided indicate other major digitisers and digital history projects of the Decade of Centenaries: The National Archives, The Military Archives, *Inspiring Ireland*, *Century Ireland*, and *Letters of 1916*. Glasnevin Cemetery and Museum is also included. Of the digitisations examined in this thesis, the NLI alone has

⁵⁷ “What we do,” “About Us.”

⁵⁸ Government of Ireland, “Centenary Programme,” 12, 37.

created a hyperlink network between them and the wider digital commemorative and archival assemblage.

Although this digital commemorative production - the 1916 Digital Collections - shares many vestiges of the remaining two case studies, it differs significantly in encompassing not only digitisations of analogue archives, but also a collection of websites i.e., web archives, *of* the commemorations. Further, beyond this curated landing page, interaction with digital content differs greatly from the streamlined databases seen in chapters 4 and 6. The following sections will address these archival pillars and the additional elements of this digital exhibition.



Figure 5-2 1916 Digital Collections, www.nli.ie/1916

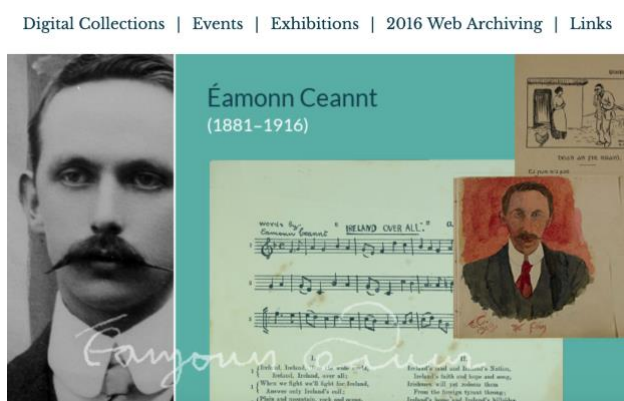


Figure 5-3 Éamonn Ceannt, 1916 Digital Collections landing page, www.nli.ie/1916

5.4 Digital Collections

The archival content consists of circa 23,000 items ‘telling the stories of the seven signatories of the 1916 Proclamation’.⁵⁹ These include papers of or relating to their spouses or next of kin. In most cases, they are part of a wider family or individual collection of papers that cover the period of the end of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth. In the case of James Connolly, the page redirects to the papers of William O’Brien (1881-1968), a labour leader and contemporary of Connolly who collected the records and correspondences of his associates, and whose collection contains a number of correspondences and writings by or about Connolly.⁶⁰ Similarly, the papers of Sean MacDiarmada, a series of letters written by him and his family members, are a sub-section of the Joseph McGarrity Papers (1789-1971).⁶¹ The Joseph Mary Plunkett Papers have the smallest range (1904-1916) while the Thomas MacDonagh Family papers (1848-1966) span 120 years. The papers of Tom and Kathleen Clarke have the most recent end-point at 1972, the year the latter died. A short introductory paragraph is provided for each set of papers, however, only the MacDonagh Family Papers and the Ceannt and O’Brien Papers are accompanied by detailed collection guides at the time of writing. Most of the Signatories material in question had been collected or donated by the late 1960s, as recorded in Hayes’s series *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilization*, and much of the material was already available for research in some form or another at the NLI prior to the Decade of Centenaries.⁶²

McAtackney has elsewhere observed that relatively little has been donated to other institutions like Kilmainham Gaol museum during this commemorative decade because of the perceived monetary value of private collections and memorabilia of the period.⁶³ Acquisition of these collections was a mixture of donation and purchase, but mostly donation: the MacDonagh Family Papers (in two batches) were donated in 1968 but only

⁵⁹ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2016,” 8.

⁶⁰ “William O’Brien (1881-1968) Papers, 1898-1969,” National Library of Ireland Catalogue, accessed August 4, 2019, <http://catalogue.nli.ie/Collection/vtls000537875>.

⁶¹ “Letters from Seán MacDiarmada and His Family to Joseph McGarrity, 1911-1912; 1916,” National Library of Ireland Catalogue, accessed August 4, 2019, <http://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000582173/HierarchyTree>.

⁶² Richard J. Hayes, ed., *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilization* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co, 1965); Richard J. Hayes, ed., *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilization: First Supplement, 1965-1975. Compiled in the National Library of Ireland.* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co, 1979).

⁶³ McAtackney, “Making 1916,” 110.

viewable with express permission from the family until the Library purchased and made it freely available in 2007; the Pearse Papers were transferred to the Library by the Office of Public Works (OPW); the Ceannt and O'Brennan, and the Clarke Papers were purchased at auction in April 2006, during the ninetieth anniversary of the Rising.⁶⁴ Ferriter describes the Clarke collection as an archival 'gem' and refers to Tom Clarke's extensive correspondences contained as 'central to underlining numerous identities and layers and tensions, which contrast sharply with the simplistic assertions by contemporary politicians that "in 1916, we were all one, before there were any splits."⁶⁵ The collections contain a wide variety of texts including letters, sketch books, administrative documents (such as those relating to St Enda's school in Rathfarnham, run by Pearse), photographs and prints, as well as poems, plays, essays and musical compositions. The latter speaks to the fact that most of these men were, in one way or another, involved in the Irish cultural revival or were playwrights, poets and musicians in their own capacity, such as MacDonagh, Pearse, and Ceannt, a quality that is emphasised in their commemoration. Many of them were also influenced by feminism and the suffrage movement through their spouses and female relatives, an influence that reached the wording of the Proclamation that binds them as signatories.⁶⁶

Widows, female relatives and correspondences active in the same cultural and nationalist circles are somewhat incidental in the narrativization of this digitisation effectively muting the presence of activist women in this set of collections as they have been presented in this centenary portmanteau. A rolling image banner that introduces each collection of papers on the landing page uses select imagery to communicate this muted heritage: an image of MacDonagh, his wife Muriel (née Gifford) and their young child, and in the case of Plunkett a love letter to Grace Gifford written from his gaol cell in May 1916 (figs.7 and 8). The same letter is curated in the *Inspiring Ireland* themed exhibition 'Women of the Rising'.⁶⁷ Both sisters were heavily involved in political and cultural circles, and republican

⁶⁴ Harriett Wheelock, "Thomas MacDonagh Family Papers - Collection Guide" (Dublin, 2008), 6, Accessed August 2, 2019. http://www.nli.ie/pdfs/mss_lists/131_ThomasMacDonagh.pdf; Provenance in 'DOC Collections - Signatories of the Proclamation,' in CRC-Review Feb 2018-0.xlsx, courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

⁶⁵ Quoting Fianna Fáil minister Mary O'Rourke. Diarmaid Ferriter, *A Nation and Not a Rabble* (London: Profile Books, 2015), 92.

⁶⁶ Senia Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women, 1900-1918* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 7; Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland, 1900-2000*. (London: Profile Books, 2004) 158.

⁶⁷ "Letter from Joseph Plunkett to Grace Gifford," *Inspiring Ireland*, accessed August 5, 2019, <https://inspiring-ireland.ie/object-detail/5d86p086p>.

activists in their own right. These images communicate them here in traditional maternal and romantic roles, the first impressions that a visitor to the site will see, while they serve to humanise their male referents.



Figure 5-4. (L) Thomas MacDonagh, banner image. (R) Joseph Mary Plunkett, banner image. 1916 Digital Collections, nli.ie/1916

As a public history resource, there is a singular historical narrative of the Seven Signatories that is communicated visually and with immediacy via the landing page for these 1916 collections. The consequence of this is to echo the ways in which women were previously side-lined in the history of bringing about independence. It echoes also how women with familial and marital links to these men commemorated them in the years after the Rising, themselves prioritising the leaders and in turn installing and perpetuating a myth that women were not integral to bringing about the events of 1916-1923.⁶⁸ Many other documents relating to female republican activism have been digitised by the NLI, such as select papers of Cuman na mBan and republican women such as Annie O’Farrelly, though many of the latter are again limited by copyright. What is important is that they are not part of a bespoke and foregrounded element of a nationally significant commemorative digital production. Women are present, sometimes extensively so, in the 1916 Digital Collections, yet they are not part of its curation.

A number of copyright restrictions mean that digital access is limited for many items. Subject to the wishes of surviving relatives and donors and national archives legislation, these are nonetheless likely to become available sooner rather than later given the 70-year rule on releasing such archives and as their creators passed away a long time ago. The

⁶⁸ McAtackney, “Making 1916,” 116.

collections are also presented within the language and infrastructure of the NLI online catalogue rather than provided with bespoke search functions, as with other centennial digitisations, and this has been intentional. The NLI catalogue is preferred as the single entry-point for its collections, rather than creating multiple separate databases as has been done for other commemorative digitisations (an exception being the Catholic Parish Registers database made available in 2015 and intended explicitly for genealogy and family history research).⁶⁹ Digital surrogates viewed through the NLI catalogue are also much higher resolution with third-party zoom functions, rather than standard PDF images, and are not freely downloadable. As this centenary project was also a major metadata creation and cataloguing one, the digitisations are accompanied by detailed and exportable metadata for each item. As Thylstrup says, ‘informational strolling is not only a leisurely experience, but also a laborious process’.⁷⁰ The means of access and functionality suggest academic research as the significant expected use case, at the same time as they feature as part of a streamlined commemorative exhibition intended for a broad range of users.

While these 1916 collections are extensive, a significant amount of the digitised material heralded is only accessible at the NLI reading room computers due to the aforementioned copyright status, a situation common to national cultural institutions that is also tied up with partnerships and costs involved in digitisation, as demonstrated in the previous chapter. Over 126,000 digitised items are viewable via the online catalogue (not including the Parish Registers), but much more has been digitised and not yet been made freely available for the reasons mentioned. This practicality is elided in the ways the centenary collections are communicated to the public in media coverage, also noted in chapter 6, or discussed in its annual reports. It is an example of how ‘increased accessibility to heritage is not synonymous with democratisation of heritage’ - that is to say, a neat binary between digitisation and access is not always realised.⁷¹ While this is not a deliberate or desired scenario on the part of the NLI or any institution, it is nonetheless a situation that creates limited access behind a public veneer of democratised access, which may feed into unrealistic expectations of digital availability. The Digital Repository of Ireland (DRI), in a survey of Irish institutions and their digital practices, stated that curated collections and

⁶⁹ Information provided by Sandra McDermott, Assistant Keeper, National Library of Ireland.

⁷⁰ Thylstrup, *The Politics of Mass Digitisation*, 116.

⁷¹ Joel Taylor and Laura Kate Gibson, “Digitisation, Digital Interaction and Social Media: Embedded Barriers to Democratic Heritage,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 23, no. 5 (2017): 410.

exhibitions ‘enable content managers to expose the richness of their collections while maintaining control over what content is actually made available. This is a useful method to employ, especially in situations where copyright or access policies, issues and restrictions persist’.⁷² More digitisation thus does not always equal more access, and more access does not necessarily mean democratised.

5.5 Exhibitions

The same DRI report observed that curated collections can ‘act as an advertisement for an institution’s holdings and can result in increased footfall, as online exhibitions, which often link multiple types of media objects, reveal the diversity of the content holder’s collections.’⁷³ The four exhibitions included in the NLI 1916 Digital Collections page are a mixture of online and offline. Images of the Proclamation, the Seven Signatories and the GPO (Figure 5-5) immediately communicate the familiar narrative, and the aesthetics and monumentality that underpin it.⁷⁴ The First World War as context for the conditions of rebellion completes this section.

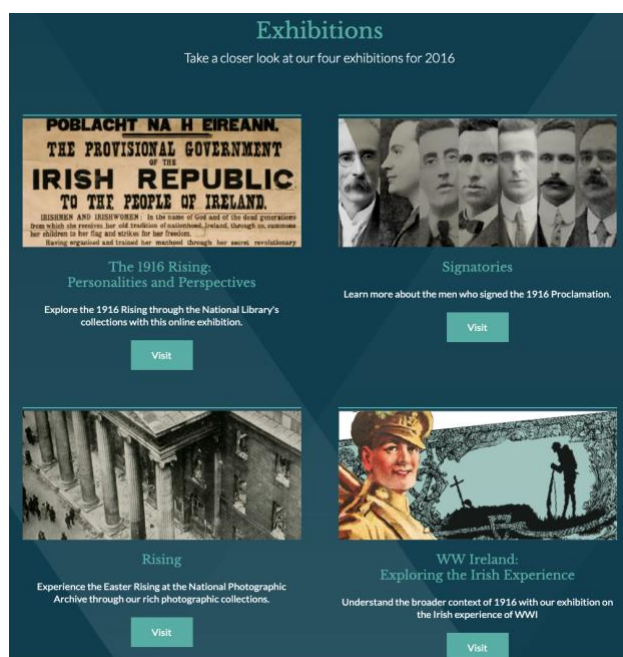


Figure 5-5 Exhibitions. 1916 Digital Collections, www.nli.ie/1916

⁷² Aileen Carroll and Sharon Webb, “Digital Archiving in Ireland: National Survey of the Humanities and Social Sciences” (Maynooth: National University of Ireland Maynooth, 2012), 39.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2006), 6.

5.5.1 1916 Rising: Personalities and Perspectives

As previously mentioned, this online exhibition was launched in 2006 for the ninetieth anniversary of the Rising and has been incorporated into the 1916 Digital Collections landing page via hyperlink. The reused microsite focuses on the main sites and activities during and leading to the Rising, as well as the Seven Signatories and the remaining executed men, a small number of male casualties, and the aftermath. A subsection is given to ‘Maude Gonne and Inghinidhe na h’Éireann’ (Daughters of Ireland), but the many women involved and Cumann na mBan are otherwise little elaborated.⁷⁵ Each section of the microsite is downloadable/printable as a PDF, and interpretation is illustrated by images and documents from the NLI collections, displaying 400 images in total, and at the time of its launch won an ‘Irish Design Effectiveness’ award.⁷⁶ Contributions were made by at least one professional historian in the interpretation and curation of this microsite.⁷⁷ A DRI survey has previously stated that the NLI ‘viewed online exhibitions and curated collections as an important platform for contextualising and interpreting its material’ and that this was an area it wished to develop based on the ‘Personalities and Perspectives’ exhibition.⁷⁸

5.5.2 Signatories

This thumbnail hyperlinks to a description page for the temporary physical exhibition ‘Signatories’ at the NLI in 2016. Elsewhere in the ‘Online Exhibitions’ section is a ‘Signatories’ exhibition curated on the NLI *Google Arts & Culture* page, though it is not directly linked to the 1916 landing page. The NLI has two such exhibitions relating directly to 1916, one regarding the War of Independence and Civil War, as well as one on power, privilege and the ‘Big House’ adapted from a previous physical exhibition.⁷⁹ ‘Signatories’ uses documents from the newly digitised collections and gives short descriptions of each leader’s wife or partner (or in the case of Pearse, mother), aligning

⁷⁵ National Library of Ireland, “The 1916 Rising: Personalities and Perspectives,” accessed August 12, 2019, <http://www.nli.ie/1916/exhibition/en/>.

⁷⁶ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2006,” 13.

⁷⁷ <http://www.nli.ie/1916/exhibition/en/credits.html>

⁷⁸ Carroll and Webb, “Digital Archiving in Ireland: National Survey of the Humanities and Social Sciences,” 40.

⁷⁹ “The National Library of Ireland,” Google Arts & Culture, accessed August 12, 2019, <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/national-library-of-ireland>.

each signatory with documents and interpretation around a female contemporary.⁸⁰ However, this is not linked through to the main landing page for the 1916 collections and requires specific and sometimes extensive searching, at a remove from the main commemorative page. As seen in the previous chapter, hyperlink networks may be used to amplify and enrich narratives in the cyberinfrastructure of digital archives. Otherwise, such narratives and identities may become lost in the complexity of websites when they are not proactively interconnected in such digital productions.

5.5.3 Rising

As with ‘Signatories’, ‘Rising’ links through to a description of a former physical exhibition, in this case held at the National Photographic Archive in central Dublin. ‘Rising’ was ‘a major photographic exhibition which showcases the National Library’s rich imagery of the events and locations of 1916’ and included ‘images from the Keogh Collection, the Independent Newspapers (Ireland) Collection and newly digitised photographs from the De Valera Collection, and various 1916 albums’.⁸¹ The digital surrogates of the photographic images displayed were also made available online through the photo-sharing platform Flickr and the NLI online catalogue. There were 60 images in the collection that formed the basis of the exhibition that intended to display the ‘landscape, physical and political’ of Dublin after the surrender.⁸² A second *Google Arts & Culture* online exhibition ‘Main sites of activity during the Easter Rising, 1916’ contains images that appeared in the physical exhibition, as well as images and documents from the Signatories collections, though again they are not directly hyperlinked. A catalogue search of digitised material using the NLI-suggested filter ‘Easter Rising, 1916’ produces over 1,900 results, of which 266 are photographs (1,403 manuscript), many of which would have been included in the physical exhibition.⁸³ A catalogue search for the digitised

⁸⁰ See: “SIGNATORIES of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic,” Google Arts & Culture, accessed August 12, 2019, <https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/awJikGjJhbnNJA>.

⁸¹ National Library of Ireland, “Rising,” accessed July 25, 2019, <http://www.nli.ie/en/udlist/current-exhibitions.aspx?article=65d3a6b9-a617-4cb2-bb71-f0ea14a5b301>.

⁸² Rónán Duffy, “Want to See the Real Rebellion? These Photographs Bring You to the Heart of the Rising,” *TheJournal.ie*, accessed August 12, 2019, <https://www.thejournal.ie/easter-rising-exhibition-2586056-Feb2016/>.

⁸³ “Current Filters | Online Availability: Digitised | Era: Easter Rising, 1916,” National Library of Ireland Catalogue, accessed November 25, 2020, http://catalogue.nli.ie/Search/Results?lookfor=&type=AllFields&filter%5B%5D=digitised%3A%22Digitised%22&filter%5B%5D=era_facet%3A%22Easter+Rising%2C+1916%22&view=list.

content of the exhibition necessarily provides more comprehensive access than the limited third-party online exhibition.

5.5.4 WW1 Ireland: Exploring the Irish Experience

This exhibition is described on the 1916 Digital Collections page as an aid to ‘Understand the broader context of 1916’. As discussed in chapter 1, the Rising was traditionally framed as an opportunity afforded by Britain’s preoccupation with the war in Europe. Irish involvement in the war has since become accepted within the official narrative. The image tile again links to a description of a physical exhibition at the NLI Kildare Street that ran from 2014-2018 in line with the historical duration of the war, however a microsite of the exhibition exists online, again indirectly linked via the main NLI website. As with ‘Personalities and Perspectives,’ this WW1 online exhibition was developed independent of the centenary project but subsequently integrated, containing extensive image, audio, video, textual and interactive content.⁸⁴

5.6 2016 Web Archive

Another aspect of the NLI response to the 2016 centenary was to archive and create a collection of websites ‘Remembering 1916, Recording 2016’ aimed at capturing the ‘digital record of Ireland online in 2016.’⁸⁵ Capturing over 400 sites related to the official programme as well as other local, national and international ‘cultural and creative events’. The collection is described by the NLI as its ‘largest and most ambitious web archiving project to date’ and as reflecting ‘the diverse and unique nature of the 2016 commemorations’.⁸⁶ The collection includes a number of social media accounts, mainly Twitter and YouTube, and sites relating to the Irish experience of the First World War, particularly the Battle of the Somme.⁸⁷ A public call was also launched in November 2016 to nominate websites the public felt ‘best record Irish life in 2016 and remember the events of 1916’ and the top five websites nominated received a web archive award in

⁸⁴ National Library of Ireland, “World War Ireland,” accessed August 12, 2019, <https://www.nli.ie/WWI/index.html>.

⁸⁵ “1916 Digital Collections.”

⁸⁶ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2016,” 9; National Library of Ireland, “Web Archive: Remembering 1916, Recording 2016” (Dublin, 2016), 1, <http://www.nli.ie/en/udlist/web-archive-collections.aspx>.

⁸⁷ National Library of Ireland, “Remembering 1916, Recording 2016,” 1-2.

December 2016.⁸⁸ This is one of several collections listed by the NLI web archive that include the categories ‘elections’, ‘society’ and ‘culture’ the last of which contains both the Recording 2016 and the considerably smaller ‘Decade of Centenaries’ collection, which will continue to be added to up to 2022.⁸⁹ The latter is, at the time of writing, somewhat dominated by websites relating to the First World War.⁹⁰ As discussed in chapter 3, the ‘Recording 2016’ collection was not the only major 2016 web archiving project during these commemorations. A collaborative effort by the British Library, the Bodleian Libraries, Trinity College Dublin Library and the University of Oxford during 2015-2016 produced the themed collection ‘1916 Easter Rising Web Archive’.⁹¹ This project was based in the UK and therefore had its own set of limitations, but it was similarly intended to capture ‘the varied ways in which the Irish and British states, cultural and educational institutions, as well as communities and individuals, approached the centenary events’.⁹²

The NLI began archiving the Irish web domain from 2011 and by 2016 its web archive had grown to 11.5 TB in size and attracted 42% more visitors than 2015. Growing in size again to 13 TB by the end of 2016, the ‘Recording 2016’ project accounts for the significant part of this additional 1.5TB to what is the de facto Irish national web archive.⁹³ Without legislation to provide for the preservation of the Irish (.ie) domain, the NLI web archive is a ‘selective archive’ and the scope of its themed collections has also proven limited by resources, for example when archiving the eighth amendment referendum in 2018.⁹⁴ The NLI therefore operates an opt-out system for archiving Irish websites whereby if a website owner does not respond to a request to archive it and make it publicly

⁸⁸ “NLI Launches Public Call for ‘Remembering 1916, Recording 2016’ Web Archive,” National Library of Ireland, accessed August 12, 2019, <https://www.nli.ie/en/list/latest-news.aspx?page=5&article=9f90ab97-f633-47f5-8e1f-2fd7904a6566>.

⁸⁹ National Library of Ireland, “Web Archive Collections,” accessed August 12, 2019, <https://www.nli.ie/en/udlist/web-archive-collections.aspx>; National Library of Ireland, “Decade of Centenaries 2012-2017” (Dublin, 2018), 1.

⁹⁰ National Library of Ireland, “Decade of Centenaries 2012-2017.”

⁹¹ Svenja Kunze and Brendan Power, “Capturing Commemoration: The 1916 Easter Rising Web Archive Project,” *Internet Histories* 1475 (2018): 202.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 207.

⁹³ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2016,” 18; National Library of Ireland, “Annual Review 2017” (Dublin, 2018), 14..

⁹⁴ “Digital Legal Deposit Consultation Concluded,” National Library of Ireland, accessed August 12, 2019, <https://www.nli.ie/en/list/latest-news.aspx?page=4&article=86be9c45-61a2-48a3-ad9c-bf3813f794ec>; Kunze and Power, “Capturing Commemoration: The 1916 Easter Rising Web Archive Project,” 206; National Library of Ireland, “The Eighth Amendment Referendum 2018” (Dublin, 2018), <http://www.nli.ie/getAttachment.aspx?Id=8fdaf4b2-9ca0-411a-85c8-0c7101a458d7>.

accessible, agreement is presumed unless an explicit response to the contrary is given.⁹⁵ The NLI originally began its web archiving activity with the now defunct Internet Memory Foundation. During this partnership, the web archive was previously accessible via a bespoke interface, the also now defunct ‘Europa Archive’ (europarchive.org), however, its collections are currently accessible via the paired back *Archive-It* service provided by the Internet Archive.⁹⁶ As Thylstrup observes in her study of mass digitisation, despite self-defining as an open-source alternative to closed corporate entities, the technical infrastructure of the Internet Archive has always been a mix of public and private interest, often operating just as clandestinely.⁹⁷ And as service providers such as the Internet Archive are hosted abroad, it appears the NLI now depends on ‘non-national, non-sovereign organisation[s] to preserve the national digital heritage,’ a common shortcoming of Irish institutions noted by the DRI.⁹⁸

The juxtaposition of the 1916 Signatories and the 2016 web archive collections contrasts old and new in digitising historical archives and archiving the contemporary internet record of the centenaries. Where the primacy of physical archives has traditionally underpinned national narratives, web archives have the potential be ‘a vehicle for further extending this narrative and aid in constructing multi-voiced narratives which can serve to diminish the undue influence of cultural or political elites.’⁹⁹ The ‘Recording 2016’ collection includes independent, community and diaspora sites, as well as certain social media accounts, mainly Twitter, which is easier to capture. Web archives can preserve not only a ‘record’ but also the interactions and debates around it through features such as comment forums or sharing functions ‘revealing further information about how content is viewed and shared’ by the public.¹⁰⁰ There is, expectedly, a preponderance of state institutions, departments and their extensive commemorative activities in this collection. A message implicit in this contrast between old and new at once harks to a traditional hierarchy of remembrance and contemporary currents in public history that have gathered critical mass particularly in this decade of commemorations, and a duality of traditional

⁹⁵ Kunze and Power, “Capturing Commemoration: The 1916 Easter Rising Web Archive Project,” 211.

⁹⁶ National Library of Ireland, “The National Library of Ireland Web Archive,” accessed August 13, 2019, <https://archive-it.org/home/nli>.

⁹⁷ Thylstrup, *The Politics of Mass Digitisation*, 13.

⁹⁸ Carroll and Webb, “Digital Archiving in Ireland: National Survey of the Humanities and Social Sciences,” 20.

⁹⁹ Kunze and Power, “Capturing Commemoration: The 1916 Easter Rising Web Archive Project,” 208.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 206.

and modern forms of archiving. This past-future duality is indeed a familiar trope of authorised commemorations of 1916, a quality that helps to sustain its relevance, binding the narrative of the collective self with a sense of enduring continuity as well as change.

As Winters argues, any future history of the twentieth century would be remiss without consulting the archived web as a primary source, and Irish anniversaries, as McBride says, have a habit of making history: ‘commemorative rituals becoming historical forces in their own right’.¹⁰¹ Commemoration has become a major branch of modern Irish historiography and web archives may be the natural successor to the public historian’s toolkit looking back on 2016, prefiguring as they may a more inclusive future archive. The NLI, in this vein, proposed in 2019 to ‘actively consider the representation of under-represented groups and communities for the NLI’s selective web archiving’ and to ‘launch web archiving community collecting projects in collaboration with groups and communities that have been identified in the NLI Diversity and Inclusion Forum, so that groups can select websites and social media that represent their communities.’¹⁰² If web archives are a primary source for studying social change then the ‘Recording 2016’ and the ‘Decade of Centenaries’ themed collections are pre-emptive of such future research into the nature of commemorations in Ireland, the nature of digital engagement, and future histories of the centennial decade.¹⁰³ The inclusion of social media feeds in such collections speaks to their utility as historical sources of commemoration and remembrance, but also for reconstructing and understanding the past from a pluralising perspective as will be seen in chapter 7.

¹⁰¹ Jane Winters, “Coda: Web Archives for Humanities Research - Some Reflections,” in *The Web as History*, ed. Niels Brügger and Ralph Schroeder (London: UCL Press, 2019); McBride, “Memory and National Identity in Modern Ireland,” 2, 4.

¹⁰² The National Library of Ireland, “Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan 2019-2021.”

¹⁰³ Niels Brügger and Ralph Schroeder, eds., *The Web as History: Using Web Archives to Understand the Past and the Present* (London: UCL Press, 2019), 2.

5.7 Dissemination & Engagement

We want to raise public and scholarly awareness of the unique and varied collections of the National Library, from hidden treasures to newly digitised resources, which capture our individual and collective memory.¹⁰⁴

The digitisation of the Signatories collections had the added utility of reducing wear on the original documents, a common practice that aids (that is not to say stand in for) conservation of popular analogue archives. At the same time, according to NLI staff, their digitisation generated interest in the originals as well as generating interest in, or making people aware of, other collections at the NLI.¹⁰⁵

In 2016 the NLI recorded a footfall of 247,000 and a much larger 22.5m combined interactions across its main website, the Catholic Parish Registers database, Flickr, and Twitter ‘impressions’.¹⁰⁶ Of these, 4.9m interactions were visits to the NLI domain (nli.ie), which covers the online catalogue. Considering there were c. 1.2m visits to the main website in 2015 and circa 3.6m in 2017, the figure for 2016 represents an increase of over 3m on the previous year and a relative spike in visits.¹⁰⁷

5.7.1 Social Media

The social media arm of the NLI has largely been centralised in the responsibility of a single employee co-ordinating across all platforms.¹⁰⁸ The Annual Reports/Reviews published online by the NLI provide significant detail of its collecting, outreach and digitisation activities since 2004. With the publication of some ‘website statistics’ from 2008, greater attention to online presence (as opposed to digitisation activities) is

¹⁰⁴ “Setting the Scene,” National Library of Ireland, “Strategy 2016-2021” (Dublin, 2016).

¹⁰⁵ Information provided by Sandra McDermott, Assistant Keeper.

¹⁰⁶ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2016,” 11.

¹⁰⁷ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Review 2015,” 10; National Library of Ireland, “Annual Review 2017,” 8.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Cauvin and Ciaran O’Neill, “Negotiating Public History in the Republic of Ireland: Collaborative, Applied and Usable Practices for the Profession,” *Institute of Historical Research*, 2017, 15.

discernible thereafter.¹⁰⁹ More recent reports during the decade of commemorations have focused more on inward online engagement via the main website, microsites and social media. Hauswedell *et al* have observed how in several institutions ‘digitisation can reduce the financial burden of researcher costs and is therefore justifiable as a public expense’.¹¹⁰ Equally, Thylstrup reminds us that ‘usage statistic reports’ link ‘the notions of *traffic* and *performance* together in ontological equation.’¹¹¹ As an institution with a ‘separate corporate identity’ competing for national funding, such data about users’ information-seeking via the NLI in turn generates ‘cultural value, and budgetary justification’ for such funding, perhaps especially for costly digital and digitisation projects.¹¹² While the NLI has a longer-established social media presence, the commemorations have elsewhere encouraged the uptake or increased use of social media platforms by the National Archives and the Military Archives, as seen in chapters 4 and 6, and increasingly part of their digital presence and institutional reporting.

The NLI has a presence on several social media platforms namely Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and to a lesser degree Vimeo and Soundcloud. According to a DRI survey the NLI reported that ‘its use of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Flickr was of huge benefit. It not only attracted readers to the library but also helped it to enrich the catalogue’s metadata.’¹¹³ Below is a breakdown of the following for the main platforms used by the NLI extracted from published yearly reports:

¹⁰⁹ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2008,” 45.

¹¹⁰ Tessa Hauswedell et al., “Of Global Reach yet of Situated Contexts: An Examination of the Implicit and Explicit Selection Criteria That Shape Digital Archives of Historical Newspapers,” *Archival Science* 20 (2020): 147-48.

¹¹¹ Thylstrup, *The Politics of Mass Digitisation*, 118.

¹¹² National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2007,” 18; Thylstrup, *The Politics of Mass Digitisation*, 117.

¹¹³ Carroll and Webb, “Digital Archiving in Ireland: National Survey of the Humanities and Social Sciences,” 41.

Table 5-1. Social media engagement numbers extracted from successive NLI annual reports.

Year	Facebook followers	Twitter followers	Flickr visits
2013 '14 report p.11	9.8K	10.1K	6.4m
2014 report p.11	12.2K	15.5K	14.9m
2015 report p.10	16.4 K	20.6K	14.3m
2016 report p.11	19.3K	24.5K	8.7m
2017 report pp.3, 8	20.8K	27.7K	7.6m

At the time of writing the NLI has c. 26,000 Facebook followers, c. 38,600 Twitter followers, and c. 35,400 Flickr ('National Library of Ireland on The Commons') followers.¹¹⁴ Twitter has been the fastest growing of the NLI social media following in the last five years. For official purposes, the NLI reports the latter in terms of 'visits' rather than followers and visits to Flickr more than doubled in the year following the aforementioned release of digitised images in 2014.

There were 22.5m combined online interactions across NLI digital platforms in 2016. For comparison, there were 21.1m in 2015 and 18m the following year in 2017, 2016 representing a relative spike in interactions overall.¹¹⁵ Twitter impressions are not provided in the Annual Report for 2016, however, they accounted for just under 4.1m of total impressions in 2017. The 'top tweet' for 2016 related to a lecture given by historian Gearoid Ó Tuathaigh on the changing historiography of the Rising, part of a series of talks based on the bestselling *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, more of which to follow.¹¹⁶ Based on a dataset of Tweets concerning the 'women of 1916' collected for this research and the focus of chapter 7, the NLI were discernible among the most retweeted accounts, demonstrating that it was active in this feminist 'issue space'.¹¹⁷ In contrast, the National

¹¹⁴ National Library of Ireland, "National Library of Ireland," Facebook, accessed October 8, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/NationalLibraryofIreland/>; @NLIreland, "National Library of Ireland," Twitter, accessed October 8, 2020, <https://twitter.com/NLIreland>; "National Library of Ireland on The Commons," Flickr, accessed October 8, 2020, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/nlireland/>.

¹¹⁵ National Library of Ireland, "Annual Review 2015," 7; National Library of Ireland, "Annual Review 2017," 3.

¹¹⁶ National Library of Ireland, "Annual Report 2016," 11; "15 November 2016: 'Atlas of the Irish Revolution' Lecture: 'Reflections on the Changing Historiography of the Irish Revolution', National Library of Ireland, Dublin 2," Decade of Centenaries, accessed August 13, 2019, <https://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/15-november-2016-atlas-of-the-irish-revolution-lecture-reflections-on-the-changing-historiography-of-the-irish-revolution-national-library-of-ireland-dublin-2/>.

¹¹⁷ Richard Rogers, *Digital Methods* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2013), 39.

Archives and the Military Archives did not feature prominently in this retweet-network. The National Archives were newly established on Twitter, and the dedicated Military Service Pensions Collection Twitter account was not established in 2016.

There were also, in 2016, 8.7m views on the NLI Flickr Commons that holds upwards of 2,500 images, among which are a significant amount of revolutionary-era photographs that hold no known copyright restrictions.¹¹⁸ The NLI Flickr Commons boasts more followers than its two counterparts and its number of visits likely outweigh individual Twitter ‘impressions’ judging from the trend from Table 1 above, and has had over 70m views since joining in 2010.¹¹⁹ The popularity of the NLI Flickr account is also due to its interactivity and the ability to contribute to the documentation of photographic archives. Testament to this success as an engagement and public metadata-creation pathway was the resulting ‘photo-detectives’ ‘community-sourced’ exhibition based on these interactions in September 2017.¹²⁰ The number of images freely available to access through the NLI Flickr account is, however, considerably less than what has actually been digitised by the NLI overall, partly because not all digitised items are added to Flickr, partly because a significant amount remains subject to copyright and licensing restrictions. NLI have contributed over 33,000 digitised images to Europeana to date, accounting for the largest single contributor of all the Irish institutions involved.¹²¹

5.7.2 Collaborations & Education

In the case of the NLI, and likely similar elsewhere, criteria for digitisation also considers how they will be useful for education, outreach and other services, that is, what collections will be the best value across the activities of the institution.¹²² In other words, the wider needs of the institution itself are also a significant consideration in what to commission

¹¹⁸ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2016,” 2; National Library of Ireland, “Annual Review 2015,” 10.

¹¹⁹ National Library of Ireland, “About - National Library of Ireland on The Commons,” Flickr, accessed August 15, 2019, <https://www.flickr.com/people/nlireland/>.

¹²⁰ “PRESS RELEASE Wednesday, 13th September 2017: Community-Sourced ‘Photo Detectives’ Exhibition Reveals Striking Images of Irish Life,” DHR Communications, accessed August 13, 2019, <https://www.dhr.ie/nli-photo-detectives-exhibition/>.

¹²¹ “National Library of Ireland - Search,” Europeana, accessed October 20, 2020, https://www.europeana.eu/en/search?page=1&qf=COUNTRY%3A%22Ireland%22&qf=DATA_PROVIDER%3A%22National%20Library%20of%20Ireland%22&query=National%20library%20of%20ireland&view=grid.

¹²² Information provided by Sandra McDermott.

for digitisation as much as the needs of their publics. According to the NLI report in 2016 it ‘welcomed researchers to explore our 1916 collections and use them in all kinds of ways’ including musicians researching and performing ballads, historical booklet creation, drama workshops and performances using letters and items from the various papers.¹²³ In addition, the NLI engaged in a collaboration with *The Irish Times* newspaper in 2016 to create a series of seven articles for each signatory’s digitised collection as part of the newspaper’s own 1916 microsite.¹²⁴ The NLI has previously disclosed positive inward traffic following newspaper coverage, stating that its Flickr Commons photo-stream received ‘40,000 hits in one day alone’ following a 2010 article in *The Irish Times*, making news media coverage an attractive pathway for dissemination.¹²⁵ The 2016 collaboration likewise proved successful in its readership.¹²⁶ Further linked with the Signatories collections is a podcast series, originally broadcast via local radio, ‘Voices of the Rising,’ which covers first-hand accounts of the event based on documents and diaries in their collections, both male and female and not exclusively those digitised for the centenary.¹²⁷ The Signatories collections were thus afforded significant dissemination through mainstream media in addition to in-house activities and social media.

As mentioned previously, part of the NLI contribution to the 2016 centenary programme was to produce a ‘schools package on the Signatories based on their online exhibition ‘The 1916 Rising: Personalities and Perspectives’.¹²⁸ One such example was reproduced by *Century Ireland* as part of its ‘Easter Rising’ online exhibition focusing on a draft of the surrender letter signed by Padraig Pearse on 29 April 1916.¹²⁹ The NLI has been partnered with the *Century Ireland* project since its launch in 2013 and has contributed a large amount of digitised items to the website. In 2016, for example, the NLI provided for *Century Ireland* a series of sketches from the Ceannt Papers for the same Easter Rising exhibition, which went online in December 2015 when the collection was first launched as part of a phased

¹²³ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2016,” 9.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 8; “Remembering the 1916 Rising.” *The Irish Times*. Accessed October 14, 2020. <https://www.irishtimes.com/1916>.

¹²⁵ Carroll and Webb, “Digital Archiving in Ireland: National Survey of the Humanities and Social Sciences,” 42.

¹²⁶ Information provided by Katherine McSharry.

¹²⁷ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2016,” 9.

¹²⁸ Government of Ireland, “Centenary Programme,” 10.

¹²⁹ National Library of Ireland, “Object: Pearse Surrender Order,” *Century Ireland*, accessed August 15, 2019, <https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/object-pearse-surrender-order>.

release plan.¹³⁰ The NLI has also contributed over a hundred digitised items to the *Inspiring Ireland* project, several from their 2016 Digital collections, twenty of which are placed within a ‘Women of the Rising’ themed exhibition, and another 26 in ‘Leaders of the Rising’.¹³¹ It has been the largest contributor to the latter themed collection.¹³² Later the NLI was closely involved in *Inspiring Ireland’s* ‘Frongoch and 1916: Recreating a Lost Landscape’ exhibition, a collaboration with the People’s Collection of Wales and the National Library of Wales to mark the centenary of rebel internment at the camp after the Rising.¹³³ A project to digitise the aforementioned Catholic Parish Registers, an ancestry resource, was completed in 2015 and represents a significant portion of online interaction (see below). The launch in July 2015 has been described as ‘a landmark day for Irish genealogy’ and appeals directly to the Irish Diaspora, also a pillar of the official centenary programme.¹³⁴ The NLI was also a collaborator on the *Google Cultural Institute / Ireland 2016* project to create a ‘Dublin Rising 1916-2016’ virtual tour. This featured items from the NLI’s online collections as well as from other institutions.¹³⁵ However, it is outside the scope of the immediate 1916 Digital Collections as they are presented by the NLI.¹³⁶

The NLI was also a partner to the *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, which was written by prominent academics for a general audience and with a forward from the President of Ireland, and significant contributor of archival documents to the publication. *Atlas* describes the documents reproduced as ‘windows into the past’ and ‘glimpses of “past futures” and roads not taken’ that expose to us ‘the “feel” of the era as it was experienced by those who were there’.¹³⁷ The book gives weight specifically to the tactile, contingent

¹³⁰ “Éamonn Ceannt Papers - NLI,” Century Ireland, accessed August 15, 2019, <https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/galleries/galleries/eamonn-ceannt-papers>.

¹³¹ “Search : Curated Collection--Women and the Rising : National Library of Ireland,” National Library of Ireland, accessed October 2, 2019, https://inspiring-ireland.ie/search/collections?f%5B0%5D=field_dri_subject%3A825&f%5B1%5D=field_dri_institute%3A580.

¹³² “Leaders of the Rising,” Inspiring Ireland, accessed October 2, 2019, <https://inspiring-ireland.ie/1916/leaders-of-rising>; “Object Detail: Letter from Éamonn Ceannt to Áine Ceant,” Inspiring Ireland, accessed October 2, 2019, <https://inspiring-ireland.ie/object-detail/rx91h4623>.

¹³³ “Frongoch and 1916: Recreating a Lost Landscape,” Inspiring Ireland, accessed November 1, 2018, <http://inspiring-ireland.ie/frongoch-and-1916-recreating-lost-landscape>.

¹³⁴ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Review 2015,” 14.

¹³⁵ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2016,” 8.

¹³⁶ Ibid.; See: Google and Ireland 2016, “Dublin Rising 1916-2016,” accessed December 10, 2016, <https://dublinrising.withgoogle.com/welcome/>.

¹³⁷ John Crowley et al., eds., *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017), xix.

and affective qualities of heritage archives. Examples include a self-portrait watercolour of Éamonn Ceannt and a letter from Patrick Pearse to his mother Margaret that were digitised for the NLI 1916 Collections, as well as numerous others from these and from other NLI collections.¹³⁸

5.7.3 Ancestry & Diaspora

It is worth noting that, in 2016, the NLI digitised more than 1,800 items additional to material pertaining to the 1916 centenary.¹³⁹ While other major digital projects may not have been directly tied to the Decade of Centenaries in the historical sense, they are nonetheless part of a wider digitisation drive and situated national context, speaking also to the ‘Global and Diaspora’ strand of the centenary programme. A significant digitisation project running alongside the 1916 collections preparations was the Catholic Parish Registers dating the from 1740s to 1880s, which began in 2006 and was launched in July 2015. A major genealogical resource complementing the 1901/1911 census records, it attracted 5.5 million page views and 330,000 unique visitors to the site across 172 countries in the first six months of going live, dwarfing the 1.2m visits to the main NLI website for that year.¹⁴⁰ The database is aimed at ‘community, heritage and diaspora engagement, allowing those overseas to consult the records without any barriers’ and its launch was described as a ‘landmark day for Irish genealogy’.¹⁴¹ The number was 4.2m for 2016 against 4.9m to the main website.¹⁴² The NLI describes its ‘unique, living national collection’ as ‘the natural home for collections that record the memory of Ireland and our diaspora’ and genealogy is a significant aspect of the public services of the NLI, and is particularly attractive to the Irish diaspora.¹⁴³ In 2016 the NLI also ran a workshop series called ‘Your Revolutionary Ancestor’ aimed at helping to ‘trace and understand our ancestors in the period 1912-1922’ in keeping with other ancestry initiatives promoted by *Ireland 2016*, such as the schools ‘1916 Ancestry Project’ using digitised sources (Family Research 1916 - NAI).¹⁴⁴ The NLI held another sold-out workshop ‘Your Family & 1916:

¹³⁸ Ibid., 277, 287.

¹³⁹ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2016,” 18.

¹⁴⁰ National Library of Ireland, “Annual Review 2015,” 10, 14.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 14.

¹⁴² National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2016,” 10.

¹⁴³ National Library of Ireland, “Strategy 2016-2021.”

¹⁴⁴ “Tracing Your Ancestors in the Revolutionary Period,” National Library of Ireland, accessed July 15, 2019, <http://www.nli.ie/en/list/current-events.aspx?article=97dab978-a0c0-4bac-8f3e-784c70433318>; Government of Ireland, “Centenary Programme,” 27, 38.

Genealogy of the Rising' during the RTÉ 'Reflecting the Rising' event on Easter Monday 2016.¹⁴⁵

Although the genealogical collections and services of the NLI are mentioned in all reports, 'Diaspora' is explicitly mentioned only in the reports for the years 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2017 (a report for 2013 is not currently available online). This perhaps demonstrates a greater emphasis on the NLI's international reach since the beginning of the commemorative period, which also saw 'The Gathering' (2013) a much-derided cultural-tourism marketing initiative aimed at the Irish diaspora. As mentioned above, it was also during this time that the NLI became involved in *Inspiring Ireland*, a decade of commemorations project ostensibly aimed at the diaspora and international audiences during 2016.¹⁴⁶

5.8 Discussion

The Signatories collections present an interesting case in that these digital commemorative archives re-traditionalise history and re-legitimise this narrative of seven at the same time as the *process* of digitisation revealed women's stories in the archive - a detail lost in the public narrative of this digitisation. Mediation of the digital archive in such cases becomes all the more potent considering that, as Smith says, the obfuscation of women in heritage representations, even where they are present, 'help to ensure that national narratives remain masculine and elite'.¹⁴⁷ The collection of papers of the Seven Signatories represents with visual immediacy the traditional, heroic narrative of the Rising and, given the history and context outlined, this is a prestige series of collections within the national commemorations. Though a more complex picture emerges, as a flagship digitisation project commemorating 1916 it defaults to a pantheon-like representation

¹⁴⁵ "Your Family & 1916: Genealogy of the Rising," RTE - 1916, accessed July 15, 2019, <https://1916.rte.ie/event/national-library-of-ireland/your-family-1916-genealogy-of-the-rising/>.

¹⁴⁶ "Our Project," Inspiring Ireland, accessed November 1, 2018, <http://inspiring-ireland.ie/about/our-project>; Government of Ireland, "Centenary Programme," 54-61.

¹⁴⁷ Smith, "Heritage, Gender and Identity," 168.

symbolic of a masculinist national heritage reinforced by aesthetics and sense of monumentality.¹⁴⁸

As previously mentioned, an NLI report stated that the cataloguing project went much farther than originally planned and included the collection of Sir Hugh Lane. According to those involved in making these Signatories digital archives available, however, the re-cataloguing process also brought together a much wider range of relevant material revealing the presence of women, particularly the widows or close female family of the executed, and often their more equal stake in revolutionary operations than might previously have been considered.¹⁴⁹ This is particularly true of the Ceannt and O'Brennan, Clarke and Pearse collections, which include the extensive papers of Áine Ceannt and Lily O'Brennan, Kathleen Clarke, and Margaret Pearse. The papers of Lily O'Brennan also contain, for example, several documents relating to Cumann na mBan such as draft constitutions, agendas, minutes, and member lists.¹⁵⁰ As McSharry stated in one of the *Irish Times* collaborations: 'the papers show the extraordinary bond between the couple [Tom and Kathleen Clarke] and their commitment to the cause, a feature of all the spouses of the Proclamation signatories'. These are very much understood as the 'Thomas Clarke Papers,' however, rather than their equal remit as the 'Tom Clarke and Kathleen Clarke Papers'.¹⁵¹ Further listed in a research guide for sources of women in Irish history published by the NLI are the Ceannt and O'Brennan Papers and the Thomas MacDonagh Family Papers. Women such as academic and suffragist Mary Hayden and organisations such as Cumann na mBan, detailed in the guide, are also listed as contributors in the collection context provided.¹⁵² Official communications on these centenary collections, however, refer almost exclusively to the Signatories, with only occasional mention of the women in generality - spouses, sisters, mothers, friends - who are also part of these collections, and many of whom were prominent activists in their own right. The press release upon their launch makes no mention of women in these archives, and the

¹⁴⁸ Taylor and Gibson, "Digitisation, Digital Interaction and Social Media: Embedded Barriers to Democratic Heritage," 410, 413.

¹⁴⁹ Information provided by Katherine McSharry, Deputy Director & Head of Development, National Library of Ireland.

¹⁵⁰ See 'III.ii. Cumann na mBan, 1916-1939' in 'III. Papers of Lily O'Brennan, 1851-1948'. Ceannt and O'Brennan Papers, National Library of Ireland.

¹⁵¹ Ronan McGreevy, "The Thomas Clarke Papers: An Impish Wit Who Fretted about Money," *The Irish Times*, January 9, 2016.

¹⁵² Sonja Ternan, "Research Guide: Women in Irish History," 2008, 15-18.

description of the ‘Signatories’ exhibition on the website and in the NLI’s 2016 Annual Report refer to them simply as ‘women who worked alongside them [the signatories]’.¹⁵³ A list of contributors that hyperlink to catalogue results for each person is provided in the collection descriptions, which gives an indication of the many women, and women’s organisations, included in or linked with these papers. Remembering the cultural logic of these as public commemorative archives, but also presented within a more complex information structure than other exemplified in this research, this is a question of findability and information literacy. If there is little indication that something is there to begin with in presenting such commemorative digitisations, the average user is less likely to look for or find it. Aforementioned, the presence of these women has been drawn out elsewhere in the NLI’s contributions to external themed collections, re-assembling and foregrounding them in new interpretive contexts that were not made possible for the 1916 Digital Collections. Thus, while these digital collections do much to reveal and make digitally accessible women in the archive, the Seven Signatories provided a more coherent narrative and message that tied neatly with the official centenary programme than perhaps could be conceived of a feminist standpoint commemorative digitisation. And as was made clear at the beginning of this chapter, public appetite for the Signatories continues to thrive.

Finally, while not discounting other continued non-digital efforts by the NLI to address Irish women in history, these are largely outside the scope of this analysis of digital commemorative archives. Physical exhibitions, though valuable, are temporary and, with the exception of some travelling exhibitions, location specific, as are lectures and special events. Indeed, it is the temporary nature of exhibitions on women’s activism in this period that contrasts strongly with permanent museum exhibitions and with the relative endurance of timely, curated, highly mediatised, commemorative digitisations.

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¹⁵³ National Library of Ireland, “Press Release: National Library of Ireland Launches 2016 Programme and 1916 Digital Collections” (Dublin, 2015), <https://www.nli.ie/GetAttachment.aspx?id=63a4e0ea-9059-4140-9494-055ead1a82c6>; National Library of Ireland, “Annual Report 2016,” 15.

In 2017, €2m in funding was announced for a second phase of cataloguing and digitisation at the NLI between 2017 and 2023, with digitised archives to be released in phased tranches between 2018 and 2023 and included documents pertaining to suffrage, the 1918 elections, the first Dáil, the Anglo-Irish Treaty and the conflicts of 1919-1923:

Towards a Republic is the National Library's next major cataloguing and digitisation project, marking the second phase of the Decade of Commemorations from 1917 to 1923. It will see the digitisation of some of the personal papers of the signatories of The Treaty in preparation for the centenary of the foundation of the State.¹⁵⁴

An *Irish Examiner* report on the 'Towards a Republic' digitisation announcement in 2018 suggested that the release of the proposed 'tranches' of archives and personal papers 'may be linked to the commemoration of significant events during the remainder of the Decade of Commemorations through to 2023,' recognising a precedent set in 2016.¹⁵⁵ A pattern of focusing on a set of male signatories of a foundational document emerges. The papers of Rosamond Jacob, Annie O'Farrelly and the Sheehy Skeffingtons were also billed as part of this second phase commemorative digitisation strategy. Information provided by NLI staff in 2019 shows that the papers of Alice Stopford Green (historian, nationalist and senator), Grace Plunkett (illustrator, nationalist and widow of Joseph Plunkett), and of the Irish National Aid & Volunteer Dependents Fund were identified for this second phase digitisation.¹⁵⁶ The vast majority in this list are papers of men associated with the Rising, revolution and nationalist politics, though, as with the Signatories collections, they are likely to turn out multiple additional female contributors.

Not alone the act of digitisation but timing and symbolic alignment with national commemorations in turn endow such commemorative digitisations with additional

¹⁵⁴ The National Library of Ireland, "Minister Humphreys Announces Major New Digitisation Funding for NLI," National Library of Ireland, 2017, <https://www.nli.ie/en/list/latest-news.aspx?article=1ccc8e1f-9aea-4f1b-95f5-7ce9d1e35235>.

¹⁵⁵ Niall Murray, "Dawn of a Digital Irish Revolution as Archives Go Online," *The Irish Examiner*, January 8, 2018.

¹⁵⁶ 'DOC Phase 2,' in CRC-Review Feb 2018-0.xlsx, courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

heritage value, investment, and cultural legitimacy that is not afforded all centenaries of national significance. While the Signatories collections were being prepared as far back as 2014, plans to digitise records of the Irish suffrage movement, commemorated in 2018, were first announced in 2017. The ‘Centenary Programme 2018’ outlining the governmental arrangements for the suffrage centenary states that a ‘large-scale cataloguing and digitisation project will make many of these sources freely available via the catalogue’.¹⁵⁷ The research guide discussed earlier lists the collections of several women who were involved in nationalism, republican activism and the suffrage movement. Undoubtedly, the most extensive and nationally significant of these are the papers of the Sheehy Skeffingtons, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington being Ireland’s foremost suffragette and whose collection of papers along with her husband’s are the most extensive of any suffrage collection in the State. A collection guide for these papers describes material relating to the suffrage movement as being a substantial portion, and the collection as being ‘exceptionally valuable documentation for the history of that movement in the first decades of the twentieth century’.¹⁵⁸ These were donated to the NLI between 1974 and 1998, some of which was still not catalogued by the time of publishing a collection guide in 2008.¹⁵⁹ These papers are now being digitised but remain under copyright, accessible only through on-site library computers. There has not been a dedicated online suffrage exhibition as for other moments of historical and commemorative significance such as the First World War and the Rising. This is partly a product of historical collection decisions, and an acknowledged paucity of visual sources documenting the Irish suffrage movement, which was entwined with nationalism (Pašeta).¹⁶⁰ As noted in chapter 4, there was a distinct drop-off in digitisation activity after 2016, and cultural institutions were not immune from the concomitant ‘commemoration

¹⁵⁷ Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht, “Centenary Programme 2018” (Dublin, 2018) accessed August 12, 2019. https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2018/02/commemorative_programme_women1916_web_a_w.pdf.

¹⁵⁸ Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, “Collection List No.47 Sheehy Skeffington Papers” (Dublin: National Library of Ireland), 6, accessed August 21, 2019, https://www.nli.ie/pdfs/mss_lists/047_SheehySkeffington.pdf.

¹⁵⁹ Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, “Collection List No.47 Sheehy Skeffington Papers” (Dublin: National Library of Ireland, n.d.), accessed 21 August 2019, https://www.nli.ie/pdfs/mss_lists/047_SheehySkeffington.pdf, 5.

¹⁶⁰ Donna Gilligan, “Did Your Granny Have a Hammer?” - Tracking down the Objects of the Irish Women’s Suffrage Movement,” Women’s Museum of Ireland, accessed November 20, 2020, <https://womensmuseumofireland.ie/blog/2016/04/18/did-your-granny-have-a-hammer-tracking-down-the-objects-of-the-irish-women-s-suffrage-movement>.

fatigue' felt by many after the 1916 centenary.¹⁶¹ With the suffrage centenary long passed, the affective capital of commemoration was not instrumentalised for this nationally significant collection to the same extent as the 1916 Collections, a situation replicated in the preceding chapter.

5.9 Conclusion

...historical decisions made around documenting and cataloguing heritage collections continue privileging certain power-knowledge imbalances and affect what cultural heritage knowledge we now access. In this sense, digitisation of and digital interaction with heritage today cannot be seen as a 'neutral' activity divorced from the entangled power relations of our past.¹⁶²

The need to take stock of heritage collections was born out in a Diversity and Inclusion policy and implementation plan recently published by the NLI. Officially acknowledged for the first time is the continued gender disparities in their collections, and an historically male dominated management team, recently reversed, stating that 'During 2017, donations to the NLI related to men outnumbered donations related to women by more than 5 to 1' and 'For the first 100 years of the NLI's existence our senior management was entirely male - today it is 88% female'.¹⁶³ The 2019-2021 implementation plan also proposes to carry out an inventory of collections 'so that analysis can be conducted to address under-represented communities'.¹⁶⁴ Such 'communities' tend to indicate historically marginalised identities along the lines of gender, race, class, disability, religion,

¹⁶¹ Also referred to as '1916 fatigue' the phrase was likely coined in an *Irish Times* letter to the editor, became salient for a time in 2016 following the March centenary. Dermot O'Rourke, "Letters to the Editor: Commemoration Fatigue?," *The Irish Times*, April 5, 2016.

¹⁶² Taylor and Gibson, "Digitisation, Digital Interaction and Social Media: Embedded Barriers to Democratic Heritage," 409.

¹⁶³ The National Library of Ireland, "Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2018-2021 (English)" (Dublin, 2018), accessed September 10, 2019.

<https://www.nli.ie/en/Policy.aspx%0Ahttps://www.nli.ie/GetAttachment.aspx?id=f13f83cf-582f-4861-84fb-81845037cd8d>.

¹⁶⁴ The National Library of Ireland, "Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan 2019-2021."

sexuality etc. and it is fair to predict, based on the previous statements, that a gender analysis will be performed upon such an inventory.

Undoubtedly, as the above suggests, historical collection (or donation) decisions impinge upon what can be made digitally accessible today. It is not possible or expected that everything can be digitised and made freely available, whether due to budget, time or copyright constraints, commemorative trends, or other considerations like education and outreach value. These constraints nonetheless have consequences for the choices that are eventually made, what is commissioned for digitisation, what is accessible and how, and to what extent it is 'democratised'.¹⁶⁵ The discourse that frames these centenary digitisations shapes how we understand them and the nature of their heritage 'value,' sending a message about whose memory and identity are ultimately most valued at moments of high commemoration. Symbolic timing and publicity for such archival releases may also have a bearing on their public reach and inward engagement as well as emphasising them as an act of cultural mediation, especially true in 2016 with the release of these Signatories collections and as seen in other digitisations addressed in this thesis. The following chapter will pick up again on this notion of an alignment of the archives with commemoration that runs through each of these case studies and which underpins the cultural logic of digitisation in this Decade of Centenaries.

¹⁶⁵ Taylor and Gibson, "Digitisation, Digital Interaction and Social Media: Embedded Barriers to Democratic Heritage," 412-14.

6 The Military Archives: Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection

6.1 Introduction

The Irish Military Archives was established in 1982 and since 1990, under the implementation of National Archives Act 1986 (Section 14), it has been the place of deposit for the records of the Department of Defence, the Defence Forces and the Army Pensions Board. Its brief is to ‘collect material from the foundation of the State up until the present day’.¹ The Military Archives are housed and managed at Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin, the headquarters of the Irish Defence Forces. The Defence Forces, which include all land, sea and air units of the Irish national army, have their origins in the Irish Volunteers (translating directly as Óglaigh na h’Éireann, the Irish language terminology officially used to refer to the Defence Forces), a nationalist militia established in 1913 to defend the enactment of Home Rule in Ireland. The Defence Forces that house and manage these archives are also the ceremonial backbone of official state commemorations of which there have been innumerable in this decade alone.² The annual Easter Sunday military parade to mark the anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising demonstrates this political genealogy and alignment as well as the fact that the Rising was ‘first and foremost a military event’.³ Members of the Defence Forces also presented the National Flag and a copy of the Proclamation to every school in the Republic in advance of ‘Proclamation Day’ in March 2016.⁴

The Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection, the focus of this chapter, was generated by applications arising from both the Army Pensions Act of 1923 and the

¹ National Archives Advisory Council, “8th Report of the National Archives Advisory Council 1999” (Dublin, 1999), 11, <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/NAAC-8th-Report-English-1999.pdf>; Military Archives, “About,” accessed March 13, 2019, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/about-us>.

² See: Defence Forces Ireland, “Ceremonial,” accessed April 3, 2019, <http://www.military.ie/en/public-information/defence-forces-ceremonial/>.

³ Diarmaid Ferriter, “1916 in 2016: Personal Reflections of an Irish Historian,” *Irish Historical Studies* 42, no. 161 (2018): 162.

⁴ Government of Ireland, “Centenary Programme,” 12; Ronan McGreevy, “Thousands of Schoolchildren to Participate in Proclamation Day,” *The Irish Times*, March 15, 2016.

Military Service Pensions Act of 1924, and subsequent amendments and reappraisals of ‘active service’ definitions to alter or extend their remit.⁵ Combined, these two pieces of legislation operated to recognise and compensate the wounded or dependants of the deceased of the Rising, War of Independence, and later including the Civil War, and surviving veterans who could prove service. The Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection, MSPC hereafter, is a series of files created by applications between 1923 and 1958 for such pensions, allowances and gratuities by persons who considered themselves eligible. The series also contains organisational membership and nomination rolls that were used to better verify applications later in the scheme, as well as brigade reports and files relating to medals awarded for service in the 1916 Rising and War of Independence period.⁶ At circa 300,000 files, there is a huge amount of material in this archive. There were approximately 85,000 applications for allowances, 18,000 of which were successful. Crowe considers the MSPC ‘the last big piece of the archival jigsaw concerning the decade of centenaries,’ citing the Bureau of Military History (1916-1921) collection as the other major piece. She also regards the MSPC records as more valuable because they are more accurate, recorded closer to the events concerned, and were refereed by a board of assessors.⁷ The extent of these two collections currently available demonstrate the sheer volume of military records pertaining to the revolutionary period and the Bureau of Military History is, as McGarry has suggested, one of the most substantive oral history archives of a modern revolution.⁸ Digitisation is, Thylstrup has argued, ‘a force deeply entwined with other dynamics that shape its development and use’.⁹ Each of the digitisations explored in these pages are interwoven with a period of national commemoration, a ‘decade of centenaries’ that represents a new stage of public history in Ireland, and as proposed in chapter 2, has framed the logic of this project as a digital commemorative archive.

⁵ Patrick Blackwell, “Short Guide to Relevant Legislation, 1923-1980,” in *Guide to the Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection*, ed. Catriona Crowe (Óglaigh na hÉireann, 2012), 50-55; Patrick Brennan, “‘Active Service’: Changing Definitions,” in *Guide to the Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection*, ed. Catriona Crowe (Dublin: Óglaigh na hÉireann, 2012), 64-74.

⁶ Patrick Brennan, “Origins, Scope and Content of the Collection,” in *Guide to the Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection*, ed. Catriona Crowe (Óglaigh na hÉireann, 2012), 14-15.

⁷ Catriona Crowe, “News From the Archives: Military Service Pensions Collection,” RTE The History Show, accessed November 20, 2017, <https://www.rte.ie/radio1/the-history-show/programmes/2017/1119/921038-the-history-show-sunday-19-november-2017/?clipid=102660098#102660098>.

⁸ Fearghal McGarry, “‘Too Many Histories?’ The Bureau of Military History and Easter 1916,” *History Ireland* 19, no. 6 (2011): 26.

⁹ Thylstrup, *The Politics of Mass Digitisation*, 19.

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Online collections have a history. Digital access is the product of analogue processes - of institutional policies and individual judgements.¹⁰

The MSPC files were first made available to the public in 2006. The records of the Bureau of Military History (1916-1921), hereafter BMH, had been made available when the last person in receipt of a military service pension died. The BMH is worth outlining as the creation of these collections intertwine historically and in contemporary remembrance.¹¹ The BMH records were intended to ‘complement’ the MSPC, which was in turn drawn upon in identifying potential interviewees on a wide scale.¹² Refusals to interview were multiple in character, but were often grounded in bitterness over unsuccessful military pensions applications, demonstrating further the entanglements in the creation or non-creation of these records, and the identities and testimonies they evidence.¹³ Together now with the MSPC, according to the Military Archives, ‘the Bureau is among the most important primary sources of information on this period available anywhere in the world’.¹⁴ Established in 1947 by Defence Minister Oscar Traynor and intended to form the basis of an official history of the revolution up to the Civil War (1922-1923) - though in practice some interviewees strayed from this - the collection was instead sealed in government archives behind an ‘official Iron Curtain’ until 2003 due to the real or perceived political sensitivities of their contents.¹⁵ The creation of this archive was in

¹⁰ Tim Sherratt, “Hacking Heritage: Understanding the Limits of Online Access,” *The Routledge International Handbook of New Digital Practices in Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums and Heritage Sites*, 2019, 119.

¹¹ Bureau of Military History, “Guide to the Bureau of Military History,” accessed April 3, 2019, <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/about.html>; Catriona Crowe, “Military Service Pensions Collection,” RTE The History Show, accessed March 15, 2019.

https://www.rte.ie/radio/utils/radioplayer/rteradioweb.html#!rii=b9_20508275_5392_19-01-2014_.

¹² Eve Morrison, “Bureau of Military History Witness Statements as Sources for the Irish Revolution,” Military Archives (Dublin, 2012), 3, accessed March 25, 2019,

http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/bureau-of-military-history-1913-1921/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Bureau_of_Military_witness_statements-as_sources-for_the_Irish_Revolution.pdf; O’Brien, *Irish Governments and the Guardianship of Historical Records 1922-72*, 136.

¹³ Morrison, “Bureau of Military History Witness Statements as Sources for the Irish Revolution,” 6.

¹⁴ “Guide to the Collection: About the Bureau of Military History, 1913-1921,” Military Archives, accessed September 1, 2020, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/bureau-of-military-history-1913-1921/about/guide-to-the-collection/>.

¹⁵ F.X. Martin, “1916: Myth, Fact, and Mystery,” *Studia Hibernica*, no. 7 (1967): 107.

Morrison's words 'a cultural initiative of the newly independent state to establish the bona fides of its claim to nationhood,' and one that reflected an international trend during this period to record 'official' military histories.¹⁶ Nonetheless, in a parliamentary exchange on financing the project in 1947, Traynor insisted that the Bureau was not set up in order to *write* a military history itself nor in the immediate sense, rather its purpose was 'to collect and arrange material so that historians of the future will be able to write military history'.¹⁷ Historians of the future would not begin writing such histories based on these records until 2003. O'Brien has recounted in detail the efforts by civil servants involved in the BMH project to ensure the closure of these records from historians and the public alike while the project was still ongoing, and chapter 4 has touched upon the broader politics of access to state archives and the control of the revolutionary narrative in the first half-century of the independent Irish State.¹⁸ Not unlike those of the 1916 Courtmartial Files, anticipation of these witness statements and their possibilities grew among historians even before their embargo.¹⁹ Originally intended for deposit at the National Library the material collected by the Bureau was, according to Martin writing in 1967 of his own frustrations with accessing it, sealed instead in government archives 'which for the historian is equivalent to the Limbo of Untouchable Things'.²⁰ The collection was eventually transferred to the Military Archives in 2001, as well as a set of copies to the National Archives 'to allow for greater public access'.²¹

Launched for public access in 2003 in the presence of the then Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, Minister for Defence Michael Smith and former Taoiseach Liam Cosgrave following a 3-year cataloguing project, the collection was later digitised and re-launched online in 2012 as a stand-alone website. This has since been migrated to the Military Archives domain. Also present in 2003 were two generations of Irish historians 'some of whom had been

¹⁶ Morrison, E. "The Bureau of Military History," John Crowley et al., eds., *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017), 878; Morrison, E., "Bureau of Military History Witness Statements as Sources for the Irish Revolution" (Dublin, 2012), 2, http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/files/Bureau_of_Military_witness_statements_as_sources_for_the_Irish_Revolution.pdf.

¹⁷ Oscar Traynor, "Dáil Éireann Debate - Wednesday, 26 Feb 1947 Vol. 104 No. 10. Committee on Finance. - Vote 63—Army.," Houses of the Oireachtas, accessed September 2, 2020, https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/1947-02-26/41/#spk_308.

¹⁸ O'Brien, *Irish Governments and the Guardianship of Historical Records 1922-72*, 130-53.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 136, 148.

²⁰ Martin, "1916: Myth, Fact, and Mystery," 107.

²¹ "Guide to the Collection."

waiting for this occasion for many years'.²² This separate but closely-related set of archives have been characterised as 'the largest resource for individual testimonies for the revolutionary period 1913-1921 currently in the public domain and is one of national and international significance' and 'one of the richest oral history archives devoted to any modern revolution'.²³ This collection of 1,773 'witness statements' and additional documentary, photographic and audio recorded material, were compiled between 1947-59 through interviews with people active in the period 1913-1921 with the intention to 'assemble and co-ordinate material to form the basis for the compilation of the history of the movement for Independence from the formation of the Irish Volunteers on 25 November 1913, to the 11th July 1921'.²⁴ There are 146 'witness statements' by women and a total of 153 women contributed material to the collection.²⁵ While the statements have been digitised as text-searchable PDFs and the 12 voice recordings made available for listening online, a large amount of additional contemporary documents (photographs, press cuttings drawings, memorabilia etc) remains accessible via the reading room only, though the original indexes of items held are digitised as are select materials. Administrative records of the Bureau, the 'S' series, which also detail reasons for refusal to interview, are also available in the reading room only.²⁶ Costs, condition and practicalities of materials are cited by the Military Archives as factoring in decisions to digitise (or not) with reference to these contemporary documents.²⁷ One *Irish Times* reader in 2012 pointed out this incompleteness of the digitisation that had been reported previously as covering its 'entire contents', protesting also the redaction of a small number of the testimonies. Media portrayals of such high-profile digitisations may give a false

²² Ferriter, *A Nation and Not a Rabble*, 17; Diarmaid Ferriter, "In Such Deadly Earnest," *The Dublin Review*, 2003, 1, accessed September 7, 2020. <https://thedublinreview.com/article/in-such-deadly-earnest/>.

²³ "Funding," Military Archives, accessed September 1, 2020, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/bureau-of-military-history-1913-1921/about/funding/>; McGarry, "'Too Many Histories?'" *The Bureau of Military History and Easter 1916*; Ferriter, *A Nation and Not a Rabble*, 17.

²⁴ Bureau of Military History, "Guide to the Bureau of Military History."

²⁵ Eve Morrison, "The Bureau of Military History and Female Republican Activism, 1913-1923," in *Gender and Power in Irish History*, ed. Maryann Gialanella Valiulis (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 59.

²⁶ Jennifer Coyle et al., "An Introduction to the Bureau of Military History 1913-1921" (Dublin: Irish Military Archives, 2002), 3, accessed March 20, 2019, http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/files/An_Introduction_to_the_Bureau_of_Military_History.pdf; "Contemporary Documents Index," Military Archives, accessed September 1, 2020, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/bureau-of-military-history-1913-1921/cd-index/>; "Guide to the Collection"; See footnote 45 in O'Brien, *Irish Governments and the Guardianship of Historical Records 1922-72*, 142.

²⁷ "Digitisation," Military Archives, accessed September 1, 2020, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/bureau-of-military-history-1913-1921/about/digitisation/>.

perception or even expectation of completeness and complete access, which is rarely the case. The reader further remarked that other collections of interviews such as among the Ernie O'Malley papers at University College Dublin archives had 'yet to achieve the same media fanfare as the bureau material'.²⁸

An oral history project, these records have necessarily proved 'imperfect and partial,' as a source for objective 'truth' due to the distance between the events and the time of their recollection, many being overtly biased and bearing the post-Civil War grievances among interviewees, others 'implausibly detailed'.²⁹ A combined reticence to deal with the Civil War in this project and of Anti-Treaty veterans to partake in it means that this perspective is less represented, however, in practice much of the material contributed strayed past the 1921 cut-off.³⁰ The collection also offers a much wider range of views than those of the most famous revolutionaries.³¹ In particular, the contributions of women to this collection attest to, as an introduction for the 2003 launch stated, 'the comprehensive nature of the involvement of women in Irish politics, despite the restrictions placed on them'.³² Pašeta has convincingly argued that the women involved in nationalist activism in the early years of the twentieth century 'did not expect to be forgotten' and were 'acutely aware of how they, and Irish women more generally, might be remembered,' and this is evidenced in various surviving autobiographical sources.³³ Women themselves being much fewer among the number of interviewees showed themselves in some cases to have been conscious of their trivialisation and marginalisation in the revolution and its memory.³⁴ Bulmer Hobson recalled the continued resistance among Na Fianna Éireann members to the election of a woman, Constance Markievicz, as the organisation's Vice President from the founding of the Dublin branch in 1909.³⁵ Helena Molony's statement gives seven pages and additional documents to countering the 'very bad, inaccurate, misleading and unsympathetic' characterisation of Markievicz by Seán O'Faoláin in his 1934 biography,

²⁸ Philip McConway, "Letters to the Editor: Revolutionary Archive," *The Irish Times*, August 9, 2012; "Secret Archives on Rising Released Online Today," *The Irish Times*, August 7, 2012.

²⁹ McGarry, "'Too Many Histories?' The Bureau of Military History and Easter 1916," 26; Ferriter, "'In Such Deadly Earnest,'" 4.

³⁰ Morrison, "The Bureau of Military History and Female Republican Activism, 1913-1923," 67; "Guide to the Collection."

³¹ McGarry, "'Too Many Histories?' The Bureau of Military History and Easter 1916," 26.

³² Coyle et al., "An Introduction to the Bureau of Military History," 40.

³³ Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women*, 1.

³⁴ McGarry, "'Too Many Histories?' The Bureau of Military History and Easter 1916," 26.

³⁵ "WS 31: Bulmer Hobson," *Bureau of Military History, 1913-1921*, 3.

which depicted a woman ‘caught up’ with the men and fond of the ‘limelight’ and ‘publicity’. She very clearly understood this as an expression of the patriarchal mentality in an addendum to her BMH statement.³⁶ Echoing this in plainer words, Leslie Price (Mrs. Tom Barry) stated categorically that in joining the Árd Craobh (First Branch) of Cumann na mBan she did so from ‘conviction and on my own volition’.³⁷ For the most part, according to Morrison, men’s statements were positive towards women and corroborated their contributions while evidencing the ideological challenges they faced at the time, observing also that the BMH records are important for our understandings of the ‘*mentalité* and memory’ of the revolution in many respects as much as they are a historical source.³⁸ Stepping back to see these collections in their commemorative context, to this we may add the MSPC collection.

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The 2006 release of the MSPC files occurred in the year of the ninetieth anniversary of the Easter Rising, and the first Easter since 1971 when a state military commemoration of the Rising was reinstated in the Republic of Ireland. Already at this time, plans to make these documents digitally available ‘in good time for the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Rising in 2016’ were emerging. In April that year during the Easter Rising commemorations it was announced by the Taoiseach that a steering group was to oversee the arrangement, cataloguing and digitisation of the collection as well as an academic advisory board.³⁹ The MSPC collection has been released online in phases beginning in 2014, with nine releases in total at the time of writing. Since their release from legislative concealment there has been a calculated ten-year lead-in to this digital archive specifically with the centenary commemorations in mind. Crowe confirmed this as a goal of the project to make the collection available to historians in time for new histories of the 1916

³⁶ “WS 391: Helena Molony,” 53-60, Appendix B.

³⁷ “WS 1754: Leslie Price (Mrs Tom Barry),” 2.

³⁸ Morrison, “The Bureau of Military History and Female Republican Activism, 1913-1923,” 61; Eve Morrison, “The Bureau of Military History,” in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, ed. John Crowley et al. (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017), 878.

³⁹ Willie O’Dea, “Dáil Éireann Debate - 24 Oct 2006. Departmental Files. Written Answer to Question No. 672,” accessed March 12, 2019, <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/dail/2006-10-24/445/>; Catriona Crowe, ed., *Guide to the Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection* (Óglaigh na hÉireann, 2012), 10-11.

Rising and the revolutionary period to be written for the centenary.⁴⁰ It has since become something of a keystone to the revolution and its afterlife, and emblematic of the digitality of the commemorations, announced in 2012 by then Minister for Defence Alan Shatter as the ‘single most important archival collection relating to Ireland’s revolutionary period’ and further characterised by Commandant Ayiotis, the serving Defence Forces officer in charge of the repository, as ‘the jewel in the crown of the military archives’.⁴¹ The sentiment has been echoed by historians alike, declaring the project ‘groundbreaking,’ ‘monumental,’ ‘transformative’ and ‘the most important’ of the archival collections being digitised during this Decade of Centenaries.⁴² The MSPC blog set up in 2017 again describes the collection as one that ‘occupies a crucial and unique place in the Irish archival landscape’.⁴³ The effectivity of this collection has also since emerged in other archival contexts: the National Archives Advisory Committee in a 2018 report stated that the circumstances of this collection (citing the ‘Army Pensions Records’ project) in relation to confidentiality of records creators had set a precedent for the retention of certain records pertaining to the Commission of Inquiry into Child Abuse, the Residential Institutions Redress Board and the Residential Institutions Review Committee, advocating that they not be destroyed but transferred to the NAI for their future historical value.⁴⁴

A refurbishment and expansion of the Military Archives at Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin, was financed and delivered as one of the ‘seven flagship capital projects’ for the centenary of the Easter Rising as set out in the official government centenary

⁴⁰ Catriona Crowe, “News From the Archives: Military Service Pensions Collection,” RTÉ The History Show, accessed November 19, 2017, <https://www.rte.ie/radio1/the-history-show/programmes/2017/1119/921038-the-history-show-sunday-19-november-2017/?clipid=102660098#102660098>.

⁴¹ Alan Shatter, “Foreword,” in *Guide to the Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection*, ed. Catriona Crowe (Óglaigh na hÉireann, 2012), 9.

⁴² Eunan O’Halpin, “The Military Service Pensions Project and Irish History: A Personal Perspective,” in *Guide to the Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection*, ed. Catriona Crowe, 2012, 144; Ayiotis, “About the Military Archives”; Ferriter, *A Nation and Not a Rabble*, 21; Ferriter, “1916 in 2016: Personal Reflections of an Irish Historian”; Mike Cronin, “Irish History Online and in Real Time: Century Ireland and the Decade of Centenaries Mike Cronin,” *Éire-Ireland* 52 (2018): 274; Marie Coleman, “Compensating Irish Female Revolutionaries, 1916-1923,” *Women’s History Review* 27, no. 3 (2016): 1.

⁴³ Military Archives, “The Collection,” Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection (MSPC) Blog, accessed March 18, 2019, <https://militarypensions.wordpress.com/the-collection-2/>.

⁴⁴ National Archives Advisory Council, “Annual Report 2018” (Dublin, 2020), accessed August 8, 2020, https://www.nationalarchives.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/CHGdoclaid300620_300620_122535.pdf.

programme.⁴⁵ Completed in time for the centenary at a cost of €5.4 million, this accounted for approximately 17% of the ‘capital’ budget that covered the ‘Permanent Reminders’ element for 2016 (€31 million), or 11% of the overall 2016 commemorations budget of €49 million.⁴⁶ Considering the array of state-funded ceremonies, events, arts, theatre, community and research projects, heritage site refurbishments, and other digital history projects, this constitutes a large single share of the national commemorative budget. At the opening event in April 2016, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Heather Humphries predicted that the new Military Archives building would be ‘one of the most important cultural legacies of the Ireland 2016 Centenary programme’.⁴⁷ Thylstrup asks how digitisation may change the ideological infrastructure of cultural heritage institutions;⁴⁸ in this case, a long and very public digitisation process has operated to turn the Military Archives into a national cultural institution in a way that it was not previously, both in the cultural value it has been afforded and the very real investment in its physical infrastructure as a ‘permanent reminder’ of the State’s foundation.⁴⁹ Ayiotis indeed went so far as to say that the refurbishment and expansion ‘has elevated the Military Archives to a new level alongside the national institutions of the State’.⁵⁰ Clearly, immense cultural weight has been ascribed to this collection making it, quite aside from the details of its contents, inextricable from a politics of national remembrance and identity.

In a way, the entire Decade of Centenaries project, but especially the 1916 centenary year, has itself been a ‘cultural initiative’ of this late-modern state to re-affirm ‘the bona fides of its claim to nationhood’ just as the fiftieth anniversary celebrations were in 1966. The

⁴⁵ Government of Ireland, “Centenary Programme,” 22.

⁴⁶ Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs Department of Arts, Culture, Heritage, Regional, “Briefing for Members of Public Accounts Committee 2016 Report Comptroller and Auditor General: Chapter 15 Solas - Galway Art House Cinema 2016 Appropriation Account Vote 33 The Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs,” Houses of the Oireachtas, accessed September 4, 2020, https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/committee_of_public_accounts/submissions/2018/2018-03-29_briefing-note-the-department-of-arts-heritage-regional-rural-and-gaeltacht-affairs_en.pdf; “Press Release April 26, 2016: Opening of the New Military Archives Building by President Michael D. Higgins and Launch of the Medals Database,” MerrionStreet.ie, accessed March 18, 2019, https://merrionstreet.ie/en/News-Room/Releases/Opening_of_the_new_Military_Archives_Building_by_President_Michael_D_Higgins_and_launch_of_the_Medals_Database.html; Heather Humphreys, “Dáil Éireann Debates - 31 January 2017. Arts Funding. Written Answer to Question No. 389 and 411,” accessed March 18, 2019, https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2017-01-31/389/#pq_389.

⁴⁷ “Opening of the New Military Archives Building.”

⁴⁸ Thylstrup, *The Politics of Mass Digitisation*, 19.

⁴⁹ Government of Ireland, “Centenary Programme,” 23.

⁵⁰ Commandant Padraic Kennedy, in Ronan McGreevy, ed., *Centenary: Ireland Remembers 1916 / Comóradh Céad bliain: Tugann Éire 1916* (Dublin: Government Publications/Royal Irish Academy, 2016), 277.

development of this digital archive in particular, in addition to the BMH, has been influential in at once broadening, complicating, and re-legitimising the revolutionary story. For Derrida ‘the archive produces as much as it records the event,’ and as has been argued in the literature review, digital archives may have far greater influence than their location-bound analogue originals.⁵¹ A boon for historians of the period, both of these collections are now widely used by academics and the public alike and have become historical forces in and of themselves, garnering attention for their coming into being as much as for their contents. The ease with which academic literature on these collections could be found, and in relatively ample supply, attests to this intense research gaze. The best-selling *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* dedicates two standalone sections to these archival collections in its ‘Memory and Culture’ section.⁵² Ferriter, active in multiple advisory capacities during the centenaries and to this collection in particular, likewise dedicated a chapter to the opening of witness accounts and the ongoing MSPC project in *A Nation and Not a Rabble*.⁵³ More plainly so, perhaps, than the digitisations examined in previous chapters, these two collections are indeed historic in their own right.⁵⁴ Where this research is concerned, both collections evidence the ways in which the dimension of gender interacted with political factionism and cultural remembrance in the Free State, and how the lens of gender has been brought to bear upon them during the current commemorations. However imperfect, as all oral histories are, the testimonies of the BMH have been a powerful resource in challenging the historical obfuscation of women’s place in the national story in the lead-up to the centenary of 1916 and beyond. The MSPC has extended this remit much further given the comparatively greater amount of women’s contributions, particularly true of recent releases that have moved through the Anglo-Irish war when the separatist movement swelled and Cumann na mBan came into its own.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Jaques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 7; Catherine Bishop, “The Serendipity of Connectivity: Piecing Together Women’s Lives in the Digital Archive,” *Women’s History Review* 26, no. 5 (2017): 771.

⁵² Morrison, “The Bureau of Military History”; Marie Coleman, “The Military Service Pensions Collection,” in *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, ed. John Crowley et al. (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017), 881-85.

⁵³ Ferriter, *A Nation and Not a Rabble*, 17-23.

⁵⁴ Bonnie Mak, “Archaeology of a Digitization,” *Journal of the Association for Information Science & Technology* 65, no. 8 (August 2014): 1516.

⁵⁵ Coleman, “There Are Thousands Who Will Claim to Have Been ‘out’ during Easter Week’.: Recognising Military Service in the 1916 Easter Rising,” 489; Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism* (London: Pluto, 1983), 119-55.

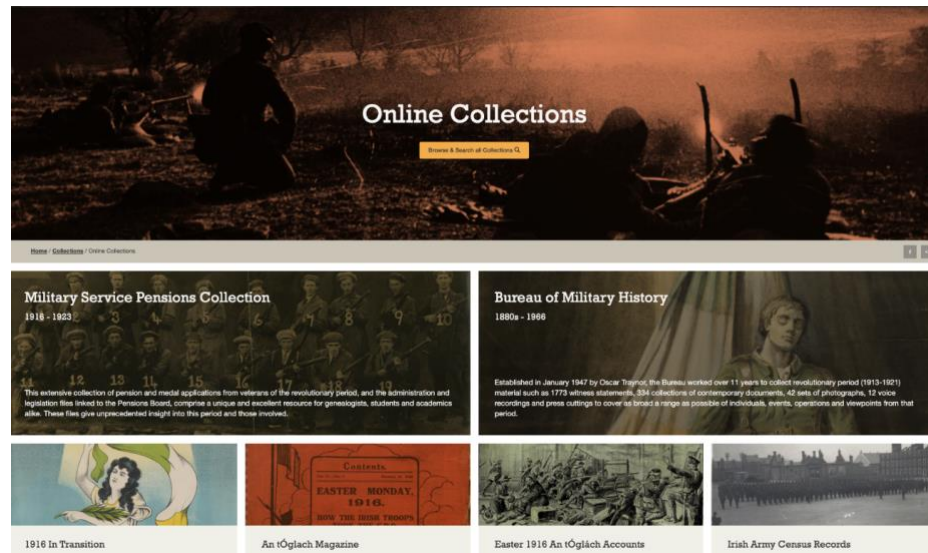


Figure 6-1 'Online Collections', Military Archives. <https://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections>

The MSPC and the BMH are the two pillars of the Military Archives 'online collections' landing page. Eight additional tiles are closely related historical collections including maps, drawings, images, army census records, and publications aligned with the historical origins of the Defence Forces, *The Irish Volunteer* newspaper and *An tÓglach* magazine (Figure 6-1), while the remaining tiles link to later and contemporary collections. The BMH was released and made accessible online in 2012 with a dedicated website prior to the digitisation of the MSPC and was maintained in a separate microsite hyperlinked to the 'Online Collections' until being integrated in to the Military Archives domain in 2019.⁵⁶ Two 'historical essays' accompany the collection, as with the National Archives format seen in chapter 1.⁵⁷ *Roomthree Design*, also responsible for the National Archives centenaries microsite, produced the current Military Archives website and designed the previously stand-alone BMH website. Each of these websites/microsites have had muted sepia-brown aesthetics, a design trope eliciting the faded colour of paper records, of authenticity in a sense of oldness.

There is a wealth of detail about the history and constitution of this archive that is unparalleled in the other case studies in this research, and this was underpinned by a desire to make clear to potential users the provenance and politics of this archive, which 'has

⁵⁶ "7 August 2012: Launch of Bureau of Military History Website."

⁵⁷ "Historical Essays," Military Archives, accessed August 13, 2020, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/bureau-of-military-history-1913-1921/about/historical-essays/>.

the potential to shape the way the reader may interpret and use the material'.⁵⁸ The division of content that is apparent in navigating the site is strongly based on the *Guide to the Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection* (2012) that covers the 'origins, scope and content of the records, the legislative framework within which they were created, the processes which led to grant or refusal of pensions, and the methodology underpinning their archival management'.⁵⁹ Three 'Academic Advisory Committee Essays' are included in the *Guide*, penned by Townshend, Ferriter and O'Halpin. Much of the text that accompanies these different aspects is also taken directly from this published guide. Much detail is also given for the BMH collection and its history. Where the previous case studies in this thesis were characterised by simplified and user-oriented archival access on the one hand, and access via a bespoke holding page leading to a detailed catalogue entry on the other, the interface of this digital archive attempts to balance streamlined access with maintaining the detail and complexity of the archival arrangement, hierarchy and description. These 'quasi military' records reportedly required very little customisation of archive management software (Aplib) to create an online database and catalogue and discovery is based on four file databases: Individual Applications, Organisations and Membership, Medal Series, and Administration. The collection is accessible by either full catalogue search, individual applications for pensions and medals, or organisation membership.⁶⁰ Alternatively, each is browseable by image tile. Filtering options are dependent on the database, with 'Pensions and Awards' being the most advanced including: Male/Female/Unknown, Organisation (e.g. British Civil Service, Na Fianna Éireann, Cumann na mBan, Civilian etc.), Country and Country/Territory. Each record is accompanied by detailed, printable description, given addresses of applicant and lists the corresponding legislation. According to Gordon, the ability to search the Brigade Activity Reports online by placename has been the most popular.⁶¹ In contrast, the BMH offers free-text or alphabetical search by name, and while organisations are attributed to each witness this is not a predefined search parameter, nor are gender or location.

⁵⁸ Cécile Gordon, "Archives and Public History," *Studia Hibernica* 46, no. 1 (2020): 128.

⁵⁹ Shatter, "Foreword," 9.

⁶⁰ Military Archives, "Methodology," accessed March 29, 2019, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/en/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/about-the-collection/methodology>.

⁶¹ Gordon, "Archives and Public History," 129.

Featured themes provide alternatives to browsing the collection such as ‘Easter 1916,’ ‘Brigade Activity Reports’ or ‘War of Independence,’ each of which have their own curated resource pages providing guides, GIS maps, timelines, people/fatalities lists, and ‘Key Operations’.⁶² The ‘Gallery’ provides a series of Brigade activity maps and sketches for each province, that are also externally linked to the MSPC Flickr page.⁶³ Organisation and membership files are searchable by county or division. These featured sections are more suited to browsing and discovery for a user without a particular name to research as they lay out clearly, and illustrate with images, links to multiple layers of document series within the collection. Users are thus presented with a choice of a search bounded in four particular database levels or curated discovery via a set of foregrounded resources revolving around either a key conflict such as the Rising or the Civil War, or a particular file series. All of the digital surrogates are viewable as PDFs and these are not text-searchable. According to Gordon, a large amount of time is dedicated to researching and providing thick descriptive aids for files and individual documents to aid potential users, and avoid ‘under-utilisation of the material’:

MSPC dense descriptions strive to capture military information relevant to the Irish revolutionary period but also focus on any social information about the individual, along with names and places associated with them, revealing human interaction and geographical networks.⁶⁴

Attention to processing and the search capabilities of this collection was indeed underpinned by a desire to maximize discovery of previously hidden voices and narratives.⁶⁵

⁶² Military Archives, “Brigade Activity Reports,” accessed November 8, 2019, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/brigade-activities>.

⁶³ Military Archives, “Gallery: Brigade Activity Maps and Sketches,” accessed April 5, 2019, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/gallery/brigade-activity-maps-sketches>.

⁶⁴ Gordon, “Archives and Public History,” 128-29.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 126.

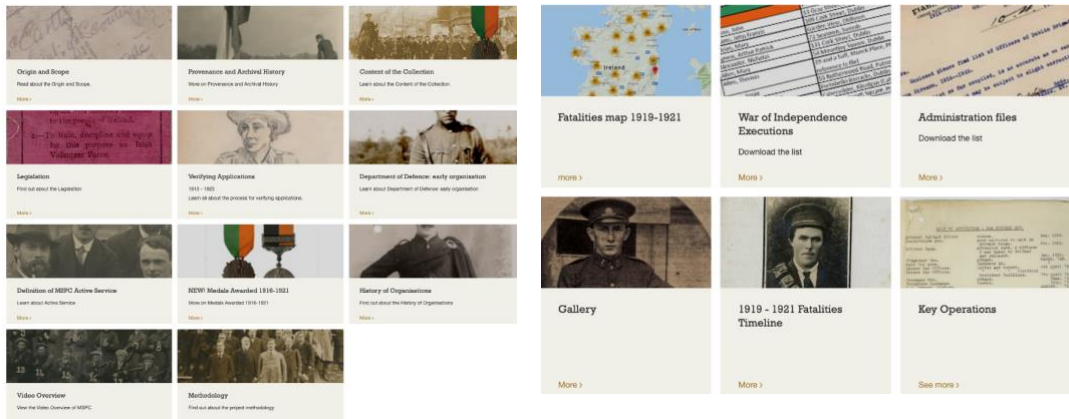


Figure 6-2. (L) 'About the Collection', <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/en/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/about-the-collection>. (R) 'War of Independence', <https://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/war-of-independence>

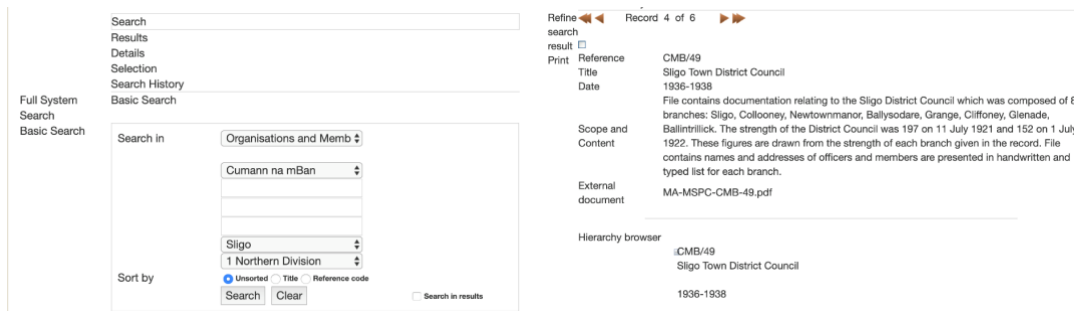


Figure 6-3. (L) 'Search the Collection', <http://mspcsearch.militaryarchives.ie/search.aspx?formtype=advanced>; (R) Catalogue entry for *Cuman na mBan* membership rolls and documentation for Sligo Town District Council branches.

The MSPC interface traverses a broad range of users but with much more advanced search capabilities, detailed file descriptions, and accompanying documentation. As many individuals had multiple files spread across the collection due to the multiple legislative changes during the scheme's operation, it was decided to 'break the original series' and keep all files pertaining to an individual together whilst maintaining original file reference codes within this, whereas 'Conventional archival practices, such as descriptive listing and respect of original order' are elsewhere followed in the collection.⁶⁶ As Sherratt reminds, how we interact with collections is circumscribed by online interfaces.⁶⁷ In terms of accessing the information held within the digital collection searching by pensions and awards is weighted towards individual identities rather than strictly linear time periods or legislative frameworks. There is, therefore, an imperative to construct and maintain the

⁶⁶ Military Archives, "Methodology."

⁶⁷ Sherratt, "Hacking Heritage: Understanding the Limits of Online Access," 119.

identity of the subjects/creators of the records at the arrangement stages, which facilitates findability for users researching an individual. The MSPC Blog describes the project as ‘an archival and preservation project, but it is also a project about access and it is a very significant identification work’.⁶⁸ By design the priority is to construct the identity of the applicants from the perspective of the user and to facilitate identity and genealogical work, at the same time as academic research is a significant use case of this collection. Gordon has further described the link between this archive, identity and meaning-making processes, circumscribed by this period of national commemoration:

The records anchor the living to their origins through the representation of their relative’s role during a momentous period in Irish history and this can be deeply linked to their own sense of identity. The current context of the commemorations exacerbates this link...⁶⁹

6.2 Content

This digital archive contains ‘tens of thousands of records containing applications for pensions, gratuities and allowances lodged by those who participated in the events from 1916 to the official end of the Civil War in 1923’.⁷⁰ The collection also contains administrative files that give context to the series of applications. According to the description of the MSPC blog, the file series are said to highlight broad topics such as ‘politics, social history, medical and welfare history, women’s history, military structure and operations’.⁷¹ As such, the collection itself is organised into three databases: Individual Applications, Organisations and Membership, and Administration. The collection has been released in phases beginning in 2014, two years into the official Decade of Centenaries cycle, and during the year of the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. The phased nature of the releases largely reflects the chronology and hierarchies of changing eligibility for pensions and gratuities, and indeed civil war politics, which both

⁶⁸ Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection Blog, “The Collection,” accessed June 6, 2018, <https://militarypensions.wordpress.com/the-collection-2/>.

⁶⁹ Gordon, “Archives and Public History,” 126.

⁷⁰ Military Archives, “The Collection.”

⁷¹ Ibid.

accrued files to this archive and created delays, frustrations and disappointment for many claimants.⁷² The women's auxiliary organisation Cumann na mBan (CMB) was precluded as one of the 'military bodies' from the initial remit of the pensions scheme until the first Fianna Fáil government amended the relevant legislation in 1932 and 1934 and awarded the lowest grade pensions thereafter.⁷³ Coleman has shown how gender was in some cases used as a pretext for refusing female applicants of the anti-Treaty side for disability or service pensions, interpreting terms such as 'soldier' as exclusively male.⁷⁴ Women would face continued challenges in their applications due to the inadequate legislative definition of 'active service' (affecting both male and female applicants) and the ways in which it was inflected by normative understandings of military value and gender roles at the time.⁷⁵ Many female veterans of the revolutionary period thus faced the dual exclusion by virtue of their politics and their gender in the first years of the scheme. A reappraisal of the parameters of 'rendering active service' removed the qualification of service in the National/Defence Forces after June 1922 and provided for those 'keymen,' but now also Cumann na mBan members, who were active over a continuous period in non-combatant work such as intelligence, dispatches, storage and care of arms, treatment of wounded in safe houses, transport, custody of prisoners etc.⁷⁶ Later amendments softened the remit to include those who had fought or sided with the anti-Treaty side during the Civil War, the majority of the Cumann na mBan membership having declared themselves so in voting on the Treaty terms in 1922.⁷⁷ Their inclusion in 1932 and 1934 amendments to the relevant Acts, when Fianna Fáil came to power, was nonetheless restricted to the lowest available rank of service and corresponding allowance.⁷⁸ As of 2020 there are over 1770 women's pensions files, successful or otherwise, available online. According to Coleman: 'the total number of women recognised for Easter Week service with the award of pensions was 213, approximately one-tenth of the figure for men at 2,077. A further fifteen [female Easter Week veterans] received medals only'.⁷⁹ There are also over 4,600

⁷² Diarmaid Ferriter, "'Always in Danger of Finding Myself with Nothing at All': The Military Service Pension and the Battle for Material Survival, 1925-1955," in *Guide to the Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection*, ed. Catriona Crowe (Óglaigh na hÉireann, 2012), 124-35.

⁷³ Marie Coleman, "Compensating Irish Female Revolutionaries, 1916-1923," *Women's History Review* 27, no. 3 (2016): 14.

⁷⁴ Coleman, "Compensating Irish Female Revolutionaries, 1916-1923," 7.

⁷⁵ Morrison, "The Bureau of Military History and Female Republican Activism, 1913-1923," 78.

⁷⁶ Military Archives, "Military Service Pensions Act, 1934: Adopting the 1916 Standard"; See also file SPG/6 for memo on definitions of "Active Service" and "Military Service" provided for 1924 Act: "Active Service".

⁷⁷ Morrison, "The Bureau of Military History and Female Republican Activism, 1913-1923," 63.

⁷⁸ Coleman, "Compensating Irish Female Revolutionaries, 1916-1923," 10.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

(offline) medal files relating to women.⁸⁰ Hierarchical by nature, further amendments and evolving interpretations by assessors continued to expand and renegotiate the remit while simultaneously privileging certain applicants. For example, amendments to the Army Pensions Act, as well as making provisions for dependants of deceased veterans, first doubled the allowances (in 1923) and later (1937 and 1953) provided special rates and ‘made special provision for the relatives of the signatories to the Proclamation published on Easter Monday, 1916’.⁸¹

While the previous commemorative collections examined have clear moments of online release in 2016, the much larger MSPC spans most of the Decade of Centenaries. The following is an overview of the ‘Release History’ to date provided by the website, helping to chart the content development of this digital archive throughout the centennial cycle.

6.3 Release History

The first set of pensions files was released online in January 2014. The release pertained to pensions applications from around 3,000 individuals involved in the Rising (and who were also active throughout the revolutionary period), but also membership rolls for the Irish Republican Army, Na Fianna Éireann, and Cumann na mBan, and constituting over 450,000 scanned images.⁸² The accompanying text to this release history specifically highlights two other groups included in this digitisation phase: members of the 1st Battalion of the Connaught Rangers (British Army) and a small number of people, both male and female, who claimed gratuities under a 1937 amendment to the Army Pensions Act for being injured in the course of carrying arms for organisations or being accidentally injured by their members during the revolutionary period.⁸³

⁸⁰ Coleman, “‘There Are Thousands Who Will Claim to Have Been “out” during Easter Week’.: Recognising Military Service in the 1916 Easter Rising,” 489.

⁸¹ Brennan, “Origins, Scope and Content of the Collection,” 17.

⁸² Military Archives, “Release History: January 2014,”; Comdt Padraic Kennedy, “Military Service Pensions Collections & Cumann Na mBan,” *Irish Roots*, no. 90 (2014): 6.

⁸³ Military Archives, “Release History: October 2014,” accessed March 26, 2019, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/release-history/second-release>.

The second release of pensions files in 2014 built on that previous, extending the scope of 1916 Rising veterans' applications, including some Cumann na mBan member pensions applications, and similarly extending the organisational membership rolls previously released. It also began the release of files pertaining to casualties of the War of Independence and Civil War period.⁸⁴ What is not specifically outlined in the description of this release history is that its focus, according to the lead archivist in an *Irish Times* video report at the time, was on women *successful* in their pensions claims who were not members of Cumann na mBan but who were active in the War of Independence, and were described as largely 'unknown' in the revolutionary narrative.⁸⁵

The third release of pensions files followed in a similar vein to previous releases of files relating to 106 women applicants, and various successful and some unsuccessful applications relating to Civil War casualties. The text accompanying the release history highlights in bold the '42 veterans of Easter Week' included. It also highlights the inclusion of extensive administration files relating to Erskine Childers, a prominent revolutionary who was executed by the Free State government during the Civil War.⁸⁶

The Medal Series is presented as a standalone release and consisted of: 'The 1916 Medal,' 'The Service 1917-1921 Medal,' 'The 1916 Survivors' Medal' and the 'Truce (1921) Commemoration Medal'.⁸⁷ The series, released in April 2016 to mark the opening of the New Military Archives facility, consists of '47,554 individual applications and 18,620 associated files, to a total of 66,174 files'. Around 14,000 medals were awarded to persons whose pension applications were otherwise unsuccessful and these were not included in this release and as yet remain unavailable for research.⁸⁸ Some medals were awarded

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Cécile Gordon, video report. Diarmaid Ferriter, "How Military Pensions Archive Throws Light on Silent State," *The Irish Times*, October 3, 2014, accessed March 26, 2019, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/how-military-pensions-archive-throws-light-on-silent-state-1.1949919>.

⁸⁶ Military Archives, "Release History: December 2015," accessed March 29, 2019, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/release-history/third-release>.

⁸⁷ Military Archives, "Release History: April 2016 - Medals Series," accessed March 29, 2019, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/en/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/release-history/medals-series>.

⁸⁸ "Opening of the New Military Archives Building"; *The Military Service (1916 -1923) Pensions Collection: The Medals Series* (Dublin: Military Archives, 2016), accessed March 15, 2019,

automatically based on a successful pension application and so did not require further documentation. Others were awarded with or without bar, meaning active military service had been proven in the former, and membership of one of the military bodies but not active service in the latter.⁸⁹ This release was of the online database only as opposed to a public digitisation, and intended ‘to allow researchers to look for their relative(s) in that series’.⁹⁰ A detailed guide to the medals series including a short academic paper is provided. Individual guides are parsed from this for each medal as well as an overview of their legislative history and a series of relevant administration files are recommended for further research.⁹¹ The anticipated sensitivities of their contents were alluded to when the need to pay ‘due regard to any privacy requirements’ when digitising these records was signposted by the Minister for Defence in 2006 upon the announcement of the project.⁹² Some files remain closed to all except proven family members because they contain information deemed sensitive under data protection legislation and the National Archives Act.⁹³

The fourth release of digitised pensions files in October 2017 was the first to move away from the revolutionary elite in a significant way, including 300 women, mostly Cumann na mBan members, 343 IRA (anti-Treaty) Civil War casualties, 66 of those executed (anti-Treaty) by the State during the Civil War. It also included applications made by dependants of deceased, and service application for the entire period 1917-1923.⁹⁴ This release is more representative therefore of those who had initially been excluded from applying to the pensions scheme. Google Analytics for the website show that 24 October 2017 had the greatest spike in the number of users - over 7,000 - since monitoring began in September 2017 (Figure 6-4).

http://www.militaryarchives.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/MSPC/_documents/Medals/MSPC_MEDALSBOKLET_APRIL2016.pdf.

⁸⁹ *The Medal Series*.

⁹⁰ “Medal Series,” Military Archives, accessed August 13, 2020, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/search-the-collection/medals-series>.

⁹¹ “Medals Awarded 1916-1921,” Military Archives, accessed August 13, 2020, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/en/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/about-the-collection/new-medals-awarded-1916-1921>.

⁹² O’Dea, “Departmental Files. Written Answer to Question No.”

⁹³ “Special allowance - A family and social history source” in “The Medals Series.”

⁹⁴ Crowe, “News From the Archive”; Military Archives, “Release History: October 2017,” accessed April 2, 2019, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/release-history/fourth-release>.

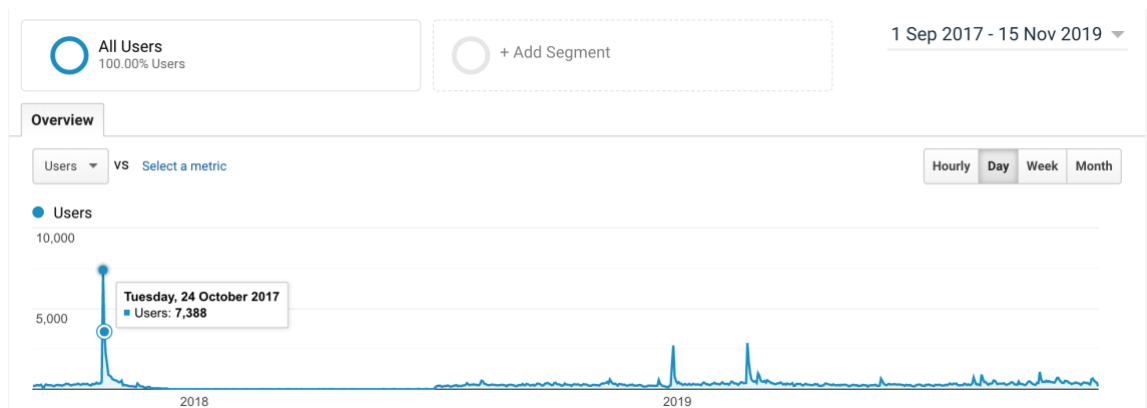


Figure 6-4 Audience Overview: Sept 2017-Nov 2019. Google Analytics for www.militaryarchives.ie, courtesy of the Military Archives.

The sixth release in May 2018 was the largest release of files to date relating to over 600 women who applied for pensions or allowances. This accounts for a little under half of the individuals concerned in this release, the largest ratio of all the releases to date.⁹⁵ Connolly has highlighted the heavy-handed institutionalisation of women traumatised by the conflict evident in the MSPC, which has become more apparent in this particular release, more of which below.⁹⁶

The seventh release concerned the Brigade Activity Reports relating to IRA activity during the War of Independence. The series is described by the Military Archives as a ‘formidable and essential resource’ for the study of the Irish revolution.⁹⁷ The Brigade Reports arose from a necessity to verify an increased number of applications after the 1934 Act that widened the scope of eligibility.⁹⁸ The Brigade Reports, as with the Medal Series, warrant their own featured section on the website with additional resources such as maps and timelines. An academic symposium was held at the Military Archives to mark the release, titled ‘A unique historical and personal legacy’ and a special publication released by the

⁹⁵ Military Archives, “Release History: May 2018,” accessed April 2, 2019, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/release-history/fifth-release>.

⁹⁶ Linda Connolly, “Towards a Further Understanding of the Violence Experienced by Women in the Irish Revolution,” Maynooth University Social Sciences Institute (Maynooth University, 2019), 32.

⁹⁷ Military Archives, “Brigade Activity Reports - About,” accessed April 2, 2019, http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/brigade-activities/?page_id=86.

⁹⁸ Michael Keane, “Introduction to the release of the Brigade Activity Files series” in Cécile Gordon et al., *The Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection: The Brigade Activity Reports* (Department of Defence, Ireland, 2018), 12.

Department of Defence with six essay contributions from historians.⁹⁹ These reports also evidence the ways in which the definition of active service was contested. Those compiling the reports emphasised the range of non-combatant supporting roles and participants - or 'keymen' - that were indispensable to the Republican Army apparatus.¹⁰⁰

In October 2019, the release of digitised files covered activities during the War of Independence and Civil War. Relating to the claims of 1,540 individuals, this release included further applications by women involved in the aforementioned conflicts, largely Cumann na mBan members involved in arms-carrying and intelligence work, as well as direct violent action. Other applications recount various military and rescue operations, and the release history points out the relatively unusual case of 'three Belfast Protestant IRA members including a former member of the Orange Order'.¹⁰¹

The latest release of digitised files, November 2020, concerned claims relating to the War of Independence and the Civil War and highlights notable cases of, inter alia, hunger strikers and connections to the infamous 'Bloody Sunday' (21 November 1920) massacre, the centenary of which was recently commemorated.¹⁰²

*

Crowe has said that the first releases concentrated on 1916 Rising related material in anticipation of its centenary year and this reflected those who had the greatest ease of access to pensions at the time of the scheme, and who were best represented in the BMH collection, i.e. those veterans associated with the Rising (especially Dublin) both men and

⁹⁹ Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection Blog, "MSPC-A Unique Historical and Personal Legacy - Symposium Podcasts - 23/02/2019"; Cécile Gordon, "Editorial" in Gordon et al., *The Brigade Activity Reports*, 8.

¹⁰⁰ Donal Ó Drisceoil, "Storm Centre: the Brigade Activity Reports from County Cork" in Gordon et al., "The Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection: The Brigade Activity Reports, 111."

¹⁰¹ Military Archives, "Release History: October 2019," 2019, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/release-history/october-2019-release>.

¹⁰² "November 2020 Release," Military Archives, accessed November 25, 2020, <https://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/release-history/november-2020-release>.

women.¹⁰³ This first release and the new holding website for the collection was launched at the General Post Office (GPO) in Dublin by An Taoiseach and several senior cabinet Ministers. The venue as well as those in attendance adds credence to the significance placed upon the collection: the GPO, a neo-classical building at the heart of the Dublin cityscape, was the rebel headquarters of the 1916 Rising and is the focal point of the annual military parade for its commemoration. It is further symbolic of the Rising through association with the 1916 Proclamation that was first read out in front of the building at the outbreak of the rebellion. This release was indeed ‘mainly dealing with 1916 personalities and survivors’.¹⁰⁴ As O’Halpin noted however, this digitised collection has since moved away from the well-known leaders to bringing civilians and rank-and-file participants in the conflict to the fore:

The MSPC records have a far broader spread, including not only the elite of the separatist movement but many thousands of foot soldiers of the republic, men and women whose individual contributions and personal circumstances were never recorded in detail elsewhere.¹⁰⁵

In particular the inclusion of the Cumann na mBan membership rolls and the Connaught Rangers pension files in the first release was out of step with the legislative chronology of their access to allowances in the past, demonstrating an ability to be selective about release content out of synch with the historical chronology where expedient. The inclusions of these groups go against past exclusions from the permitting legislation and acted as something of a showcase for releases to come as ‘selected files and material to place the collection in an overall context’.¹⁰⁶ The inclusion of the Connaught Rangers, specifically highlighted in the accompanying text, is notable in that they were a long-established battalion of the British Army, rather than a Republican militia, unusual in this collection. Yet certain members and their dependants were afforded specific legislation from 1936

¹⁰³ Coleman, “Compensating Irish Female Revolutionaries, 1916-1923,” 12; Morrison, “The Bureau of Military History and Female Republican Activism, 1913-1923,” 66.

¹⁰⁴ Crowe, C. “Introduction,” Crowe, *Guide to the Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection*, 11.

¹⁰⁵ O’Halpin, “The Military Service Pensions Project and Irish History: A Personal Perspective,” 144.

¹⁰⁶ Department of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht, “Expert Advisory Group on Centenary Commemorations Second Phase Mission Statement 2017 - 2023”, 2, accessed April 19, 2018, <https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2017/10/2017-04-10-final-second-statement-english-1.pdf>; Patrick Brennan, “Origins, Scope and Content of the Collection” in Crowe, *Guid. to Mil. Serv. Pensions Collect.*, 14.

to account for their having mutinied while on active service in India in 1920 to protest martial law in operation in Ireland during the War of Independence.¹⁰⁷ These claims were assessed as stringently as any of the others, but their creation speaks to the value placed on military action even where it emerged from sources bound in opposing camps. Further, their inclusion in the first release speaks to a recognition of Irish soldiers who served in the British Army, and likely saw active service in the First World War. Considering that most of the initial material relates to the 1916 Rising, this inclusion must be read in the context of the centenary of the First World War during which the files were released. Similarly, 2014 saw the centenary of the foundation of Cumann na mBan, a women's organization key to both the militant and cultural driving forces of the separatist movement, who were excluded in the initial pensions scheme until legislation in 1934 widened the scope of claimants. The Military archives produced 'a comprehensive listing of relevant materials in our collections' alongside an online exhibition for the centenary of the foundation of Cumann na mBan.¹⁰⁸ The first release was perhaps taken as an opportunity to demonstrate the polyvocal nature of this archive to come, which largely chimes with the chronology of the revolutionary period in phased releases thereafter.

The Medal Series database is recorded as a stand-alone rather than as the numerically fourth in the series of releases. O'Halpin upon the launch of the MPSC online anticipated this series to be the 'only one missing piece in the state's archival mosaic of the Irish revolution'.¹⁰⁹ This series is commemorative in both the award of medals and the circumstances of their contemporary release as a searchable database: the '1916 Medal' was introduced upon the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Rising in 1941 and the '1917-1921 Service Medal' the following year in 1942; the '1916 Survivors Medal' in 1966 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Rising; and the 'Truce (1921) Commemoration Medal' on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the War of Independence in 1971. The introduction of the Truce medal also fell during the height of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, when the annual Easter military parade in the Republic was thereafter

¹⁰⁷ Irish Military Archives, "The Connaught Rangers (Pensions) Act, 1936," accessed March 26, 2019, http://www.militaryarchives.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/MSPC/WThe_Connaught_Rangers.pdf.

¹⁰⁸ The exhibition is not currently functional since migrating to the new website. "Online Exhibitions - Cumann Na mBan," Military Archives via Internet Archive, accessed November 25, 2020, <http://web.archive.org/web/20171230104222/http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/archives-spotlight/online-exhibitions/cumann-na-mban>.

¹⁰⁹ O'Halpin, "The Military Service Pensions Project and Irish History: A Personal Perspective," 144.

suspended indefinitely. More recently, and chiming with the ceremonial nature of the first release, the Medal Series appeared upon the historical centenary of the Easter Rising in April 2016, an occasion that also marked the opening of the ‘new Military Archives,’ one of the aforementioned ‘permanent reminders’. On this occasion, the files were launched and the new facility officially opened in a state ceremonial by the President of Ireland, who, like many in present-day politics, has direct familial links with the conflict evidenced in the MSPC collection.¹¹⁰

Research into the previously released BMH collection points to the frustrations of both men and women who were refused pensions or allowance applications, and especially in the case of women who were not considered eligible under the legislation, at least as it was interpreted by the application assessors.¹¹¹ These women and men would not have been successful in their applications until later in the scheme’s remit, unlike the majority of those contained in these initial releases of this digital archive. In terms of women’s testimonies, it is in the fourth release of files that the archive truly begins to fill some of the space left by the BMH.¹¹² Crowe described this release as ‘very significant’ for research on Cumann na mBan, for whom there are very few known primary sources that detail their activities, which were often covert during the War of Independence and Civil War period.¹¹³ Morrison has similarly suggested that the covert nature of women’s activities, which capitalised on gendered role assumptions and were essential to their success in wartime, also had the effect to ‘further exclude them from histories and commemorations of the period’.¹¹⁴ Nancy Wyse-Power recalls these assumptions in relation to the more public activities of Cumann na mBan in 1921 debated by its members stating that ‘it was evident that the Government did not wish to make any large scale arrests of women. A very small number in fact were ever made. Presumably, the Government felt that the results would be troublesome.’¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Sinéad O’Carroll, “How Michael D Higgins’s Father Fought for Irish Independence,” *TheJournal.ie*, December 11, 2015, accessed March 27, 2019, <https://www.thejournal.ie/michael-d-higgins-family-war-of-independence-2495675-Dec2015/>.

¹¹¹ Morrison, “Bureau of Military History Witness Statements as Sources for the Irish Revolution,” 6.

¹¹² Morrison, “The Bureau of Military History and Female Republican Activism, 1913-1923,” 69.

¹¹³ Crowe, “News From the Archive.”

¹¹⁴ Morrison, “The Bureau of Military History and Female Republican Activism, 1913-1923,” 62-65.

¹¹⁵ “BMH WS 0587: Dr Nancy Wyse-Power,” *Bureau of Military History, 1913-1921*.

In a 2019 symposium it was indicated by those working on this archival project that the line on doing ‘something more in terms of representation’ as regards women is to wait until all women’s files in the collection have been fully catalogued, and the logic of this is to maintain accuracy in how they are used as a dataset - by this logic sometime in 2022-3. Similarly, there is a deferment of looking at open data sharing until the task of cataloguing is complete.¹¹⁶

6.4 Dissemination & Engagement

Huvila says that an ‘engaging archive leverages enthusiasm on its stakeholder groups’.¹¹⁷ Likewise, Warwick has observed that the common denominator in the use or uptake of various digital humanities resources is having a good dissemination strategy.¹¹⁸ Assessing engagement with a collection involves assessing the various media that extend out from the collection directly or indirectly such as pedagogical resources, social media, documentaries, and academic publications. To this may be added the leveraging of commemorative enthusiasm as this collection is bound up with a national period of commemoration with periodic releases largely corresponding to significant military phases of the revolution.

The ‘Methodology’ provided tells us that ‘preservation and access’ were the primary concerns of the project team from the outset.¹¹⁹ Gordon has said that 90% of the project is dedicated to cataloguing and the other 10% to ‘doing as much outreach as possible’.¹²⁰ Further, in advance of each MSPC release ‘the team liaises with various media in order to emphasise the depth of information and to highlight the best stories in the files before entering the public domain’.¹²¹ At the time of writing, the Military Archives are active on Twitter with c. 10,800 followers. A separate Twitter account for the MSPC collection was

¹¹⁶ Cécile Gordon, “Discussion Panel QA,” in Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection Blog, “MSPC-A Unique Historical and Personal Legacy – Symposium Podcasts – 23/02/2019.”

¹¹⁷ Isto Huvila, “The Unbearable Lightness of Participating? Revisiting the Discourses of ‘Participation’ in Archival Literature,” *Journal of Documentation* 71, no. 2 (February 18, 2015): 376.

¹¹⁸ Claire Warwick, “Studying Users in Digital Humanities,” in *Digital Humanities in Practice*, ed. Claire Warwick, Melissa Terras, and Julianne Nyhan (London: Facet Publishing in association with UCL Centre for Digital Humanities, 2012), 12.

¹¹⁹ Military Archives, “Methodology.”

¹²⁰ Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Project, “Discussion Panel QA.”

¹²¹ Gordon, “Archives and Public History,” 130.

created in 2017 to accompany the newly associated Blog, with just under 1,500 followers at the time of writing. Akin to the National Library collaboration seen in chapter 5, in 2019 a partnership with *The Irish Times* supported by the Department for Defence led to a special supplement ‘The Revolution Files’ dedicated to the MSPC collection, intended to ‘introduce the collection to a wider audience’.¹²²

6.4.1 Website Engagement

Announcing the integration of the BMH microsite to the Military Archives domain, streamlining their collections and improving website functionality in 2019, it was noted that since 2016 ‘the demand for online access to Military Archives resources has grown significantly’.¹²³ Information provided for the BMH image ‘Galleries’ in a previous version of the website showed that the images contained had been viewed 344,226 times since going online.¹²⁴ Undoubtedly, the microsite received a much higher number of visits overall. The first, most highly anticipated release of MSPC files in 2014 reportedly drew over one million page-views in the first two weeks of going online.¹²⁵ I was granted limited access by staff at the Military Archives to the institution’s web analytics service (Google Analytics) and these cover the entire Military Archives domain. These analytics provide a bird’s-eye view of online engagement and audiences such as in-bound traffic pathways, demographics, gender breakdown, as well as length of website visits, page visits and page depth (number of pages visited). The following data, briefly presented, are taken from an analytics sample from between 1 September 2017, when the Military Archives began using the service, and 5 June 2019.

¹²² “The Revolution Files,” *The Irish Times*, 2019, <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/century/the-revolution-files>; Paul Kehoe, “A Remarkable Record of the Road to Independence,” *The Irish Times*, October 15, 2019, <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/heritage/century/the-revolution-files/a-remarkable-record-of-the-road-to-independence-1.4039048>.

¹²³ “News & Updates: Bureau of Military History Website,” Military Archives, accessed September 8, 2020, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/news-updates/single-view/article/bureau-of-military-history-website?cHash=7be4ad6783ff86228b7d55aa9b568088>.

¹²⁴ Irish Military Archives, “Bureau of Military History - Photo Gallery,” accessed May 7, 2019, <http://militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/bureau-of-military-history-1913-1921/>.

¹²⁵ Kennedy, “Military Service Pensions Collections & Cumann Na MBan,” 6.

For this period there were over 1 million page-views and 199,000 visitor sessions. Of all users, males account for 55% and females 45%. This gender breakdown of visitors is consistent across different permutations - age, type of visit etc. - with a slight preponderance of male to female. The age brackets 35-54, 55-64 and 65+ account for the largest proportion of overall users, and of these the 65+ bracket is proportionately the largest share (Figure 6-5). The largest number of visitors to the Military Archives during this period were, predictably, from Ireland followed by the United Kingdom, USA, France, Australia and Canada and the predominant language used was English. As seen in reporting from the National Archives, outside of Ireland these mostly anglophone countries are historically associated with the Irish diaspora, particularly the UK, USA, Australia and Canada. Cities such as New York, Chicago, Birmingham (UK) and Paris, for example, cities with strong Irish emigrant connections, feature in a more detailed location breakdown.



Figure 6-5. Demographics overview: Age and Gender. Google Analytics for www.militaryarchives.ie, courtesy of the Military Archives of Ireland. Age brackets 1-6 (bar graphs): 18-24; 25-34; 35-54; 55-65; 65+

The online collections section of the domain was at the top end of user engagement, whether unique pages visits, sessions duration or page bounces etc.¹²⁶ Following this to a page-depth of four, we can see the top ten pages reached after ‘online-collections’ and how much they account for overall session duration i.e. the average length of time a visitor to the website spends. The Cumann na mBan series, for example, is in the top ten of these destinations in terms of page views and session duration, after others such as the pension series, IRA membership series and the medal series (Figure 6-6). Unsurprisingly, the predominant mode of information seeking is via the ‘search the collection’ function. Beyond this, the elevated points of access via highlighted sub-series suggests that there is a relatively high uptake of already fore-grounded records.

Page path level 4		Page Views	Time on Page
		110,803 % of Total: 10.21% (1,084,723)	1907:44:16 % of Total: 14.10% (13530:44:28)
1.	/search-the-collection	23,872	11.77%
2.	/search-the-collection/pensions-series	16,504	18.38%
3.	/search-the-collection/organisation-and-membership/ira-membership-series	11,252	16.38%
4.	/about-the-collection	9,994	4.34%
5.	/release-history/fifth-release	5,940	7.56%
6.	/search-the-collection/medals-series	5,918	7.14%
7.	/new-war-of-independence	4,177	6.13%
8.	/search-the-collection/organisation-and-membership	3,525	1.12%
9.	/about-the-collection/new-medals-awarded-1916-1921	2,805	3.08%
10.	/search-the-collection/organisation-and-membership/cumann-na-mban-series	2,472	3.38%

Figure 6-6. Page Depth level 4. Google Analytics for www.militaryarchives.ie, courtesy of the Military Archives.

In terms of overall session duration, c. 56% of visitors were engaged for one minute or less, while 41% were engaged for anywhere between 1 - 30 minutes, representing moderate to highly engaged users. The remaining 3% engaged for 30 minutes or more per session and represent a small number of very highly engaged users. Similarly, page depth of user sessions steadily decreases before rising for a small number of users who engage with 20 or more pages, accounting for a significantly larger user to page-view ratio. Facebook was in this period the primary source of social network referral traffic to the

¹²⁶ ‘Page bounce’ indicates the rate of single page visits where the user leaves the website without moving past the initial landing page.

Military Archives domain and to the collections (see Appendix B for supplementary infographics).

6.4.2 MSPC Blog

A standalone ‘MSPC Blog’ (WordPress) was launched in 2017 to highlight unusual topics within the collection, such as disability, and individual stories of civilians, women, and rank-and-file rebels. Despite a recently updated and easy to navigate website, the complexity of the legislative and historical context that created this collection is nonetheless reflected in the many layers contained within it. The MSPC Blog serves to demystify this complexity by extracting and interpreting individual file cases that highlight different persons and narratives contained within it and presented in an easily navigable interface (Figure 6-7). The purpose of the Blog is to ‘disseminate information from the MSPC to the public’ with a view to ‘increase public awareness and online access to our collection pages available via the military archives website’.¹²⁷ In turn, the newly associated Twitter feed promotes the Blog and its contents. Website analytics show that the MSPC Blog was in the top 12 links followed via the online collections, as discussed above. The provision of subject tagging and searching allows for some of the perspectives and identities within the collection to be highlighted and more easily explored, such as ‘women,’ ‘social history’ and ‘medical history’ alongside the military periodization of the content.¹²⁸ Notable entries include ‘Deafness in the Military Service Pensions Collection’ and the ‘Women in Intelligence’ series, as well as posts that discuss the ‘behind the scenes’ of the archives, the conservation and preparation for cataloguing and digitisation.¹²⁹ In its final entry the author of women in intelligence states that the trilogy:

¹²⁷ Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection Blog, “About the Blog,” accessed April 16, 2019, <https://militarypensions.wordpress.com/about/>.

¹²⁸ Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection Blog, “Stories From the Collection,” accessed April 10, 2019, <https://militarypensions.wordpress.com/>.

¹²⁹ Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection Blog, “Deafness in the Military Service Pensions Collection,” accessed April 10, 2019, <https://militarypensions.wordpress.com/2017/07/18/deafness-and-the-military-service-pensions-collection/>; Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection Blog, “Women in Intelligence - Part 1: Annie Mary Smith Née Brennan,” accessed April 10, 2019, <https://militarypensions.wordpress.com/2018/06/15/women-in-intelligence-part-1-annie-mary-smith-nee-brennan/>; Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection Blog, “Behind the Scenes,” accessed April 10, 2019, <https://militarypensions.wordpress.com/2017/12/20/behind-the-scenes/>.

...endeavours to shine a small light on the work of three women whose records went online in MSPC's latest release, but who were among the many courageous and indomitable women who played an active and significant part in the War of Independence, the Truce Period, and Civil War and yet who remain for the most part unknown.¹³⁰

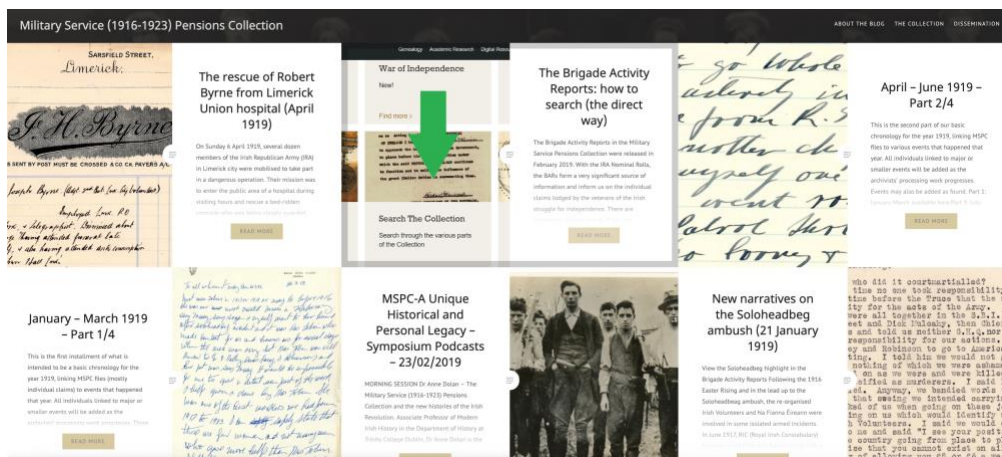


Figure 6-7. MSPC Blog homepage, <https://militarypensions.wordpress.com/>

The blog offers a more self-conscious engagement with the collection's contents, and contemporary politics of memory and identity within which it has come of age as a digital archive. The Blog picks up on the opportunity to feature minority voices and identities, researching profiles of less well-known women from the collection, and it is not the institutional voice that we find here but a far more situated one. Similarly, *Keepers of the Flame*, a documentary listed in the Blog's 'Dissemination' section is about the revolution and its aftermath and draws extensively from the collection and notably uses the testimony of unsuccessful claims applications as much as it does successful ones to explore post-revolutionary disenchantment of those who were rejected.¹³¹

6.4.3 Collaborations & Education

'1916 in Transition' is a lesson plan series developed as a collaboration between the Military Archives, the *Letters of 1916-1923: Ordinary Lives, Extraordinary Times* project and

¹³⁰ Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection Blog, "Women in Intelligence - Part 3: Minnie Lenihan," accessed April 10, 2019, <https://militarypensions.wordpress.com/2018/07/12/women-in-intelligence-part-3-minnie-lenihan/>.

¹³¹ Conor McNamara and Nuala O'Connor, "Keepers of the Flame," *History Ireland* 26, no. 5 (2018): 52.

the Irish History Teachers Association utilising material from the *Letters of 1916-23*, MSPC and BMH collections.¹³² *Letters of 1916-1923* is a public digital humanities project led by Maynooth University that collects and digitises letters written during this historical period from international institutions and private collections, and invites members of the public to ‘transcribe, edit and encode them’.¹³³ Originally focusing on the year 1916 and the six months leading to it, in 2017 *Letters* extended its remit to 1923 with new funding and following an active media presence in 2016, the media pinnacle of which was an RTÉ documentary ‘16 Letters’ aired from the GPO in March 2016 on the eve of the centenary of the Easter Rising.¹³⁴ Collaboration with *Letters* chimes with the pluralising and ‘history from below’ ethos of the MSPC project, described by those involved as ‘a corpus that challenges the “passive” memory of the year 1916 - that propagated through the canonical narrative - with an active engagement with not only the voices of the canonical figures, but those at the margins.’¹³⁵ The lesson plans link to various documents within the MSPC, BMH, *Letters* and other sources such as the Internet Archive, the Dictionary of Irish Biography, and the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI). This series of lesson plans covers various aspects relating to the 1916 Easter Rising such as the Proclamation, the executions, internments, courts-martial, the geography of the Rising, and the role of women (Figure 6-8). The lesson plan series ties in with the educational branch of the 2016 centenary programme set out by the government in 2015, which aimed to ‘tell the story of 1916 through the major cultural objects of the State’ via lesson plans developed collaboratively by the national cultural institutions.¹³⁶ Other examples include the series of Easter Rising online lesson plans provided by *Century Ireland* and the ‘Ireland in 100 Objects’ resource developed by the Royal Irish Academy, the National Museum, *The Irish Times* and An Post.¹³⁷

Two lesson plans address the role of women - ‘Women in 1916’ and ‘Women in Easter Week’ - and the theme of ‘Female Participation’ occurs in other plans such as those

¹³² “Education,” Military Archives, accessed May 7, 2019, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/education>.

¹³³ Susan Schreibman, Vinayak Das Gupta, and Neale Rooney, “Notes from the Transcription Desk: Visualising Public Engagement,” *English Studies* 98, no. 5 (2017): 506.

¹³⁴ Letters 1916-1923, “Media Coverage,” accessed December 10, 2018, <http://letters1916.maynoothuniversity.ie/wp-post/about%2Fmedia-coverage>.

¹³⁵ Schreibman, Das Gupta, and Rooney, “Notes from the Transcription Desk,” 514.

¹³⁶ Government of Ireland, “Centenary Programme,” 41.

¹³⁷ “1916 Education Articles,” *Century Ireland*, accessed May 7, 2019, <https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/theme/1916/education>.

concerning detention, internment and court-martials.¹³⁸ Though limited to the events of 1916, these lesson plans curate the female experience in more detail than elsewhere in the website, bringing together relevant testimonies and contextual documents from across the above collections. From a pedagogical perspective, greater interpretive licence is expressed regarding ‘female participation’ than elsewhere in the curation of the main collection. Laudable though this is in addressing the gender politics of the past in pedagogical material aimed at primary and secondary students, a nested lesson plan is likely not the first port of call of the average adult visitor to the site, and this is somewhat borne out by website analytics. On the other hand, there are no data available for users below 18 years, nor for the years prior to 2017 when the Military Archives began using Google Analytics. Analytics show that the ‘Education’ tab is far down the list of page views for the period covered, with an uptick in 2019. It is likely, however, that the lesson plans experienced greater traction when first launched during the relevant centenary in 2016. Together with the Cumann na mBan membership rolls appearing on the collection homepage, this is the only digitisation of the three examined that explicitly foreground a female narrative of the Rising.

¹³⁸ Irish Military Archives, “Search The Lesson Plans,” accessed November 19, 2018, <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/1916-in-transition-1916/search-lesson-plans>; “Lesson Plan - Detention of Rebels Following the Collapse of the Rising in 1916,” Irish Military Archives, accessed May 7, 2019, http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/1916-in-transition-1916/search-lesson-plans/single?tx_r3lessonplan_pi1%5BshowUid%5D=22&cHash=657e7b8fc8495cf1958da091959b8118.

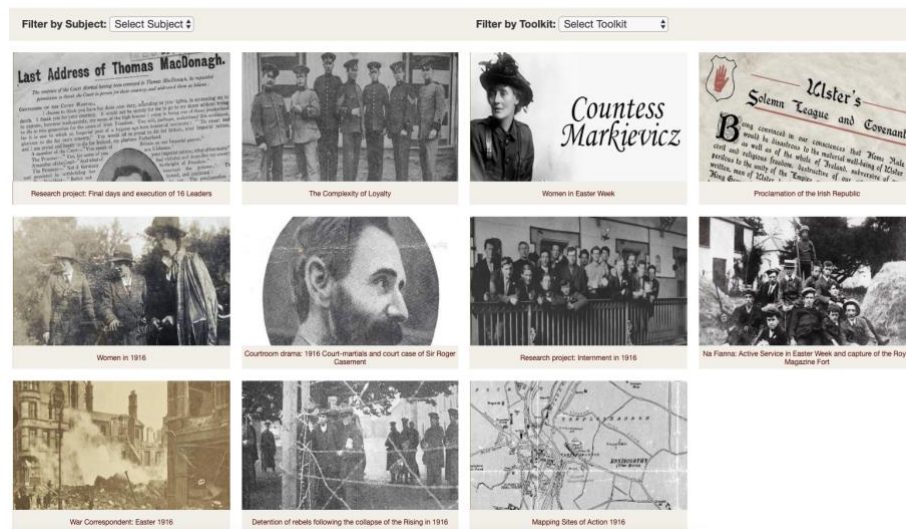


Figure 6-8. 'Search the Lesson Plans,' *Military Archives*, <https://www.militaryarchives.ie/en/collections/online-collections/1916-in-transition-1916/search-lesson-plans>.

6.4.4 Access and use of archives

In its 'Dissemination' section, the MSPC Blog lists 19 conferences/lectures, delivered mainly in Ireland, that concern the collection and this list is unlikely to be exhaustive. It also lists several 'articles/publications,' which do not include peer reviewed academic publications, as well as items of radio and documentary media.¹³⁹ Several conference papers and lectures listed on the MSPC Blog concern the presence of women in this archival collection. This is indicative of the value attributed to the collection by those actively engaged in researching the collection in terms of gender and the received historical narrative. Collecting and presenting this kind of information also conveys the 'value and impact' of digitisation. And though Jensen contends that researchers are not always forthright in citing digital versions of archives making this difficult to track, the opening of this collection and its digitisation have been, for the most part, one in the same meaning that its wide use has been primarily tied to digital access.¹⁴⁰

The pervasive use of these records in recent academic research is indeed testament to their free and digital availability, size and scope of their content. It is also a testament to the value placed upon them by the State and researchers alike, with great monetary and

¹³⁹ Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection Blog, "Dissemination," accessed April 3, 2019, <https://militarypensions.wordpress.com/dissemination/>.

¹⁴⁰ Helle Strandgaard Jensen, "Digital Archival Literacy for (All) Historians," *Media History*, 2020, 10.

academic investment in their digitisation and wide promotion as a ‘high value’ resource for both academic researchers and the public.¹⁴¹ A Scopus search of academic texts that refer to the MSPC collection in their title, abstract, or references produced 18 results, mainly journal articles, between 2013 and 2018. A search of *History Ireland*, a prominent history magazine in Ireland authored by academic and public historians, produced 16 articles and reviews that directly concern or reference the MSPC collection between 2006 and 2019. Many of these also reference or are concerned with the BMH as they often go hand in hand in the research. In the field of History the book is preeminent, however, it is more difficult to quantify the number of books that use the collection as it is harder to perform a systematic search of primary sources used, and as mentioned digital pathways of archival engagement are underacknowledged in citations, but the number is likely to be high. What is certain is that many histories concerning Irish nationalist women that have appeared in the last decade make extensive use of these collections.¹⁴² The revolutionary period and particularly 1916 is saturated with book publications, both academic and popular, and most recent publications on the subject would be remiss not to draw from this collection in dealing with the revolutionary generation and the activities that extended out from them. The National Library of Ireland catalogue alone returns 1,130 book results for a search of ‘1916 Easter Rising’ in its entire holdings; 323 of these were published between 2003 and 2019.¹⁴³ It also returns 49 books for a search of ‘Irish Revolution’ between 2003 and 2019, covering the period when both the BMH and MSPC were released for public consultation and later digitised.¹⁴⁴ In both cases, there is a clear corresponding increase in publications from roughly 2011, after which the BMH was digitized, and from 2014 when the first tranche of MSPC files were digitised. Texts have been republished since the appearance of these archives online, forewords to new editions making reference to the change that the digitisation of these two collections (and others)

¹⁴¹ Decade of Centenaries, “Fifth Release from Military Service (1916-23) Pensions Collection Now Available, May 2018,” accessed April 2, 2019, <https://www.decadeofcentenaries.com/launch-of-latest-release-from-military-service-1916-23-pensions-collection-may-2018/>.

¹⁴² E.g. Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women*; McCooile, *No Ordinary Women*; Linda Connolly, ed., *Women and the Irish Revolution: Feminism, Activism, Violence* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2020); Liz McAuliffe, Mary and Gillis, *Richmond Barracks in 1916, “We Were There” - 77 Women of the Easter Rising* (Dublin: Dublin City Council, 2016).

¹⁴³ Search a) “1916 Easter Rising”, filter: “Books”; b) “1916 Easter Rising”, filter: “Books” + “2003-2019”, National Library of Ireland, “Catalogue,” accessed May 10, 2019, <http://catalogue.nli.ie/>.

¹⁴⁴ Search ‘Irish Revolution’ filter: ‘Books’ + ‘2000-2019’, National Library of Ireland; These numbers are also notwithstanding items published outside Ireland, though the library does selectively collect relevant material beyond its legal obligations.

has wrought upon the study of women and ‘democratizing historical research’ since their first publication.¹⁴⁵

Echoing Cronin’s observation on the drop off in digitisation after the 2016 centenary year - and keeping in mind that the National Library is a legal deposit institution - so too do book publications appear to peak in 2015 and 2016 for the given search terms, dipping abruptly thereafter (Figure 6-9).¹⁴⁶ Such observations cannot be made in total isolation of the wider range of digital archives made available during this commemorative period and an exact empirical relationship cannot necessarily be drawn here. The MSPC are part of a wider landscape of personal papers, historic collections and state records held in university and national repositories that continue to become available to varying degrees of accessibility. It is, however, a large, varied, entirely novel collection and one that is committed to ‘establishing the affordances of transformative access’ via digitisation and one that has enjoyed considerable national publicity.¹⁴⁷ There is an indicative relationship between the release of these archives, the commemorative lead-up to 2016, and a relative boom in book publications in Ireland on the subject matter, as indeed was the intention. Crowe has also further confirmed that the files have indeed been used ‘extensively’ by prominent historians to produce such books.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ E.g. The digitisation of the 1641 depositions by Trinity College Dublin. Marie Coleman, “Foreward to the New Edition,” in *Irish Women & Nationalism: Soldiers, New Women and Wicked Hags*, ed. Louise Ryan and Margaret Ward (Irish Academic Press, 2019), x-xi; Fearghal McGarry, *The Rising in Ireland: Easter 1916*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), xiv.

¹⁴⁶ Cronin, “Irish History Online,” 282; The National Library of Ireland, “Collection Development Policy, 2009-2011,” 5.

¹⁴⁷ Paul Conway, “Digital Transformations and the Archival Nature of Surrogates,” *Archival Science* 15, no. 1 (2015): 52.

¹⁴⁸ Crowe, “News From the Archives: Military Service Pensions Collection.”

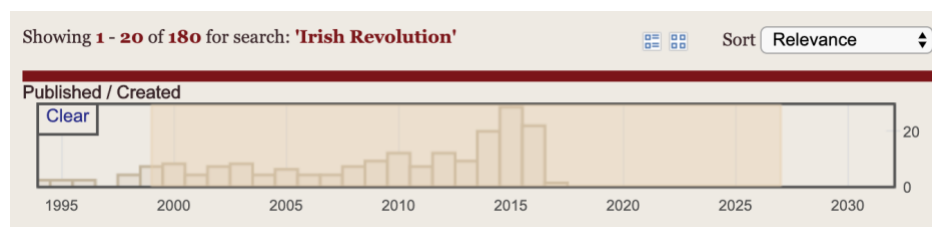
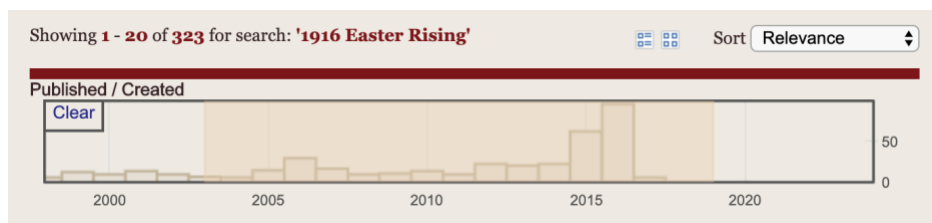


Figure 6-9. Infographic of search results for books on the subject of the 1916 Rising and the Irish Revolution between 2003 and 2019.

Source: National Library of Ireland online catalogue, www.catalogue.nli.ie.

The preponderance of both academic and popular literature that either uses or directly concerns these collections is evidence of their use and the intended purpose of their digitisation being fulfilled. It is clear from the ways in which the collection has been used in research, conferences and publications, and documentary-making that the information it holds has been utilized extensively for doing women's and gender history, as well as broader 'social history'.¹⁴⁹ Information seeking of this kind is further borne out in the website analytics as discussed above and in the academic literature we now find not only evidence of the historical, gendered structures and feminisms contained in this archive but the use of this archive to feminist ends.

6.5 Gender

The 'prehistory' of both the MSPC archive and the BMH is gendered in such a way that it is heavily entangled with a post-Civil War tensions, and political and social attitudes, shaping both 'administrative decisions and the attitudes of contributors'.¹⁵⁰ Acknowledged by the MSPC project manager is the fact that 'archives are not neutral. They are social constructs and therefore their creation is influenced by a multitude of variables'.¹⁵¹ As Coleman has shown, the political entanglements of gender embodied in the MSPC are

¹⁴⁹ Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Collection Blog, "Dissemination."

¹⁵⁰ Morrison, "The Bureau of Military History and Female Republican Activism, 1913-1923," 78.

¹⁵¹ Cecile Gordon, "Editorial" in Gordon et al., *The Brigade Activity Reports*, 8.

evident in the conception of the pensions schemes and legislation themselves that initially excluding both anti-Treatyites, Cumann na mBan, and other non-affiliated women, their wording and interpretation, and in the political contexts, government administrations, and boards of assessors that refereed them, spanning several decades.¹⁵² A far richer source of 'history from below' than what had been available previously, predominantly in the form of personal memoirs, the BMH collection nonetheless privileged testimonies from relatively 'elite' men and women associated with the Easter Rising and has a comparatively narrower scope of testimonies and perspectives than the MSPC.¹⁵³ Where women activists are concerned, Morrison has shown how the wider geographical remit of nationalist women's activities during the years 1917-21 are underrepresented in the BMH - 'the collections' most significant limitation' - due to both refusal to contribute based on political stance or rejected pensions applications, as well as this somewhat elite selection of interviewees.¹⁵⁴ Undoubtedly, however, the affordances of the BMH when it was released pointed to the possibilities of the MSPC from a gender history perspective as much as a cultural and military one. Subsequent to this first major piece of the 'archival jigsaw' of the decade of commemorations - this assemblage of digital archives - and constituting opt-in rather than invitation-only testimonies, the MSPC has by its nature a greater plurality of voices from women as well as 'keymen' and rank and file revolutionary veterans of both political divides, by virtue of its sheer volume, and from every corner of the country. The fact that these archives of women's experiences exist at all is notable, regardless of their quantity relative to the entire collection, and the information they give us is fairly unique in the landscape of sources available. We cannot alter past exclusions but such exclusions or absences continue to be of interest with regards to the process of digitisation, considering as Coleman has that this collection is 'probably the most comprehensive source we will ever have for charting the role of women in the Irish revolution'.¹⁵⁵ These records greatly expand the number of women known to have contributed to the events of 1916-1923, and greatly expands our knowledge about these activities that go above and beyond the cooking, cleaning and otherwise domestic supporting tasks carried out in order to feed and clothe the revolution, especially during

¹⁵² Coleman, "Compensating Irish Female Revolutionaries, 1916-1923."

¹⁵³ Morrison, "Bureau of Military History Witness Statements as Sources for the Irish Revolution," 1; Morrison, "The Bureau of Military History and Female Republican Activism, 1913-1923"; Pařeta, *Irish Nationalist Women*, 14.

¹⁵⁴ Morrison, "The Bureau of Military History and Female Republican Activism, 1913-1923," 68.

¹⁵⁵ Coleman, "Compensating Irish Female Revolutionaries, 1916-1923," 4.

the Independence and Civil War. In this way these records of female revolutionary activism arguably have greater transformative power than is measurable by number alone. Their strength lies somewhat in their 'liminal' status – as introduced in the literature review - as much as their breadth and content, used to critique mainstream, masculinist readings of violent and political activism in the period.¹⁵⁶

Both the BMH and MSPC have played a key role in piecing together new narratives of the revolution, as demonstrated thus far in this chapter. If archives and records indeed have multiple meanings and multiple 'activations' over time, the MSPC has taken on a life of its own as a commemorative cultural production and as a feminist historical touchstone in this Decade of Centenaries. Just as the BMH 'breathed new life into academic and popular perceptions of 1916,' so too the appearance of the MSPC as a nationally significant collection has had a powerful effect as both an academic and a public history resource.¹⁵⁷ Evidenced further by academic outputs and website analytics above is the pronounced use of this archive for researching the women of the revolution, leading to it being described as 'one of the most detailed archival collections for charting the role of women in any national revolution' and 'the subsequent treatment of female veterans by the state'.¹⁵⁸ Whereas a significant number of women's BMH testimonies largely recounted the activities of other men, minimizing their own contributions, pensions claims demanded description of activities of the applicant only and corroborated by assessors and referees, medical reports and letters of reference from members of military or organisational units.¹⁵⁹ Activities undertaken by women evidenced in the MSPC include, *inter alia*, fundraising, dispatch carrying, concealment and transport of arms, ammunition and bombs - often at great risk - providing safe houses for Flying Columns, feeding and clothing IRA men, treating the wounded, and intelligence work.¹⁶⁰ The files also detail the repercussions faced by the women involved, such as repeated raids and enfilades on their homes. Brigid Noone, whose case was re-opened after initially being unsuccessful in her pension application, had her house raided during 'the Tan war' and even more during the Civil War when such hide-outs and active Cumann na mBan

¹⁵⁶ Wilson, "The Tyranny of the Normal and the Importance of Being Liminal."

¹⁵⁷ Beiner, "Probing the Boundaries of Irish Memory," 302.

¹⁵⁸ Coleman, "Compensating Irish Female Revolutionaries, 1916-1923," 4.

¹⁵⁹ Morrison, "The Bureau of Military History and Female Republican Activism, 1913-1923," 66.

¹⁶⁰ The 'Flying Columns' of the Irish Republican Army were military units that defined the guerrilla tactic of the War of Independence, carrying out swift, surprise attacks rather than open warfare.

members were known to Free State forces: ‘Our home was raided a hundred times or more some of which was cruel’. Noone in her appeal details an occasion when the Black and Tans opened fire on her way to warn an IRA Brigade Officers meeting in a house on her land in Sligo, managing to distract them long enough to escape, herself held at gunpoint. Her house was burned down the following day.¹⁶¹ Others, like Mary Alleway of Cumann na mBan who hid arms, did scouting, dispatches and intelligence work during the War of Independence, experienced direct violence being beaten by British soldiers and having her hair cut off, known as ‘hair-shorning,’ for assisting in the shooting of a Constable. Alleway, who appears keen to demonstrate her love of ‘dear old Ireland’ and referencing her friends who had made the ‘supreme sacrifice,’ had given up her work as a teacher to devote her time to the separatist movement and said that she had since suffered ill health from all the cycling, ‘exposure’ and lack of rest during 1921. She relocated to London after the Treaty (‘to find work in a foreign land’) as she had no home and very little money left.¹⁶² Many files indeed show addresses in the UK, USA, and elsewhere, many claimants having emigrated since the conflict, many others in poor financial circumstances or ill health. As several have pointed out in appraising these records, these pensions and allowances were often a stand-in for a lacking state welfare system in the newly independent state, and they contain stories of financial struggle, destitution and even mental health.¹⁶³ The pension application of Mollie O’Shea who was active in Cumann na mBan, made by a relative on her behalf, shows that she suffered a breakdown when her brother (also appearing in the collection) was killed in the Ballyseedy massacre in 1923, spending a period of time in an asylum, committed again in later years and made a ward of court.¹⁶⁴

The importance of these women’s records in understanding not just the revolution but the operation of gender in the social and political afterlife of the conflict, and in

¹⁶¹ Brigid Noone, MSP/34/REF/56221, 34/E9496.

¹⁶² Mary/Mollie Bridget Alleway, MSP34REF37069.

¹⁶³ Marie Coleman, “Service Medals And Special Allowances” (Dublin: Military Archives, 2016), http://www.militaryarchives.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/MSPC/_documents/Medals/MSPC_MEDALSB_OOKLET_APRIL2016_072_special_allowance2.pdf.

¹⁶⁴ Mollie O’Shea, MSP34REF57057; The Ballyseedy massacre was one of the more notorious reprisals by Free State forces during the Civil War in which seven republican prisoners were blown up by a land mine. See: MSP34REF6759 for the pension application of the only survivor, Stephen Fuller. Hopkinson. “Civil War and Aftermath, 1922–4,” 51.

bureaucratic memory spaces at various stages of the twentieth century, has been noted.¹⁶⁵ Research by Connolly has further contested the nature of what these records do *not* tell us, or only give us glimpses of, when we ‘read against the grain’ in the archives.¹⁶⁶ Pointing to the dialectical relationship between omissions in the BMH statements and indications in the MSPC about violence and sexual violence meted out to women during the revolution - a burgeoning research area - when considered with other sources.¹⁶⁷ She outlines the ways in which gendered violence was underreported and concealed at the time, with names and sections of statements redacted or suppressed in both the BMH and MSPC collections, and how there may be significant evidence in what is redacted or ‘closed’ for data protection or ethical reasons.¹⁶⁸ Reappraising the level of gendered violence during the revolution and ‘received analysis of the Irish Revolution focusing mainly on the deaths, disappearances and fate of male combatants primarily’ such an analysis presents a new set of uncomfortable questions about the bitter violence of the period, giving yet new meaning to this archive:

The documented impact of trauma on women that is currently emerging provides a very different kind of narrative to the analysis of sectarianism, ethnicity and community conflict which has dominated the masculinist historiography that has prevailed to-date.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Coleman, “Compensating Irish Female Revolutionaries, 1916-1923,” 15; Morrison, “The Bureau of Military History and Female Republican Activism, 1913-1923.”

¹⁶⁶ Bishop, “The Serendipity of Connectivity,” 771.

¹⁶⁷ See for example: Linda Connolly, “Sexual Violence in the Irish Civil War: A Forgotten War Crime?,” *Women’s History Review* 0, no. 0 (2020): 1–18.

¹⁶⁸ Connolly, “Towards a Further Understanding of the Violence Experienced by Women in the Irish Revolution,” 30-31.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 18, 34-35.

6.6 Conclusion

The Military Service Pensions Archive project is a cornerstone project of the Government's Decade of Centenaries 2012-2022 Commemorative programme. This project will serve as a permanent reminder of this commemorative period and will be a resource for future generations.¹⁷⁰

McBride has observed that 'events are encoded with meaning as they actually occur'; the interplay then between the very public digitisation of these archives, the commemorations with which they are aligned, and their academically reinforced status, may operate to encode the one and the other in mnemonic symbiosis.¹⁷¹ Digitised in the commemorative spotlight this collection has received extensive public, political, and academic recognition and value affirmation. As indicated in the above quote, it has become a heritage collection at the vanguard of the centennial digitisations, recognisable as a key cultural artefact - a digital monument - of the commemorations. Women and gender history have also become a key and constituent dynamic in this digitisation project much more explicitly than in the other case studies considered. The much more limited nature of the Military Archives collections overall, however, affords greater possibilities to focus resources on unconventional or bespoke modes of presenting collections. Histories of female revolutionaries existed before this and the BMH collection and before this commemorative decade, supported by many other archival sources that are not freely, digitally accessible to the wider public. However, as already discussed in the literature review, most analogue archives are in ways unknowable to the average person in comparison with digitisations that are accessible at the touch of a button.¹⁷² Accessibility, much more than simple availability, has become something of a by-word for 'online' with regards to archival sources during this decade. A distinctly more wide-reaching public resource by comparison then, this collection may also dominate popular perceptions of archival possibilities. Sources that are easily accessible through digitisation, as Bishop says, and available at a given time 'lead historians to tell particular types of stories'.¹⁷³ As much as it pluralises and opens up the afterlife of the conflict in new ways, inevitably the MSPC

¹⁷⁰ Paul Kehoe, TD, "Foreword", in Gordon et al., *The Brigade Activity Reports*, 6.

¹⁷¹ McBride, "Memory and National Identity in Modern Ireland," 8.

¹⁷² Conway, "Digital Transformations and the Archival Nature of Surrogates," 52.

¹⁷³ Bishop, "The Serendipity of Connectivity," 772.

reinscribes the preoccupation with the revolutionary period, one that remains predominantly a story of ‘men and masculine pursuits’ often at the expense of other historical narratives and identities that shaped modern Ireland.¹⁷⁴ Yeates for example, reflecting on 2016 and the Irish historical tradition, has suggested that the BMH had added to the ‘imbalance’ in the kinds of histories researched about this decade of change, less concerned with the ‘home front,’ the effects of a war economy, crime, disease and poverty: ‘That’s the other history we tend to forget during commemorations because they don’t resonate with current agendas’.¹⁷⁵ Just as Bishop attributes the popularity of the Australian Imperial Forces records, prioritised for digitisation around the 2015 centenary of the Gallipoli landings, as ‘evidence of the success with which Australians have been taught that war is one of the most significant parts of our history,’ the value now ascribed to these digital archives and the gender histories they support should not be dissociated from the canonical national narrative and authorised commemorations of which they are part and the greater popularity, legitimacy and connection this assures them in the public consciousness.¹⁷⁶ As Mak contends, ‘Helping to embody a story that has already been deemed important, digitizations may be taken to represent a particular people’s literature or national identity’.¹⁷⁷

All archives have a prehistory and the prehistory of the MSPC tells us about the values that led to its creation, the significance ascribed to it over time, and its activations in the present.¹⁷⁸ The significance now ascribed to this archive in a more open and pluralising public historical culture has to do with the ways in which the revolution has been remembered, historicised and commemorated in the past, the rivalries, pain, shame, and resentment leftover from the conflict, the now widely acknowledged and challenged obfuscation of women from the historical record, and attempts at controlling the national heritage narrative. An acceptance of the multiple identifications with the past are indeed, McGarry asserts, ‘bound up with the emergence of a more tolerant and flexible sense of Irish identity’.¹⁷⁹ Strongly reflected in both of the collections considered in this chapter is

¹⁷⁴ Lorinda Cramer and Andrea Witcomb, “‘Hidden from View’?: An Analysis of the Integration of Women’s History and Women’s Voices into Australia’s Social History Exhibitions Exhibitions,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25, no. 2 (2018): 3.

¹⁷⁵ Yeates, “Historians on 1916.”

¹⁷⁶ Bishop, “The Serendipity of Connectivity,” 769.

¹⁷⁷ Mak, “Archaeology of a Digitization,” 1517.

¹⁷⁸ Hall, S. “Constituting an Archive,” *Third Text* 15, no. 54 (2001): 89.

¹⁷⁹ McGarry, *The Rising in Ireland: Easter 1916*, xiii.

the Civil War, a bitter conclusion to a decade that led to independence and which helped set in motion the conservative ‘new nationalism’ of the Free State, and to exaggerate existing divisions.¹⁸⁰ Conspicuously absent from the timeframe permitted in the BMH interviews, who was or was not selected for or agreed to interview was inflected by the fallout of this conflict as well as material matters; who was initially considered eligible for a pension and recognition of service to ‘the cause’ excluded Anti-Treatyites, both male and female, in turn generating more files appealing or challenging these exclusions; both created certain hierarchies of participants that were at once political and gendered and that privileged certain kinds of service, with 1916 being the gold standard. Dolan has pointed out that ideas about collective memory do not sit well with such fractious internal conflicts as the Irish Civil War, that indeed commemoration in its wake ‘could never be simple again’. That the memory of the Civil War had also been until then - Dolan was writing in 2003 - ignored in the historiography, had the concomitant effect of further marginalising nationalist women active in this period.¹⁸¹ Gilliland and Caswell argue that ‘the roles of individual and collective imaginings about the absent or unattainable archive and its contents should be explicitly acknowledged, in both archival theory and practice’.¹⁸² Though the BMH collection undoubtedly brought with it anticipation for what the MSPC would mean for further re-gendering Irish history, there is little indication that the digitisation of these collections was originally underpinned by an explicitly feminist archival imperative. Yet, their digitisation has had immense repercussions for a growing feminist appraisal of the Irish revolution, transcending academic research to become mainstream knowledge.

Beyond representation, these archives help to further dismantle gendered assumptions about the roles that both men and women played during these conflicts, and the gendered nature of attributing value to those activities that together gave rise to the birth of the nation that this digital archive commemorates. As Lane put it in 2019, the collection allows historians to go beyond ‘general statements’ about the role women played in this period; in turn it allows the wider public to understand these women beyond such limited characterisations previously meted out to them through most mainstream popular

¹⁸⁰ Hopkinson, “Civil War and Aftermath, 1922–4,” 55; Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War*, 154.

¹⁸¹ Dolan, *Commemorating the Irish Civil War*, 2-3, 152.

¹⁸² Anne J. Gilliland and Michelle Caswell, “Records and Their Imaginaries: Imagining the Impossible, Making Possible the Imagined,” *Archival Science* 16, no. 1 (2016): 55.

histories and education.¹⁸³ In this way the issues of gender may be addressed in a way that differs significantly from previous hegemonic interpretations, allowing not only for a more critical understanding of the gendered apparatus of the period, but also the gendered entanglements of its historiography and commemoration past and present. These observations are partly contingent on the availability, access to and curation of the collection online, but also how these records are disseminated, and used to redefine the history and collective memory of the period, processes that may only fully come to fruition or be judged in retrospect. The feminist interventions in this collection are themselves another stage in a decades long process of re-gendering the revolutionary period. In the chapter that follows, I will demonstrate the manifestation of this new narrative in feminist remembrance culture on Twitter during the 1916 centenary year.

¹⁸³ Military Service (1916-1923) Pensions Project, "Dr Leanne Lane - The MSPC as Source for Researching Women's History in the WOI and the Civil War," Soundcloud, accessed April 2, 2019, <https://soundcloud.com/user-55838885/dr-leann-lane-the-mspc-as-source-for-researching-womens-history-in-the-woi-and-the-civil-war>.

anniversary in 2006.³ In this chapter it will be argued that Twitter was a space in which a feminist identity was being expressed through commemoration. As will be shown, this was undeniably underpinned by a discourse of women's rights and gender equality in the present, and an emphasis on the connection between the foundation of the State and the feminisms and egalitarianism of its female protagonists. Notions of feminism and freedom intermingled in critique on the past in the present, emphasising 1916 as a struggle for women's rights as much as for Irish self-determination, and an unfinished struggle to achieve them. If the past 'can never be understood solely within its own terms' the occasion of commemoration provided a medium and reference point for engaging in a gender heritage critique of remembrance, performing a feminist collective identity and Irish cultural identity.⁴

Constance Markievicz, as the word cloud above suggests, continued to have the most name recognition in public remembrance of revolutionary women on Twitter in my dataset (Figure 7-1). Markievicz, along with three other prominent women, were included in the original query as keywords in order to capture tweets that may mention specific women but may not have used hashtags. The preponderance also results from the fact that the period of data collection also covered two consecutive anniversaries of Markievicz's election to Westminster Parliament in 1918. Cumann na mBan are also prominent, given they are the women's organisation most associated with the separatist movement, many of whose members took part in the Rising. These top level word frequencies do not tell us anything new, nor do commemorative-historical statements, but they are part of a necessary performance of making visible that which was historically obscured. The boundaries between historical, factual and commemorative statements are often fuzzy, and there is also rich crossover between such statements and a more critical remembrance discourse. In this way, Twitter was a theatre of memory in which the tension between remembering and forgetting manifested. Memory, after all, 'is an active cultural process of remembering and of forgetting that is fundamental to our ability to conceive the world'.⁵ The following analysis will address these representations and the meaning-making processes that underpin them. Thematic qualitative coding and analysis

³ Higgins, *Transforming 1916*, 82.

⁴ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 58.

⁵ *Ibid.*

is the basis of this chapter, illustrated by time series analysis, text analysis and data visualisation.

7.1.1 Time Series Analysis

Plotting tweets over time (time series analysis) demonstrates the scale of Twitter engagement with the 1916 centenary, as well as complementing other analyses.⁶ The graphs below demonstrate how highly concentrated commemorative activity was around March 2016 in particular, and to a lesser extent April (Figure 7-2 & Figure 7-3). Peaks are apparent on Proclamation Day (15 March 2016), the official anniversary on Easter Sunday (27 March), and the historical anniversary on 24 April. When retweets are removed to minimize popularity bias, the women of 1916 ‘issue space’ - a term borrowed from Rogers indicating ‘clusters of actors engaged in the same issue area’ - is c. 10k tweets, and is therefore smaller by a factor of 4.5.⁷ This accounts for less than 10% of the much larger ‘Easter Rising’ issue space (c. 139,000 original tweets) comparatively. Another dataset was collected specifying the names of the seven signatories of the Proclamation and relevant keywords, which for a 6-month period returned approximately the same number of original Tweets as for the ‘Women of 1916’ dataset in a 15-month period. The hashtags #womenof1916 and #Ireland2016 (second only to #easterrising) were the two most prevalent in each dataset respectively (Figure 7-4 & Figure 7-5). The official hashtag of the government commemorative body of the same name, #Ireland2016, occurs at rate of 20:1 compared with #womenof1916, the de facto official hashtag of that issue space. The relative size and influence of this dataset is therefore taken into account, and it speaks to Wilson’s theorisation of gender heritage as a ‘liminal’ but powerful critique of the epistemological core.⁸

⁶ Wasim Ahmed, “Using Twitter as a Data Source: An Overview of Social Media Research Tools (2019),” LSE Impact of Social Sciences Blog, accessed May 11, 2019, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2019/06/18/using-twitter-as-a-data-source-an-overview-of-social-media-research-tools-2019/>.

⁷ Rogers, *Digital Methods*, 39.

⁸ Wilson, “The Tyranny of the Normal and the Importance of Being Liminal,” 6-8.

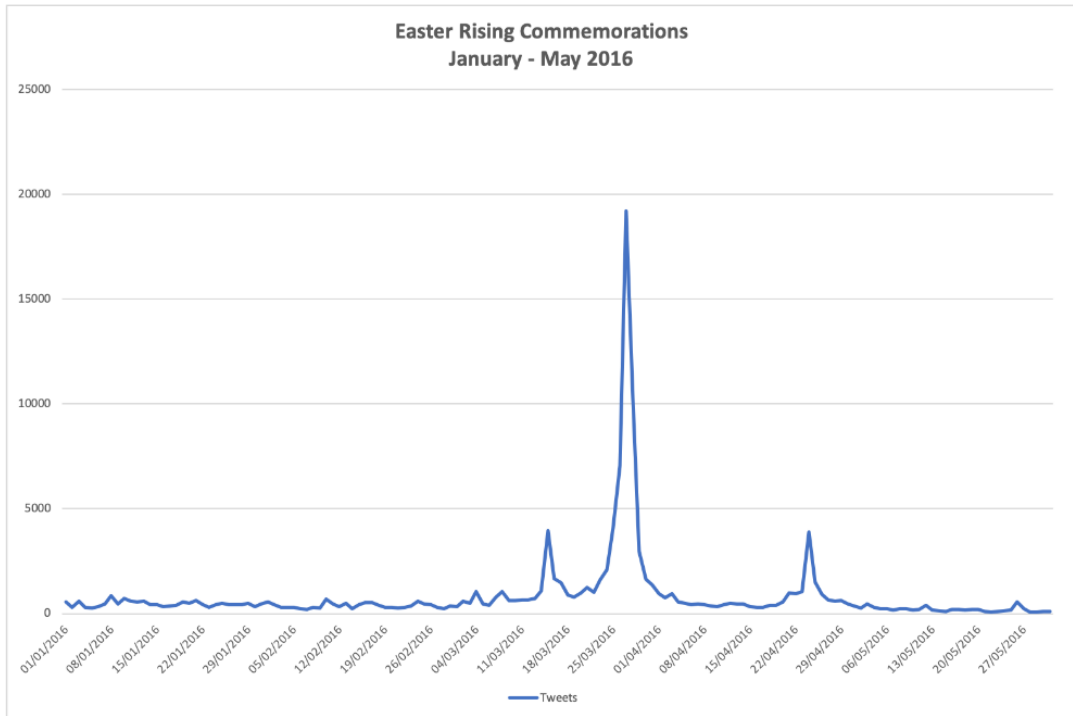


Figure 7-2 'Easter Rising 2016' dataset, retweets removed (c. 139k original Tweets) 1 Jan - 31 May 2016. MS Excel.

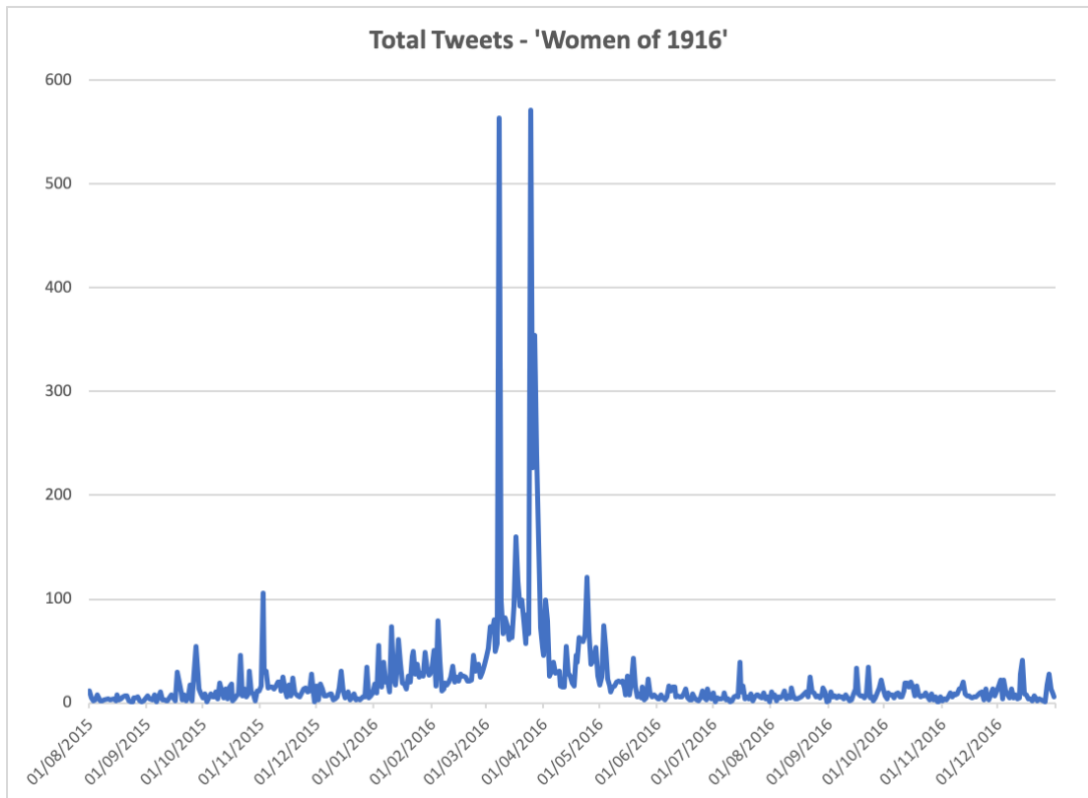


Figure 7-3 Total Tweets 'Women of 1916' (c. 10k original Tweets i.e. retweets removed) Aug 2015 - Dec 2016. MS Excel

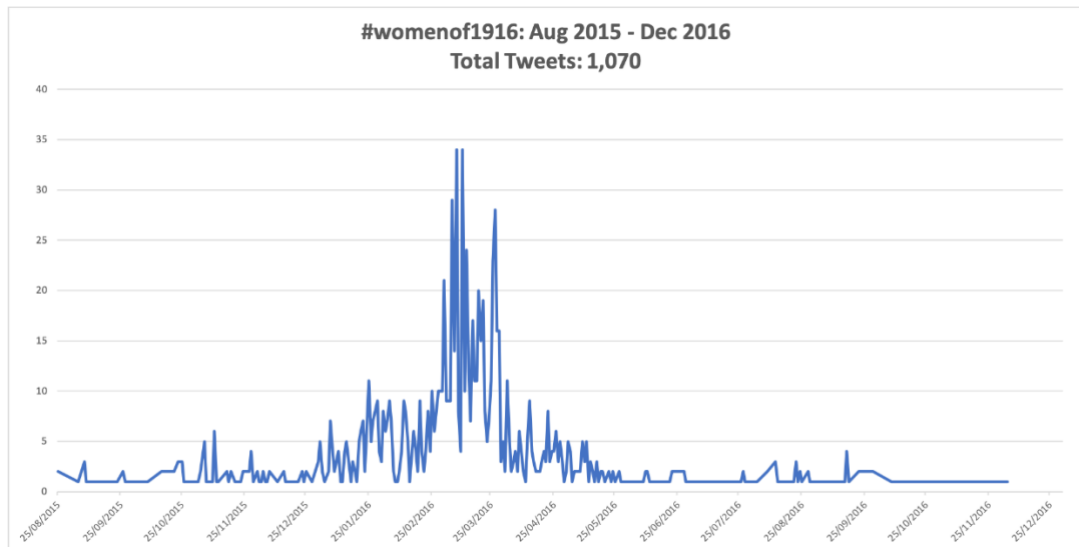


Figure 7-4 From 'Women of 1916' dataset, retweets removed. Use of #womenof1916 Aug 2015-Dec 2016. MS Excel.

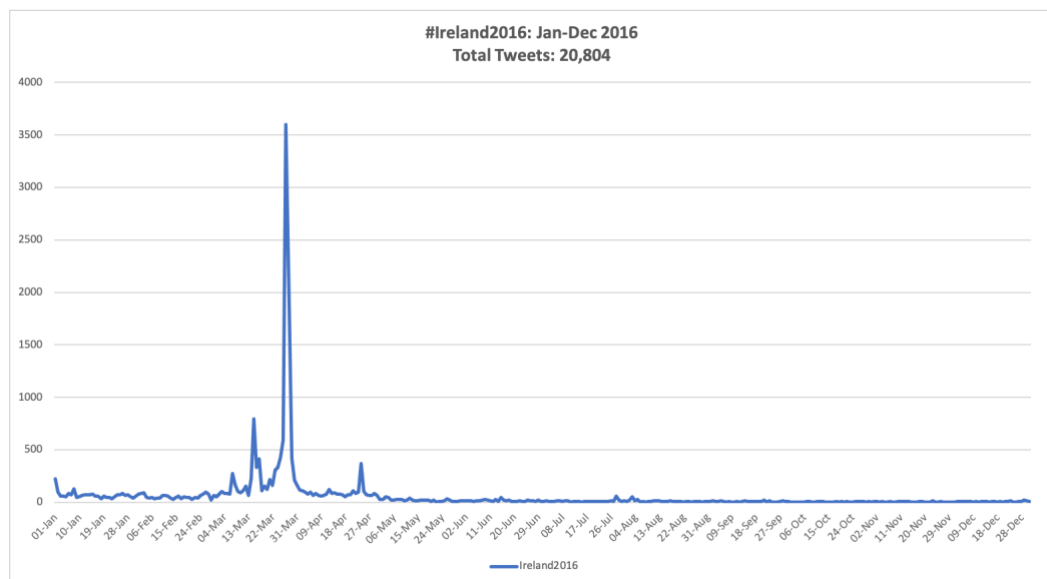


Figure 7-5 Eater Rising 1916/2016' dataset. Use of #Ireland2016 Jan-Dec 2016. MS Excel.

Influence

Network visualisations of the most retweeted accounts in the dataset were generated using Gephi (Figure 7-6). A 'Modularity' algorithm, i.e. community detection, and the 'Circlepack' layout were applied. Retweet connections were set to 'directed,' that is to say the ties are one-way from the user doing the retweeting to the user being retweeted (non-reciprocal). The retweet network for the 'Women of 1916' dataset was filtered by 'in-degree' of >5 , or accounts that have been retweeted more than 5 times, to remove noise

and clarify the influence of certain users in the issue space.⁹ A cursory exploration of the inverse or ‘out-degree’ filtering, which indicates the extent to which an account has retweeted other accounts, showed that the most retweeted accounts and the most prolific retweeters are not significantly correlated, as seen in other studies.¹⁰ As is demonstrated below, there is a greater correlation between the most retweeted accounts overall and the most retweeted tweets. Less than 10% of tweets (870) in this dataset were retweeted more than ten times, and were sent by 370 unique users, or 16.5% of total unique users (5,245). Similarly, 1,128 tweets, were favoured more than 10 times. The single most retweeted Tweet in the ‘Women of 1916’ dataset was sent by *Ireland 2016*, accompanied by a commemorative video (more of which later):

@ireland2016: On #InternationalWomensDay we remember the bravery & idealism of the women of 1916. #Ireland2016 [video]

This was also the third most retweeted Tweet in the Easter Rising 2016 dataset. Tweets from the leftist Jacobin Magazine and the New York Times were also in the top five most retweeted, both including iconic photographs of Constance Markievicz (held by the National Library of Ireland) posing in Cumann na mBan uniform and holding a rifle:

@jaconinmag: On this day in 1918 Irish republican and socialist Constance Markievicz became the first woman elected to Westminster. [image]

@nytimes: The Irish republic should repay its debt to women [URL] via @nytopinion [image]

⁹ Rantasila et al., “#fukushima Five Years On,” 193.

¹⁰ Ibid., 937.

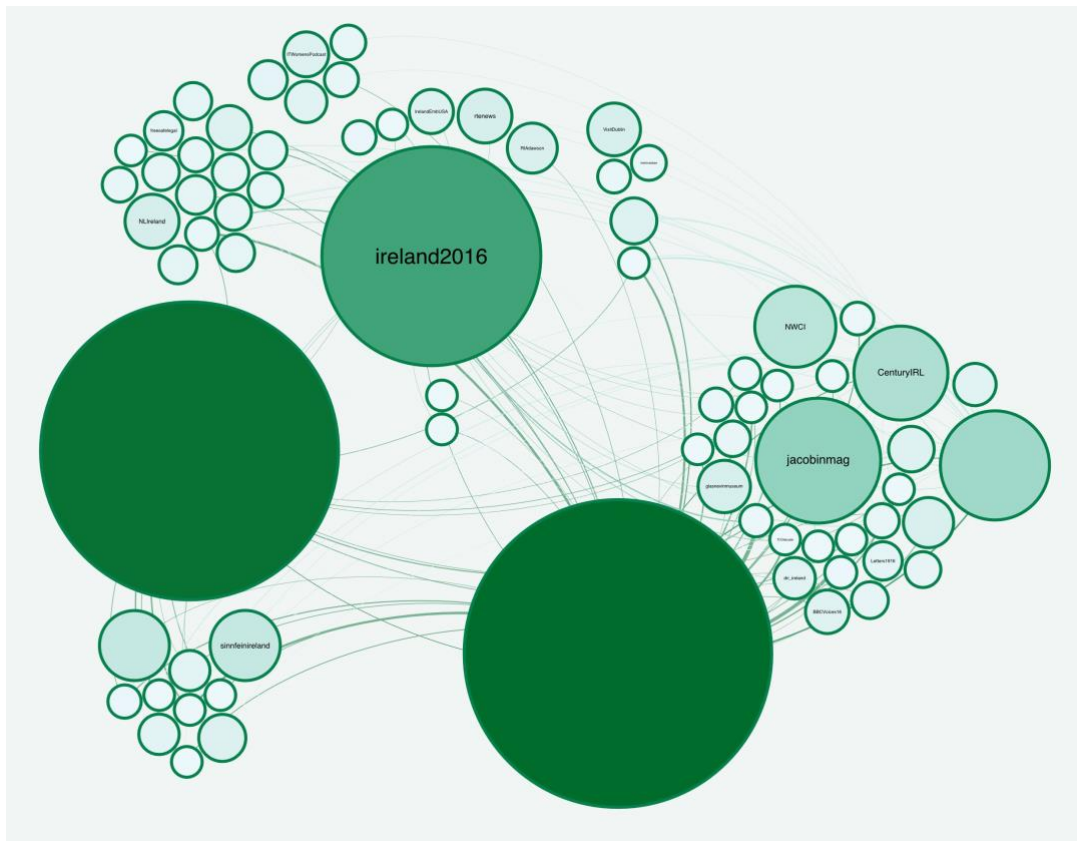


Figure 7-6 Network visualisation of most retweeted accounts in 'Women of 1916' dataset, set to In-Degree of >5 and Edge weight >2.0, Circlepack Layout and arranged by modularity. Gephi.

Tweets from two independent accounts (the two largest circles in fig. 7-6), one dedicated to tweeting about the women of 1916, the other to the Easter Rising, were also in the top five most retweeted accounts. The account dedicated to tweeting about the women of 1916, run by a feminist historian who was also prominent in the retweet network, was the most retweeted account overall in the 'Women of 1916' dataset; that of the Easter Rising was the most retweeted account in the Easter Rising 2016 dataset.¹¹ By way of comparison, in the Easter Rising dataset 4.5% of tweets (6,277) were retweeted 10 times or more, sent by 1,698 unique users, or 3.6% of total unique users (46,381), and 9,158 tweets were favourited more than 10 times. The most influential tweets and users account for a greater proportion of the total number of users in the 'Women of 1916' dataset than for 'Easter Rising 2016' dataset. While a far smaller number of unique users account for the basis of the women of 1916 issue space as a whole, the proportion of the most

¹¹ It is possible to calculate 'impressions' based on the Retweet count multiplied by the number of Followers; however, the API returns the number of followers at the point of retrieval rather than historical follower numbers. This would be an inaccurate way of calculating impressions, which are in any case not a reliable measure of actual engagement.

influential tweets and users is greater than it is for the Easter Rising dataset, where retweet influence is concentrated in a much smaller number of tweets and users.

Retweets are a blunt instrument for measuring impact, yet they are the *modus operandi* of influence on Twitter. They are the means of ‘information diffusion’ and, as with hashtags, ‘participating in a diffuse conversation’.¹² Furthermore, Twitter as a social network functions in such a way that allows for not quite linear yet highly asymmetric connections and ‘spheres of influence’;¹³ in-platform algorithmic updates to the Twitter Timeline also continually alter what and who we encounter, and when. These metrics are therefore useful in thinking about power relations and who is leading or dominating the narrative in such digitally mediated forms of commemoration. Further, it raises again the question of representativeness particularly when, in this issues space for example, the number of very influential users is considerably smaller than the number of users engaging in this historical and commemorative space overall. Historical Twitter (indeed Twitter more broadly) also has a strong academic and journalistic presence that must be taken into consideration. The feminist labour of putting women on the commemorative agenda has indeed been primarily credited to feminist historians and academics. As will be discussed below, journalistic information sources can also be extremely influential in shaping the discursive of commemorative moments, evident in the repetition and adaptation of language but also the number of retweets, and duplicate tweets of articles. These duplicates may be manual or direct link-shares through the information source that pre-determines the text of a Tweet and which are not captured when removing true Retweets through automation.

¹² Danah Boyd, Scott Golder, and Gilad Lotan, “Tweet, Tweet, Retweet: Conversational Aspects of Retweeting on Twitter,” *Proceedings of the Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, 2010.

¹³ Lori McCay-Peet and Anabel Quan-Haase, “What Is Social Media and What Questions Can Social Media Research Help Us Answer?,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2016), ch.2, 12, EPUB pagination; Gilad Lotan et al., “The Revolutions Were Tweeted: Information Flows during the 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions,” *International Journal of Communication* 5, no. 0 (2011): 1379.

7.1.2 Top 30 hashtags

Table 7-1 Top 30 hashtags for Women of 1916 dataset (L) and 'Easter Rising 2016 dataset (R). Sinclair and Rockwell, 'Corpus Terms', Voyant Tools (2020).

Term	Count
womenof1916	1070
easterrising	413
ireland2016	247
1916rising	245
internationalwomensday	233
iwd2016	188
wakingthefeminists	172
ireland	138
rebellion	110
women	106
cumannnamban	101
irish	90
irishhistory	87
birthofanation	79
onthisday	79
womenoftherising	78
dublin	69
markievicz	65
easter1916	55
history	54
iwd16ni	50
women1916	49
otd	48
feminism	46
1916live	44
womenin1916	44
repealthe8th	40
rising	37
rte1916	36

Term	Count
easterrising	22965
ireland2016	20815
1916rising	10885
ireland	4196
rte1916	4093
proclamationday	3296
easter1916	3116
dublin	2618
centenary	2187
savemoorestreet	2178
reflectingtherising	1839
easter	1814
dublin1916	1715
irish	1666
rebellion	1502
1916live	1330
1916centenary	1167
womenof1916	960
history	872
irishhistory	821
news	754
stpatricksday	676
letters1916	627
easterweekend	621
rising1916	621
rising	619
jointherising	540
inspiringireland	508
gpo	496

7.1.3 Word Frequencies

Word frequency tables were generated from original tweets for both datasets. While 'women' appears in the top 10 words in a word frequency list for the largest dataset, this is in part because 'the men and women' of 1916 are frequently referenced together, and not necessarily specific or exclusive to a 'women of 1916' issue space. In comparison, a list of top hashtags for each dataset was also generated using Voyant Tools and

#womenof1916 appears in the top 30 hashtags for each dataset. See Appendix J for extended word frequency tables and hashtags.

Table 7-2 Word frequency samples for 'Women of 1916' (L) and 'Easter Rising 2016' (R). Words >4 letters. NVivo.

Word	Count	Word	Count
women	4750	women	4750
1916	3480	1916	3480
rising	2389	rising	2389
markievicz	2050	markievicz	2050
easter	1808	easter	1808
irish	1441	irish	1441
countess	1273	countess	1273
cumann	945	cumann	945
constance	927	constance	927
mban	926	mban	926
men	730	years	704
years	704	woman	698
via	702	grace	688
woman	698	still	600
grace	688	fighting	552
100	674	gifford	538
still	600	ireland	493
fighting	552	margaret	449
gifford	538	today	419
ireland	493	skinnider	418
margaret	449	olivia	414
today	419	plunkett	404
skinnider	418	great	403
olivia	414	dublin	352
plunkett	404	o'leary	346
great	403	elizabeth	338
dublin	352	role	335
day	349	first	331
o'leary	346	joseph	330

7.2 NVivo coding and analysis: Women of 1916

The conventions of historical commemoration are represented in the two major themes that emerged: 'Historical Information' and 'Centenary Commentary,' and these account for a larger number of the Tweets. Rantasila *et al* call this the 'ritual discourse' of

commemoration, a term that will be used in this analysis.¹⁴ Together these make for a preponderance of official and organised content - event advertisement and news sharing for example - and significant repetition even when retweets have been systematically removed.¹⁵ The repetition of historical facts and statements (e.g. #onthistoday Constance Gore-Booth was born...) that characterise commemorative and historical Twitter tells us about the sheer scale of engagement with the commemorations, and with certain content or issues, in a bigger picture sense. These statements, and ‘invitations to remember’ are part of the ‘ritual discourse’ of commemoration online, and they are also constitutive of the tensions between remembering and forgetting that inform this discourse of commemoration.¹⁶

Absence, affect, and equality emerged as substantially recurrent and more abstract concepts that are both embedded in and go beyond ritual commemorative commentary and historical information in the women of 1916 issue space (see Appendix K for the NVivo codebook generated from this process). The conceptual labels ‘absence’ and ‘affect’ were assigned by the author after appraising and amalgamating codes, while ‘equality’ emerged *in vivo* and was retained. Voyant Tools was used to visualise word collocations (words that occur in association with each other across tweets) led by the qualitative coding.¹⁷ A file version with mentions removed but retaining hashtags was used in Voyant to explore the keywords and themes arrived at through qualitative coding. Gephi was again used to visualise hashtag co-occurrences in the dataset, using a clustering algorithm and the ‘Circlepack’ layout. Accounts or hashtags that are ‘members of a cluster have a large number of ties between them compared to actors outside the cluster’.¹⁸ Colour coding is applied to the different clusters. These visualisations are intended as interpretive aids, representations of the dataset as aggregations that support the qualitative descriptions (see Appendix L for extended visualisation).

¹⁴ Rantasila et al., “#fukushima Five Years On,” 939.

¹⁵ Link sharing direct from news sources, online petitions, and automated duplication of Tweets create repetitions, but often contain supplementary text or hashtags.

¹⁶ Rantasila et al., “#fukushima Five Years On,” 939.

¹⁷ Stéfan Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, “Voyant Tools,” 2020, <https://voyant-tools.org/>.

¹⁸ Rantasila et al., “#fukushima Five Years On,” 933.

The focus of this chapter will be on the five thematic concepts of interest to this thesis. A description of each theme follows, and below is a table summarising the thematic concepts that are addressed in this chapter:

Table 7-3 Themes emerging from in vivo coding

Historical Information	Centenary Commentary
factual	commemoration
quotations	celebration
live-tweeting	remembering
Stories	memory
GLAMs	events
role of women	recognition

Absence	Affect	Equality
airbrushing	pride	feminism
silencing	honour	gender
erasure	legacy	fighting
forgotten	bravery/ heroism	Freedom/ liberation
herstory	emotion	rights
recognition	inspiration	Proclamation

7.3 Themes

7.3.1 Historical Information

Twitter is above all a platform for information transmission and tweeting historical information was key to the remembrance process.¹⁹ This includes factual Tweets, quotations from historical figures, and ‘live-tweeting’ historical moments - using

¹⁹ Anabel Quan-Haase and Lori McCay-Peet, “What Is Social Media and What Questions Can Social Media Research Help Us Answer?,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods*, ed. Luke Sloan and Anabel Quan-Haase (London: SAGE Publications, 2017), ch.2, 4, EPUB pagination.

#onthistoday, #OTD, or phrases like ‘On this day in history...’ or ‘At this moment...’ which are commonly used by historical Twitter, as well as #twitterstorians and #womenshistory:

@glasnevinmuseum: Remembering Elizabeth O'Farrell who died #OnThisDay
1957 O'Farrell delivered the surrender during 1916 #EasterRising

Information about Cumann na mBan and named female rebels and revolutionaries (Kathleen Clarke, Elizabeth O'Farrell, Winifred Carney, Margaret Skinnider for example) constitutes much of these tweets, and there is an emphasis on telling their stories and commemorative cultural productions inspired by them. Suffrage, and the suffragist/-ette identity of many of these women, also feature. Some tweets have an eye to the 2018 centenary of partial women's suffrage in terms of how it would be adequately commemorated. Information about Libraries, Archives, Museums and Galleries (GLAMs) are also a key part in this, referring to events, exhibitions, collections or the letters, diaries, records and photographs of particular women. Closely related is information pertaining to academic research and advertising books, conferences, lectures, and historical documentaries.

The content of historical information in this issue space pivots on the *role of women* in the Easter Rising, highlighting their activism and contributions through factual information and commenting on the memory politics of the past. Many tweets characterise the contributions of women as ‘brave’, ‘vital’, ‘key’, ‘integral’, ‘critical’, ‘central’ and so on. A distinct tension emerges between the ‘forgotten’, ‘untold’, ‘ignored’, ‘unknown’ or ‘hidden’, and the remembering, recognition, retelling, celebration and reclaiming of women's roles and stories. This has the dual function of public history-making and critical commentary, making visible both the politics of the past and that which was marginalised.²⁰ The complexity of women's involvement in Easter Week 1916 is necessarily lost in the reductive nature of Tweets, and indeed we cannot expect such complexity of this medium. Of greater interest to this analysis is how people engaged with

²⁰ Maeve Casserly and Ciaran O'Neill, “Public History, Invisibility, and Women in the Republic of Ireland,” *The Public Historian* 39, no. 2 (May 16, 2017): 11.

and understood these historical roles and their consequences for the course of Irish history and gender politics up to the present day, and how they expressed these meanings through the medium of Twitter. Commemoration is a present-centred meaning-making process and as will become apparent in the remainder of this chapter, the stories of the women of 1916 became the narrative that for many spoke ‘more directly to latter-day concerns and are more relevant to latter-day identity formations’.²¹

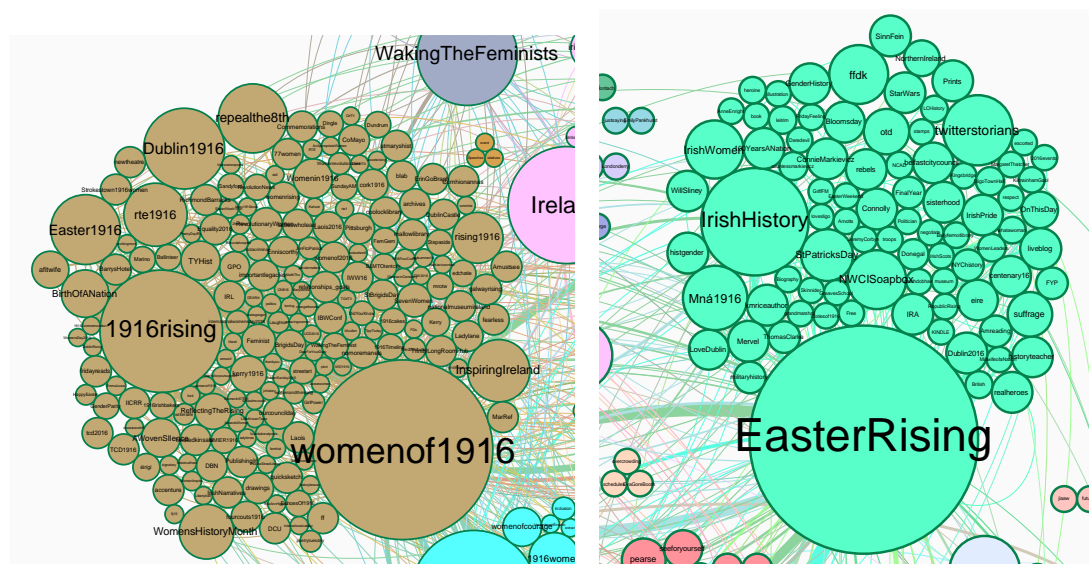


Figure 7-7 Hashtag co-occurrences. #womneof1916 (L) and #EasterRising (R) clusters. Gephi.

7.3.2 Centenary Commentary

It is important that we, the citizens, come together to celebrate and have pride in Ireland’s independence and to honour those who gave their lives, so that the dream of self-determination could become a reality.²²

‘Centenary commentary’ can be divided between the subset of themes ‘commemoration’, ‘celebration’, and ‘remembering’ and in each case invitations and obligations to remember, commemorate and celebrate are salient. Commemoration, broadest of these, includes

²¹ Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, “Cultural Memory and Its Dynamics,” in *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (New York: De Gruyter, 2009), 2.

²² Government of Ireland, “Centenary Programme,” 4.

information, announcements about, and invitations to, events such as for International Women's Day, commemorative ceremonies such as wreath-laying and plaque dedications, commemorative campaigns, craft, theatre and musical performances - all of which pay homage to, highlight and explore the role of women in the 1916 Rising. Pride, honour and concomitant expressions of emotion and overwhelmingly positive sentiment towards the commemorations and related cultural productions are also a feature of this sub-theme. Cultural productions such as theatre and musical performances as modes of remembering, celebrating, and commemorating individual women are similarly well received in this issue-space. One exception was the TV mini-series *Rebellion*, aired between February and March 2016, which dramatized the Rising largely from the point of view of three fictional women. This received a more ambivalent reception, with some tweets appreciative of the female perspective yet critical of the somewhat ironic removal of nurse Elizabeth O'Farrell, famously 'airbrushed' from a *Daily Sketch* photograph reporting on the insurrection in 1916, from the surrender scene.

Also included is commentary on the inclusiveness of the centenary programme, comparisons with the position of women in the 1966 fiftieth anniversary commemorations, and repeated declarations that 'finally' these historical women and their roles in the foundation of the State were being acknowledged. A sense that women had at long last become 'worthy' or deserving of recognition also emerges in relation to this unprecedented public and commemorative attention.

@ireland: The #womenof1916 is a central theme of #Ireland2016 commemorations.

The centenary as a 'celebration' is also indicated in the prevalence of the term in this issue space, as in the larger control dataset. In the main, these statements are about celebrating particular women, Cumann na mBan, the role of women in the Rising more generally, and their bravery and legacies. Many events and their themes are also characterised as themselves celebrating the role of women.

The invitation or obligation to remember, the importance of remembering, and declarations of remembering women and women's roles in the Rising are prevalent in this issue space, to remember all participants inclusively, and to do so with pride. Many tweets declare remembrance of the courage and sacrifices of women and men involved in the Rising, describing them variously as heroes, patriots, courageous, and others still refer to honouring their memory, and paying tribute or homage to their memory (more of which to follow). Similarly, the imperative not to forget women while in the act of remembering 1916 is conveyed, as is the assertion that women who were once 'forgotten' are now recalled, demonstrating again the mnemonic tension. Recognition is again expressed as something long awaited and justified. Further still, some tweets remind us to remember the issues that women face *today* even as we commemorate 1916 and the women involved, that indeed these contemporary problems are tied up with the need to engage in remembrance. Several tweets also ask us to recall not just their role in 1916 but equally their legacies of gender equality work. The interplay between memory and recognition are therefore constitutive of this gendered remembrance discourse.

@ireland2016: This year we remembered the bravery and idealism of the women of 1916 and honoured the women of today. [video]

7.3.3 Absence

'Absence' resonates particularly with recent developments in the historiography of the rising vis-à-vis the role of women, and in the 'democratisation' of the archives. Most explicitly, this sub-discourse of historical absence (or presencing absence) is tied to a politics of visibility in the present, which Banet-Weiser defines:

The politics of visibility usually describes the process of making visible a political category (such as gender or race) that is and has been historically marginalized in the media, law, policy, and so on. This process involves what is simultaneously a category (visibility) and a qualifier (politics) that can articulate a political identity. Representation, or visibility, takes on a political valence. Here, the goal is that the coupling of ‘visibility’ and ‘politics’ can be productive of something, such as social change, that exceeds the visibility.²³

Each of these sub-discourses is bound up with a politics of visibility in different ways - ‘equality’ the ‘social change’ that might be produced by this practice - but ‘absence’ speaks most explicitly to marginalisation. If absence is not a void but a contingent space of becoming entangled with presence, the presence of absence in remembrance of the women of 1916 through Twitter is demonstrable in the recurrence of terms like ‘forgotten,’ ‘airbrushed,’ ‘silencing,’ ‘erasure’ and ‘hidden’ that are countered by or co-exist with those like ‘herstory,’ ‘remember’ and ‘recognition’.²⁴ The repeated use of ‘airbrushed’ and ‘airbrushing’ demonstrates in particular the extent to which the Elizabeth O’Farrell incident continued to be a popular leitmotif for the marginalisation of women in the historiography and remembrance of the Rising. Many tweets comment on the relationship between Irish historiography and absence, and how women and their roles in 1916 were excluded from the historical narrative and collective (‘communal’) memory (‘written out of history / the history books’). Reflecting on the centenary, this ‘erasure’ of women is framed as a century of marginalisation and being actively ‘written out,’ with ‘exclusion’ ingrained in this history and memory-making process, and questioning *why* this happened. Others use variations of the term ‘éirebrushed’ (Ireland-brushed) to connote the particular Irishness of this silencing. These are also in reference to a theatre production of the same name that dramatized ‘the untold story of the revolutionary lesbian and gay heroes of 1916 that have been airbrushed from our history until now’ in May 2016 with reference to Elizabeth O’Farrell and Eva Gore-Booth as well as other

²³ Sarah Banet-Weiser, “Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny” (Duke University Press, November 23, 2018), 22.

²⁴ Bergsdóttir and Hafsteinsson, “The Fleshiness of Absence,” 106, 110-11.

male rebels whose sexuality has been reappraised.²⁵ Yet more commented on the removal of O'Farrell from a mural on Moore Street, site of the last stand of the insurgency, in 2016 as well as her replacement by a male actor in the surrender scene of the TV mini-series *Rebellion*, typifying the incidents as continuing the historical exclusion and effacement.

Absence is also repeatedly denoted by commentary on the 'forgotten' women, stories and roles of women in the Rising. While some express dismay at this history of 'forgetting', statements are more often couched in remembrance, that is to say declaring these forgotten women of 1916 and Cumann na mBan to have been remembered and commemorated in the present. As already outlined, there is an acceptance that at last the women of 1916 were 'no longer forgotten', a phrase taken up elsewhere in media representations of their rehabilitation.²⁶ Equally, the duty to remember / not to forget is communicated in many tweets, as are assertions about 'recapturing' and 'revealing' these 'untold,' 'hidden' and 'unofficial' narratives, re-inserting women into the history of 1916 and '#Herstory':

[quote retweet] Ireland owes a debt to the women of the 1916 Rising who were airbrushed out of history.²⁷

7.3.4 Affect

We will remember the events of 1916 in the full context of our history and we will honour the people whose courage and idealism inspired a nation.²⁸

²⁵ "The 13th International Dublin Gay Theatre Festival," accessed 3 June 2020.

http://www.gaytheatre.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Brochure_2016_Web.pdf

²⁶ Michael D. Higgins, "Speech at an Event to Commemorate the Role of Women in the 1916 Easter Rising," President of Ireland, March 8, 2016, <https://president.ie/en/media-library/speeches/speech-by-president-michael-d.-higgins-to-commemorate-the-role-of-women-in>; Margaret Ward, "No Longer Forgotten: Women Activists from the Decade of Centenaries," *The Irish Times*, December 1, 2016.

²⁷ This Tweet has been reworded.

²⁸ Government of Ireland, "Centenary Programme," 9.

Affect manifested in tweets variously expressing admiration, respect and emotion towards the women of 1916, and their commemoration, in this theatre of memory. As Smith reminds us ‘memory is an important constitutive element of identity formation, unlike professional historical narratives, it is personal and thus collective memory has a particular emotive power’.²⁹ Similarly, one of the conclusions drawn from Rozenzweig and Thelen’s work was that people remember significant historical national and political events in a way that is collective but primarily personal.³⁰ With this in mind, notions of pride, honour, legacy, heroism, bravery and inspiration are recurrent in this theme, the courage, heroism and patriotism of the rebels repeatedly emphasised. A large amount of these tweets make very similar general statements about remembering ‘the brave men and women’ of 1916, and an indebtedness to their ‘sacrifice’. However, many tweets foreground and celebrate ‘courageous’ women of 1916 alone describing them variously as ‘badass’, ‘strong’, ‘fearless’, ‘rebellious’, ‘imaginative’ and ‘heroic’. The female participants of the Rising as ‘heroines’, ‘heroes’, ‘sheroes’ also features strongly, and to a lesser extent ‘icon’ or ‘champion’, and often with additional qualifiers such as ‘unsung’, ‘Irish’, ‘national’, or ‘republican’. The veracity of their collective heroic quality is also asserted. Many Tweets also declare personal admiration and affection for particular women - although Markievicz and Skinnider are most prevalent - and several identifying them as their personal heroes or heroines.

Many tweets reference the widows of the leaders of 1916 and cultural productions inspired by them, particularly Grace Gifford. This reflects a greater focus on the women left behind and their experiences of the Rising and its aftermath in recent research, notably McCoolle’s *Easter Widows*.³¹ The romanticising of Grace Gifford’s gaol-cell marriage to Joseph Plunkett the night before his execution for his part in the rebellion continued to capture the nation’s imagination in 2016, drawing equally strong affective responses on Twitter. Gifford was the second most referenced nationalist activist in the dataset after Markievicz. More generalised expressions of emotion are also prevalent, referring to feelings of pride towards the commemorations and in the ‘sacrifice’ of the rebels, feelings

²⁹ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 60.

³⁰ Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) 123-127.

³¹ Sinéad McCoolle, *Easter Widows* (Dublin: Doubleday Ireland, 2015).

of patriotism, feeling ‘moved’, ‘emotional’ or ‘inspired’ in response to events, stories and commemorative media that reflected on the women of 1916. Inspiration denotes a particularly affective and motivated response, a number of tweets describing the ‘inspirational’ or ‘inspiring’ qualities of the women of 1916 and of their continuing legacy. A small number make reference to shared ‘foremothers’ in relation to legacy, indicating a direct sense of inheritance, continuity, and therefore collective, gender national identity. Many tweets that make reference to the inspirational also demonstrate a sense that the women who were ‘out in 1916’ were ahead of their time (‘forward-thinking’), several also using the hashtag #wakingthefeminists. Some events or productions were similarly described as ‘powerful’ or ‘empowering’. A video released by *Ireland 2016* remembering ‘the bravery and idealism’ of the women of 1916 and ‘honouring the women of today’, garnered a significant response, shared widely and described variously as ‘emotional’, ‘emotive’, and ‘moving’.³² As mentioned, the original Tweet by *Ireland 2016* sharing the video was the single-most retweeted in the dataset.

To a lesser extent some women are themselves described as ‘leaders’, primarily Constance Markievicz and Margaret Skinnider. Though they may have shown leadership in their activities, with the exception of Markievicz (appointed second in Command to Michael Mallin at the St Stephen’s Green garrison) it cannot be said that the women involved in the Rising were leaders in the sense of having been in commanding roles in its military hierarchy. Some were leaders within Cumann na mBan, many members of whom were active during Easter Week 1916 in essential but mostly non-combatant roles as messengers, couriers, commandeering food, first-aid, cooks, etc. As Ward recounts, the women attached to the more egalitarian Irish Citizen Army during the rebellion were indeed armed and saw some combat.³³ Margaret Skinnider (of Cumann na mBan) acted as sniper at the St Stephen’s Green garrison, a fact that prevails in tweets about her. More often in these tweets, however, women are described as the widows in reference to particular leaders, that is to say the Proclamation signatories and the other executed men, than as leaders themselves. Many were indeed leaders in their own cultural, political and organisational circles, as well as Inghinidhe na h’Éireann, Cumann na mBan, and na Fianna Éireann in Markievicz’ case, before and after the Rising. Such statements about

³² Ireland 2016, “Women of Ireland 1916|2016,” YouTube, accessed April 30, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jzuSoP7R_M.

³³ Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries*, 111.

female leadership as they relate to the Easter Week are somewhat anachronistic, indicative of a composite memory of their longer-ranging role in nationalist and feminist politics and militant organising, and as boundary-breaking in terms of the gender norms of the day. At the same time, Twitter is itself a highly reductive medium through which very short statements attempt to convey a much more complex meaning and reality. Clark-Parsons reminds of how hashtags may overly simplify and even undermine structural change; Tweets, as much as the hashtags they produce, ‘trade on short but compelling narratives’.³⁴

Feelings of honour and pride are especially prevalent, and closely related to the act of paying tribute or conferring honour. Such esteem is expressed towards the bravery and sacrifice of men and women of 1916 broadly speaking but more often, in this dataset, towards the specific involvement of women insurgents. Many tweets refer to cultural productions that pay homage to the various women of 1916 and Cumann mBan such as music, theatre, artwork and murals. One commemorative mural is prevalent in this discourse, ‘le cheile i ngruaig’ (together in the hair), that was temporarily erected on International Women’s Day by an independent artist on the gable of a building on Dublin’s George’s St, described both as ‘inspiring’ and as ‘inspired by’ revolutionaries Constance Markievicz, Kathleen Clarke and Grace Gifford (Figure 7-8). A sense of personal pride and privilege at being present for and taking part in commemorative events or productions dedicated to the women of 1916 is voiced, as it is in discovering ancestors involved in separatist activism. National pride and pride in one’s national identity is expressed by some, with specific references to Irishness and Ireland, including the use of hashtags like #proudtobeirish. Pride in the acts of honouring and remembering is expressed, as is the justness of the honouring of the women insurgents. The conferring of honour is also referenced in relation to commemorative ceremonies, the role of women, their memory and legacy, and occasionally the women of today. Links between the stories, histories and contributions of women and the legacy of 1916 are made, and the individual and collective legacies of the women of 1916 as a source of inspiration. Some tweets lean towards critique of the legacy of 1916, both for its female participants and for women in 2016. Legacy, after all, is another way of saying heritage.

³⁴ Clark-Parsons, “I SEE YOU, I BELIEVE YOU, I STAND WITH YOU,” 5.



Figure 7-8 . 'Lé Cheile i nGruaig' mural, Dame Street, Dublin. Image by author.

Pride, honour, and legacy in particular - keywords in the discourse of national commemoration - relate to notions of prestige, status, authority, and worthiness in the national heritage narrative. Expressions of pride and honour in national commemorations tend to be part of an AHD, which as Smith points out 'is almost inevitably about the "good" things, events and cultural expressions that lend credence to a sense of cultural and communal pride in identity'.³⁵ Many tweets express approval at women's bravery and contributions at last being recognised and 'honoured', while others offer their tributes, salutes and gratitude to those women. As mentioned above, this is partly explained by persistent expressions of pride in and the imperative to honour the 'men and women' of 1916 more broadly - statements reflecting a ritual discourse of official commemoration. However, assertions of honour and pride also appear in common with words such as unsung, forgotten, feminist, and recognition specifically in relation to the commemoration of the women of 1916. Again, this speaks to a politics of representation within an authorising national narrative but also a form of critical remembrance. Articulations of the unfinished business of gender equality append many statements of commemorative pride, for example, as do certain rights-based hashtags. Some tweets express ambivalence towards the centenary, and towards their own sense of national pride because of the continued gender inequity in Irish life, specifically the lack of abortion rights at the time. This issue, denoted by terms such as #repealthe8th, abortion and

³⁵ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 58.

#notacriminal, peppers each of the thematic groupings, more of which in the next section, e.g: 'Let women in 2016 be as defiant and courageous. #RepealThe8th'³⁶

Affect, Papacharissi outlines, is more than emotion, it is a 'way of sense-making' that 'contains anticipation, promise, hope, and potential'.³⁷ For many engaging in this issue space, the 'anticipation, promise, hope and potential' for gender 'equality' animated this critical commentary on the past.

7.3.5 Equality

The manifestation of an equality discourse is perhaps the most explicit example in this thematic analysis of what Rantasila *et al* describe as 'the interplay between a moment of commemoration and the political potential opened up by collective, emotionally loaded, attention'.³⁸ Always commemoration is enacted through the lens of present-day concerns, and such moments of national self-reflection as the 1916 centenary often create opportunities for highlighting contemporary injustices on a national scale, whether by accident or design. '1916' is, as Higgins says, a 'touch-stone and lightning rod in the Irish popular imagination'.³⁹ The centenary programme itself highlighted that the year-long commemorations 'should be a reflection of how we are faring as a Republic worthy of the name'.⁴⁰ In 2016, a critique of the progress of gender equality was undoubtedly one of the ways in which this worth was tested, extending out from the marginalisation of historical women in the revolutionary narrative. A discourse of women's liberation is prevalent in this Tweet dataset, with equality referenced directly but also indirectly through discourses of representation, rights, feminism and freedom.

While the position of women was already on the commemorative agenda, the conditions in which a national conversation about gender inequality and its relationship to the national heritage could take place were partly propelled by the fallout over the centenary programme published by the National Theatre, the Abbey, in October 2015. 'Waking the

³⁶ This Tweet has been reworded.

³⁷ Papacharissi, *Affective Publics*, 15.

³⁸ Rantasila et al., "#fukushima Five Years On," 930.

³⁹ Higgins, *Transforming 1916*, 5.

⁴⁰ Government of Ireland, "Centenary Programme," 6.

Nation' included only one female playwright and three female directors. By November, it had sparked a furore over gender imbalance in the sector that played out online under the hashtag #WakingTheFeminists and a smaller peak in Tweet activity is discernible around 5 November 2015 (Figure 7-3). Exemplary of 'hashtag feminism', which Clark-Parsons defines as 'a form of feminist activism that appropriates Twitter's metadata tags for organizing posts and public-by-default nature to draw visibility to a particular cause or experience,' it garnered international attention and support.⁴¹ Commitments to gender equality reform from several theatres followed, as did national Arts Council research into gender inequality in the sector, a year-long series of 'Waking the Feminists' (WTF hereafter) meetings and events, and a revised centenary programme from the Abbey.⁴² The official website and Twitter feed for the movement were included in the National Library of Ireland's 'Remembering 1916, Recording 2016' centenary web archive collection, discussed in chapter 5.⁴³ Reactions to the conversation about Waking the Nation that began on Twitter in the first instance express anger at a programme that all but 'ignores' women. Keywords and hashtags like 'exclusion,' 'bias,' 'airbrushing,' 'sexist,' #Gender and #GenderEquality are used in expressing this gendered marginalisation, an apparent unwillingness in the sector for change, and linking it with wider, structural gender-based inequity. The continuity of marginalisation and the struggle to be heard - indeed, a sense of déjà vu ('groundhog day') - is emphasised: WTF was seen as now part of this story of 'erasure' and of a masculinist heritage narrative. Equally, WTF and the organising around it was seen as progress, 'liberating,' revolutionary, and itself a persistent 'legacy' of the feminist women of 1916. The same demands for recognition of the contributions of women to Irish culture - of 'forgotten' women revolutionaries and their agency in 1916 - that characterise the remembrance discourse of the overall issue space are echoed in WTF tweets. The hashtag #WakingTheFeminists spread more widely to similarly motivated conversations, such as tweets concerning exhibitions, public lectures or talks about women and 1916, and individual women revolutionaries or 'heroines'. These statements tend to emphasise the feminism of these women more explicitly; similarly, the sexuality of women revolutionaries is more apparent in the WTF discourse.

⁴¹ Clark-Parsons, "I SEE YOU, I BELIEVE YOU, I STAND WITH YOU," 1.

⁴² 'How it started,' *Waking the Feminists*. Accessed 8 June 2020.
<http://www.wakingthefeminists.org/about-wtf/how-it-started/>

⁴³ National Library of Ireland, "Remembering 1916, Recording 2016."

recognised day to commemorate women globally. Most tweets comment on IWD events, ceremonies and talks and wish a happy International Women's Day. A state event was held at Kilmainham Hospital, during which the Richmond Barracks '77 women' community quilt project was launched, many tweets referring to this. Richmond Barracks was refurbished as one of the seven flagship capital projects for the 2016 centenary being the location where the 1916 leaders were interned and court-martialled, and which has since been refocused as the internment centre for 77 women involved in the rebellion - the 'hidden history' of the barracks.⁴⁵ The tone of tweets marking IWD are celebratory, focusing on the legacy of the women insurgents, underscoring their role as 'key', 'significant' and 'pivotal', and expressing inspiration, pride and solidarity in celebrating and paying tribute to them, their 'bravery and idealism' re-emphasised. IWD events and cultural productions are described variously as fitting, beautiful, and perfect homages. Acknowledgement, recognition and the call or imperative to commemorate and remember also characterise IWD tweets. Continuity between 1916 and 2016 is more explicit as with IWD there is a celebratory discourse directed towards women of the past as well as the women of today. Further to this is the acknowledgement of the ways in which the women of the past and their roles in history have impacted the Irish nation today, the status of women in it, and individual sense of identity. Such tweets assert the women of 1916 and Irish women in history as shapers of the nation and national identity: "Thanks to the courageous women of the rising that defined our nation and the person I am today."⁴⁶ Equally, there is recognition that there is still much work to do to achieve equality, many tweets pointing to the slow progress of gender representation in Irish politics, gender quotas having been recently introduced in electoral nominations in 2016 in time for the February general election. To a much greater extent, gender representation in politics was to become the backdrop to the 2018 centenary of partial female suffrage.⁴⁷

Figure 7-11 and Figure 7-12 show clusters of hashtags around the topic of IWD, and to a lesser extent Proclamation Day, with hashtags like #womenofcourage, #inclusion, #hero, #equality4all, #genderequity, #inspiringwomen, #theproclamation, #1916women to name a few. Figure 7-12 shows how keywords like 'honouring,' 'tribute,'

⁴⁵ Government of Ireland, "Centenary Programme," 24; McAuliffe et al., "Forgetting and Remembering - Uncovering Women's Histories at Richmond Barracks: A Public History Project," 19.

⁴⁶ This Tweet has been reworded.

⁴⁷ See: "Vótáil 100."

commemoration'.⁴⁹ A key remembrance ritual, tweets in this issue space evidence such readings at events and exhibitions concerning women and 1916. Many tweets somewhat anachronistically narrativize 1916 as fundamentally an equality struggle, supported by the egalitarian language of the Proclamation, and the involvement of women in the Rising and revolution; gender equality is repeatedly underlined as an equally motivating factor for the women involved in 1916. The Rising was, first and foremost, about Irish national sovereignty. Certainly, from the perspective of many women who took part in the Rising and militant separatism, equal citizenship was their ambition within the free Ireland they envisioned; the significance of the Proclamation's language, how it came to be there, and the extent to which the Proclamation became a reference point for nationalist women during the Rising and the years that followed has been reappraised.⁵⁰ Equally, that many women involved in separatist agitation, notably those attached to *Ignhinidhe na h'Éireann*, were staunchly feminist yet prioritized the national question over suffrage in the immediate term - believing the vote for Irish women should be granted by an Irish Parliament - has been documented.⁵¹ Nevertheless, Pašeta insists that these different and dissenting feminisms 'did not define women's political activism in the period,' demonstrating much more affiliation between suffragist and republican women activists than has previously been characterised.⁵² Ward has made the observation that, with regards to *Cumann na mBan* and the debates, shortly after the ratification of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, over extending the franchise to women in 1922: 'As nothing less than the full implementation of the ideals enshrined in the Proclamation could be accepted, recognition of the Republic was inextricably linked with recognition of women's right to equality'.⁵³ Tweets in this dataset indeed frame the Proclamation in firmly quixotic terms: 'radical' and radically inclusive, a touchstone for women's equality today. The sense of pride in this prescient document is tempered by an awareness of its broken 'promise', or its 'myth'. A sense of narrowly missing out on equality in 1916, a loss of rights in independent Ireland, and that women's full equality is long overdue is therefore prevalent in this issue space. What women did or did not fight for in 1916 is challenged, some questioning what the women of 1916 would think of the status of women in 2016 and

⁴⁹ Roisín Higgins, "'The Irish Republic Was Proclaimed by Poster': The Politics of Commemorating the Easter Rising," in *Remembering 1916: The Easter Rising, the Somme and the Politics of Memory in Ireland*, ed. Richard S. Grayson and Fearghal McGarry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 61.

⁵⁰ Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries*, 1983, 113; Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women*, 191-93.

⁵¹ Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries*, 1983, 83-85; Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women*, 102-4.

⁵² Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women*, 5, 109.

⁵³ Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries*, 178.

the nature of their citizenship, echoing the erotesis ‘was it for this?’ invoking the ghosts and ideals of the revolution against which to measure the failings of Irish society.⁵⁴

As previously outlined, much of this issue space pivots on the role of women in the 1916 Rising, and by extension the Irish Revolution. A number of tweets refer to this role specifically as it relates to ‘freedom’ from colonial rule, and the Irish Republic is referenced more frequently in such tweets. The part that women insurgents, and especially Cumann na mBan, played in the separatist effort is underlined, as is the ‘vision,’ ‘bravery’ and ‘sacrifice’ of both men and women insurgents. How those women involved in 1916 understood themselves as working on an equal footing with their male combatants is similarly asserted, and an equality of indebtedness for Irish independence is expressed in many tweets. Appreciation for and pride in this sacrifice - that is to say, lives given - are salient, with many offering their thanks, gratitude and respect to the men and women of 1916, or the women alone, for delivering ‘freedom’ or ‘liberation’. The women insurgents are described by many as ‘fighters,’ ‘symbols,’ and ‘icons’. Their agency in 1916 is impressed upon in these descriptions of women as ‘fighters’ or having ‘fought’ and of their bravery in doing so, echoing Pašeta’s analysis that those Irish Citizen Army and Cumann na mBan women who went out during Easter week 1916 ‘willingly joined the fight, a fight which they clearly believed was their own,’ and one that carried considerable risk.⁵⁵

A duality of striving for national self-determination and for women’s rights is notably recurrent. ‘Liberation,’ ‘emancipation,’ ‘freedom,’ ‘free,’ ‘inclusion’ and ‘equality,’ appear with reference to national sovereignty as well as women’s rights, and many tweets articulate the interdependency of the two liberation struggles for those women insurgents who ‘fought for Ireland and their gender’.⁵⁶ Quotations from speeches and writings of Markievicz and Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington pertaining to the relationship between national freedom and women’s freedom are detectible with reference to this standpoint. The fate of women and women’s rights, their treatment and level of freedom in Free State Ireland and later the Republic is referenced by some, juxtaposing the revolutionary stance

⁵⁴ Diarmaid Ferriter, *A Nation and Not a Rabble* (London: Profile Books, 2015), 388-89.

⁵⁵ Pašeta, *Irish Nationalist Women*, 170.

⁵⁶ This Tweet segment has been reworded.

of the Proclamation with a loss of rights, or only partial gaining of rights, in independent Ireland. Expectedly, the Proclamation is quoted, paraphrased and appended as it pertains to the ‘guarantee’ of equal rights and equal opportunities for all citizens. Many tweets additionally convey a sense that the equality envisioned in it, though admirable, was far from realised in 2016. The Proclamation remains a powerful leitmotif of the democratic nation-state in the Irish popular and political imagination, in spite of the efforts of historians to dispel such ideas about a “‘living” document’.⁵⁷ A sub-discourse around ‘women workers’ and workers’ rights is also evident, emphasising repeatedly the socialism and trade unionism of many nationalist women alongside their suffragism and feminism. Some emphasise the involvement of certain women in the Irish Citizen Army who took part in the Rising, others assert that workers’ rights were an equally motivating factor in the Rising, along with equality and freedom:

@CenturyIRL: Constance Markievicz - suffragist, socialist, revolutionary - was born #onthisday in 1868.

If notions of liberty were not yet transmissible as gender issues in the commemorative discourse of previous anniversaries, by 2016 this connection was being drawn by those engaged in critical remembrance through Twitter.⁵⁸ Freedom is understood overwhelmingly from a feminist standpoint in this issue space, the centenary as ‘a time to revisit Irish values’.⁵⁹ That 1916 was not alone a struggle for national independence but also the rights of women is consistent throughout, with freedom, equality and gender equality, by implication, interchangeable in many tweets. As mentioned, a *Jacobin* article written by Irish historian Mary McAuliffe on the women of 1916 was influential in this issue space, and its assertion that women were struggling for an ‘emancipation of their own’ is echoed emphatically in this discourse of freedom and equality, and the socialist politics of many women activists. Similarly pervasive is the sentiment of a *Guardian* newspaper article asking ‘Why, 100 years after the Easter Rising, are Irish women still

⁵⁷ Lisa Smyth, *Abortion and Nation: The Politics of Reproduction in Contemporary Ireland* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 74; For an account of the “cynicism” this engendered in 2016 see: Ferriter, “1916 in 2016: Personal Reflections of an Irish Historian,” 162-63.

⁵⁸ Higgins, *Transforming 1916*, 83.

⁵⁹ This Tweet statement has been reworded.

fighting?’⁶⁰ One of the most retweeted tweets in this dataset (134), this article was published two days before the Easter Sunday commemorations in 2016 by Irish journalist Olivia O’Leary, and calling for a woman’s right to choose. It was widely shared and quote-retweeted, often with the addition of hashtags like #repealthe8th, #equality or quotations from the article e.g., ‘women are still waiting #repeal’.⁶¹ Some emphasise the notion of freedom, others equality or gender equality, in sharing or quote-retweeting. The article, which also looks to the ‘promise of equality’ in the Proclamation, is a brief overview of gender inequity since Irish independence, however, the sentiment of the article - that the ‘fight for Irish freedom goes on’ - resonated in this issue space.⁶² Many tweets that precede as well as follow the appearance of this article, are at pains to highlight the ongoing ‘battle,’ ‘struggle’ or ‘fight,’ the long road or path to an as yet unrealised equality - or freedom - for women, a sentiment further legitimised in the widely cited speech by President Higgins at the IWD state ceremony. Frustration, sadness, and weariness with, but also determination in this persistent struggle is observable. This century of seeking equitable treatment is also understood as an ‘inheritance’, a legacy of inequality that is also bound to the legacy of the women revolutionaries and what they did or did not fight for in 1916, and what was or was not achieved. Continuing to engage in the mitigation of gender inequality is also proposed as an appropriate way to honour or remember their deeds and legacies: ‘pay tribute to them by continuing the fight #equalityforall’.⁶³

A number of tweets articulate reproductive rights as an equality issue in relation to the legacy of 1916 and its commemoration. The campaign to repeal the 8th amendment to the Irish constitution, that effectively banned termination of pregnancy except in very limited circumstances was gaining momentum in 2016. Several tweets referring to the centenary commemorations or the egalitarian language of the Proclamation also refer to abortion access, bodily autonomy or are appended by hashtags like #repealthe8th, #notacriminal or #prochoice. For many, the lack of reproductive rights in particular signifies this unrealised equality. The continuity and historical nature of this equality struggle, and

⁶⁰ O’Leary was also involved in hosting the state event to commemorate the women of 1916 on 8th March. Olivia O’Leary, “Why, 100 Years after the Easter Rising, Are Irish Women Still Fighting?,” *The Guardian*, March 25, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/mar/25/100-years-after-easter-rising-irish-women-still-fighting-gender-equality>.

⁶¹ This Tweet segment has been reworded.

⁶² O’Leary, “Why, 100 Years after the Easter Rising, Are Irish Women Still Fighting?”

⁶³ This Tweet segment has been reworded.

struggle for representation, ('visibility', 'voice', 'ignored'), highlighted in this issues space, were not anomalous to public discourse during the 2016 year. Conceptualisations of absence and equality were further reflected during the 2016 annual 'March for Choice' that was held in September following the centenary, when abortion rights activists adopted the theme 'Rise and Repeal' and the hashtag #RiseAndRepeal, referencing the 'promise of equality' of 1916 and the hitherto gender exclusionary culture of remembrance:

Until recently, our women revolutionaries - who fought and died alongside their male counterparts - were erased from history... This 'airbrushing' continues to this day... 100 years on, the equality promised in the proclamation hasn't been realised.⁶⁴

Similarly, in a zine produced through a collaboration between the ARC and artist Éilís Murphy with participants of the march, contributors drew reference to the Proclamation and the centenary commemorations. The zine, *Rise and Repeal*, included hand-drawn images, prose and participant commentary reflecting on the legacy of the women of 1916 and its link with feminism today. Three contributors took the Proclamation as inspiration; one polemicizes in the voice of Constance Markievicz; another mimics the original text:

A post-repeal Ireland guarantees equal access to abortion to all its citizens... and declares its resolve to pursue the health and wellbeing of the whole nation and all its parts cherishing all the people of the nation equally...⁶⁵

Elsewhere, contributors connected the contemporary struggle and the state commemorations, again conceptualising this in terms of recognition, honouring, and

⁶⁴ Abortion Rights Campaign, "Rise and Repeal March for Choice 2016."

⁶⁵ 'Pro-choice Proclamation to the People of Ireland,' in Éilís Murphy, "Rise and Repeal," 2016.

heroism. One contributor, by way of example, cited the ‘revolutionary women... largely forgotten by popular history’:

As part of the 1916 Rising centenary celebrations, several campaigns were launched with the aim of highlighting women’s role in the Rising, ensuring women were fairly represented in the commemorations. One hundred years on, we endeavour to recognise and honour the valiant Irish women of our past. But what about Irish women now?⁶⁶

Abortion rights campaigners framed the 2016 march around the Easter Rising centenary and the recognition of women’s roles in the separatist movement, mobilizing the heritage of women’s republican activism through ‘remix culture’ and a renewed historical consciousness.⁶⁷ This growing ‘Repeal’ campaign also mobilized the heritage of women’s suffrage during its centenary year, 2018, when the referendum on abortion access was held. The 1916 Rising, its commemoration and its purported values, is a well-worn usable past through which various social grievances and demands towards the State have often been expressed, as the ‘unfinished business’ of partition and the Irish language question were in 1966 and other years.⁶⁸ However anachronistic, such uses of the past are indicative of the diffuse ways in which the meaning and legacy of 1916 continues to become intertwined with novel present-day struggles, struggles that in turn may bear upon individual and collective articulations of remembrance.⁶⁹ Furthermore, as demonstrated by the Repeal campaigning, the connection between historical and present-day women’s liberation struggles was not taking place in a social media vacuum.

⁶⁶ Aoife Riach Kelly in *ibid.*

⁶⁷ Red Chidgey, “Feminist Protest Assemblages and Remix Culture,” in *The Routledge Companion To Media And Activism*, ed. Graham Meikle, 2018, 196.

⁶⁸ Mary E Daly, “Less a Commemoration of the Actual Achievements and More a Commemoration of the Hopes of the Men of 1916,” in *1916 in 1966: Commemorating the Easter Rising*, ed. Mary E Daly and Margaret O’Callaghan (Royal Irish Academy, 2014), 27.

⁶⁹ Red Chidgey, *Feminist Afterlives: Assemblage Memory in Activist Times*, Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 4.

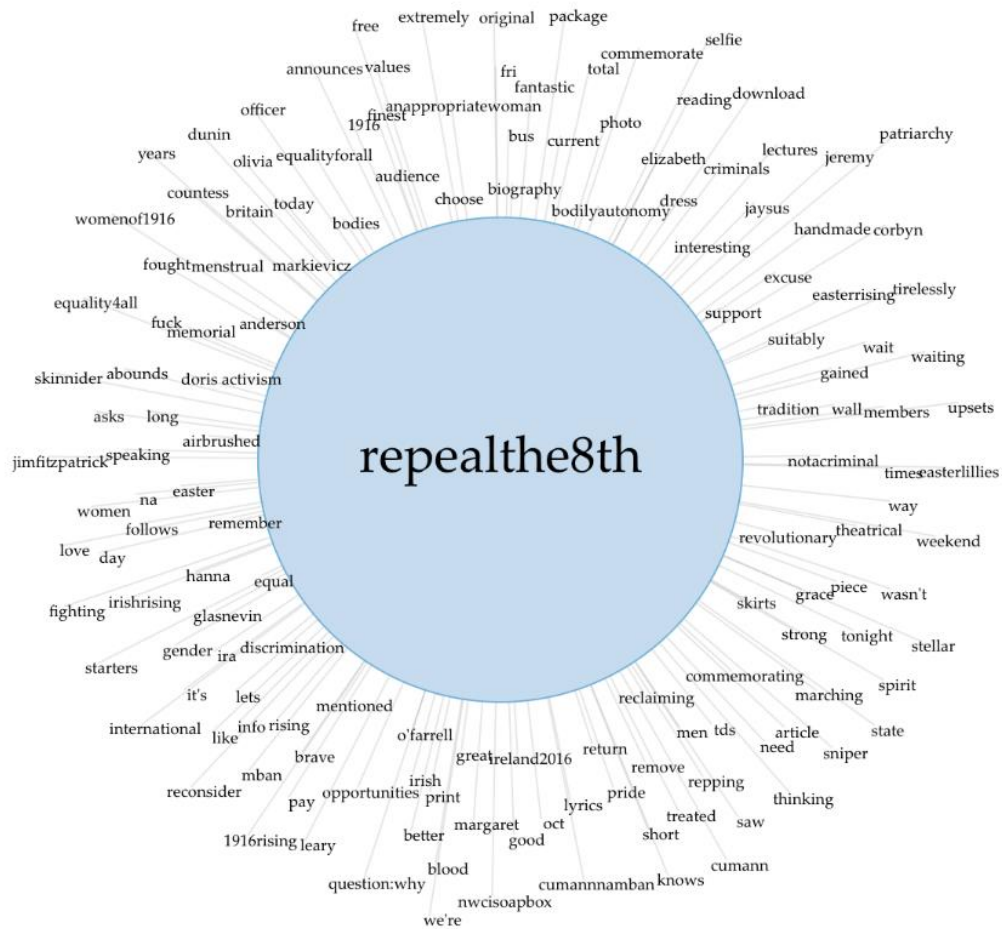


Figure 7-15 Word Links, '#repealthe8th,' Voyant Tools (2020).

7.4 Discussion

The dynamics of commemoration in this theatre of memory have been, for the purpose of analysis, artificially deconstructed. In reality they are intertwined, an imbrication that extends out from moments of commemoration. Historical information was a cornerstone of this discursive space, highlighting the role of women in the Easter Rising and signalling a decentring of the dominant masculine narrative. The more general centenary commentary reflects a ritual commemorative discourse and the tensions of remembrance: the obligation to commemorate, celebrate and remember, but also not to forget the women of 1916. This exercise in visibility, representation and critical commemoration via the medium of Twitter represents a wider process of actualizing the women of 1916 in 'official' or authorised commemoration, history, and communal memory. Acknowledgement, recognition and worthiness of remembrance, as well as notions of pride, honour and inspiration, are tied up with this mnemonic tension, and the presence of absence is further entangled with this affective push and pull of memory. Affective

responses to the acknowledgement and commemoration of the women of 1916 were overwhelmingly positive, though not uncritical, with connections between a chequered historical legacy and what that means for the present - and necessarily the future - being made. The marginalisation of women in the history and commemoration of the Easter Rising prior to 2016 is understood not in isolation but symptomatic of a wider imbalance that bears upon questions of equality, rights, and Irish cultural identity in the present. After all, ‘a commemoration tells us more about the year when it is staged than about the actual event being commemorated’.⁷⁰ The tensions and traces of critical remembrance conveyed in this issue space demonstrate the ways that Twitter was re-appropriated during the centenary commemorations for feminist ends.

The primacy of the historical record and historical fact were rightly insisted upon by the Decade of Centenaries Expert Advisory Group in the framing and execution of these commemorations. Equally important to understand, however, are the affective responses to those histories and commemorations, which are beyond the control of the historian, archivist or civil servant: ‘it is the legitimacy or facts of that remembrance or commemoration that is privileged and given critical attention, and not the emotional or subjective activity itself that is acknowledged, nor the possibility of meanings that this activity may have outside of the AHD’.⁷¹ National commemoration is after all in the realm of heritage, an affective and political meaning-making process through which people tell and retell the story of a shared identity and belonging. Meanings that exist ‘outside of the AHD’ may also alter the AHD, using the same tools to, as Wilson has theorized, critique and transform it from the margins.⁷² In many ways much of the language used in this space bears the hallmarks of a long tradition of remembrance rooted in the same cult of sacrifice and heroism that informed the 1916 generation and was in turn invoked in their memory. This was brought into sharp relief by the revisionist debates of the Troubles era, at the same time as women’s and gender history was emerging. Undoubtedly a discourse of the ‘patriot dead’ is observable, though users were far more likely to use terms like hero, heroine or leader than ‘patriot’, less distinct connotations of uncritical devotion to

⁷⁰ Mary E Daly and Margaret O’Callaghan, “Introduction: Irish Modernity and ‘the Patriot Dead’ in 1966,” in *1916 in 1966: Commemorating the Easter Rising*, ed. Mary E Daly and Margaret O’Callaghan (Royal Irish Academy, 2014), 7.

⁷¹ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 58.

⁷² Wilson, “The Tyranny of the Normal and the Importance of Being Liminal,” 7.

country.⁷³ It is clear that valour in many of these Twitter users' considerations went beyond a purely nationalistic binary to their feminist work and legacies, and in many cases their socialism and trade unionism. No more than the men, the politics and activities of these women 'were not confined to the pursuit of nationalist aspirations,' a nuance embraced by many engaged in this theatre of memory.⁷⁴ While these commemorations have sought to move away from monolithic narratives of the past, those doing the remembering were also moving towards new frameworks of valorisation, reappropriating the language of heroism to recentre the place of women that was not previously a part of this discourse.

To declare someone a hero or worthy of honour is an affective investment and one that, when carried out collectively, can help to raise certain individuals or groups to iconographic status. In this context, its use should therefore first be understood as part of the foregrounding and status-raising of the role of women in the Irish revolution - to honour is, after all, a value-laden act of recognition. This has been underpinned by a politics of visibility, for which digital media and social media are paramount.⁷⁵ In other words, this type of valorising language is not dissociable from contemporary 'popular' feminisms and female empowerment culture around foregrounding women and women's agency, a practice that has become hyper visual in both digital and offline contexts in the past decade during which feminism, Banet-Weiser documents, has become mainstream.⁷⁶ Feminism in this period has increasingly been defined by the mobilisation of digitality in feminist campaigning and feminist critique.⁷⁷ As with #WakingTheFeminists, the predominant #Womenof1916 along with its many variations (e.g. #Womenand1916, #Women1916, #1916women) is a marker of a heritage-based 'hashtag feminism' concerned with making visible and identifying with women of the past as part of an authorising commemorative agenda. Ritual commemorative discourse is also influential in symbolically constructing this female iconography. The language of revolutionary spirit, courage and ideals echoes outputs from the official commemorations body, political speeches and government centenary publications, which, though they also draw on well-

⁷³ Witoszek, "A Funerary Culture?" 207.

⁷⁴ McCoolle, *No Ordinary Women*, 25.

⁷⁵ Banet-Weiser, "Empowered," 19.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 72, 6-27.

⁷⁷ Hester Baer, "Redoing Feminism: Digital Activism, Body Politics, and Neoliberalism," *Feminist Media Studies* 16, no. 1 (2016): 18.

worn invocations, cannot be entirely dismissed as vacuous policy statements but which play a part in establishing the *lingua franca* of national commemorations. At the confluence of these two discourses, language, as Smith posits, is important to the heritage process and specifically as it pertains to individual or communal practices of remembrance: ‘the discourse we use to understand them and give them meaning - also shape and form our memories and frame the process of remembering and forgetting’.⁷⁸

7.5 The anti-feminist backlash?

What is not readily apparent in this Tweet data is evidence of the kind of anti-feminist or misogynistic discourse that is often expected in such research, that can be expected of social media spaces and forums, and for which Twitter is a ready petri dish. Banet-Weiser has considered this intractable duality of ‘popular feminism’ and what she calls ‘popular misogyny,’ a ‘defence against feminism and its putative gains,’ as they play out in multiple media settings including social media and comment-enabled platforms.⁷⁹ The answer in respect of this particular analysis has to do firstly with the data source and the limitations of the API-based retrieval methods. At the time of collecting the Tweet data, there was no capacity to capture a cascade of full-text Tweet replies, which is where we would expect to find this type of discourse, when using the Premium API service - Twitter is a reactionary medium in more sense than one. The number of times a Tweet has been replied to, the identification number of the Tweet to which it replies (and this may not be the original Tweet in the conversation, rather the previous Tweet in a series of replies), and whether or not the Tweet is itself is a reply (`in_reply_to_status`) are retrievable but not a list of the full-text replies (or Tweet IDs) associated with each Tweet that matched with the original query. It has been a problem faced by hate speech researchers, for example, when attempting to scale-up research methodologies and data collection from phenomena observed in-platform. Since the time of data collection, an update to the Twitter API and the addition of new endpoint features (August 2020) includes a `conversation_id` parameter to better track these threads.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 58-59.

⁷⁹ Banet-Weiser, “Empowered,” 2-5.

⁸⁰ “Conversation ID,” Twitter Developers, accessed August 13, 2020, <https://developer.twitter.com/en/docs/twitter-api/conversation-id>.

Another partial explanation is that those expressing opposition to this feminist remembrance politics simply did not engage in the hashtags or use keywords or phrases that matched with the query used to collect this dataset in the first place. Whether a deliberate eschewing of hashtags - which are after all designed to connect and make visible - or otherwise identifying language is at play, it is only possible to speculate here. In this sense, the dataset and this analysis are based in the 'hashtag women of 1916' narrative on Twitter primarily from the perspective of its participants, itself a feminist practice.⁸¹ As outlined in chapter 3, no query can capture every relevant Tweet, nor return a fully representative dataset. Recognising these limitations presents a possible future direction for the research and findings presented in this chapter that will require careful methodological evaluation and development.

Further to this, not all sentiments expressed in this issue space were positive with regard to the commemorations more generally. Several tweets protesting the inclusion of British soldiers in the commemorations for example, notably the Glasnevin Museum memorial wall that was erected in 2016 naming all those killed - combatants, police, Crown forces, and civilians - during the Rising. This grievance also coalesced around a petition that circulated online to remove the wall. Feelings of shame, insult and disrespect for the 1916 rebels are conveyed and occasionally commentary on state 'revisionism'. Such statements are directed at the commemorations more broadly, rather than speaking to a specific gender politics, and are more prevalent in the larger 'Easter Rising 2016' dataset. Since being erected, this memorial wall has been protested both during its unveiling and a separate commemorative ceremony with the Canadian Ambassador to Ireland, as well as vandalised twice over its inclusion of British soldiers.⁸² Analysis of these distinct memory politics is outside the scope of this thesis but similarly worth exploring in future.

⁸¹ Clark-Parsons, "I SEE YOU, I BELIEVE YOU, I STAND WITH YOU," 16.

⁸² Sorcha Pollak and Conor Lally, "Scuffles near Glasnevin Cemetery after Protesters Try to Burn Union Jack," *The Irish Times*, April 3, 2016; Henry McDonald, "Canada's Ambassador to Ireland Subdues Protester at Dublin Easter Rising Service," *The Guardian*, May 26, 2016; Ronan McGreevy, "Controversial Glasnevin Memorial Wall Vandalised Again," *The Irish Times*, February 6, 2020.

7.6 Conclusion

Female revolutionaries were written out of the national historical narrative in postcolonial Ireland, forming a repressed memory for almost seventy years, until feminist scholars resurrected their stories.⁸³

This chapter has shown that Twitter has become one of the many public media through which inchoate collective memories take hold or are consolidated in a society - in this instance that of the women revolutionaries of 1916 as integral to the national origin story but also as historically complex in their own right.⁸⁴ It was a space in which the female narrative of 1916 and the feminist legacy of its protagonists were affirmed in the national heritage and Irish cultural identity, part of a larger commemorative assemblage in which the ideal of the nation was performed. Twitter as a medium is constituted by user-generated data, one in which remembrance and commemoration is performed with immediacy. Hoskins proposes that ‘The very use of these systems [social media] contributes to a new memory...in that communications in themselves dynamically add to, alter, and erase, a kind of living archival memory’.⁸⁵ Those remembering and commemorating through Twitter were, after all, producers and shapers of that collective memory - and of the commemorative assemblage - as much as they were its consumers.⁸⁶ It follows that Twitter is a public arena in which collective memory may be negotiated, transmitted and made salient; as with commemorative digital archives, it joins ‘the various strands of commemorative tradition which have formed our consciousness of the past’.⁸⁷

Many of those engaged in such critical remembrance were also, directly or indirectly, performing a feminist identity. More still expounded the female revolutionary narrative

⁸³ Crozier-De Rosa and Mackie, *Remembering Women’s Activism*, 83.

⁸⁴ Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, “Cultural Memory and Its Dynamics,” in *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (New York: De Gruyter, 2009), 2-3.

⁸⁵ Andrew Hoskins, “Digital Network Memory,” in *Cultural Memory and Its Dynamics*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (New York: De Gruyter, 2009), 92.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 91-92.

⁸⁷ Erll and Ann Rigney, “Introduction: Cultural Memory and Its Dynamics,” 2–3, 9; McBride, “Memory and National Identity in Modern Ireland,” 42.

as inherent to the origins of the nation, and therefore Irish cultural identity, through the prism of commemoration. While this body of tweets cannot be described as representative of the public, a snapshot of the 2016 commemorations online, it is nonetheless indicative of a process that has not occurred in isolation as previous chapters have demonstrated. While the occasion of the centenary year may have created the conditions in which tensions around inclusion/exclusion might boil over in different cultural spaces, this moment came on the back of decades of feminist historical scholarship and the opening up of archives, both of which accelerated in the lead up to and during the Decade of Centenaries. Rather, this small collection of tweets is a litmus test for the ‘mentalitiés’ of those responding to these commemorations from a critical gender or feminist perspective. It is clear that this digital issue space is also evidentiary of a wider public shift in the interpretation of the past, and one that offers insights into the heritage process and its implications for collective memory and identity from a gender heritage perspective.

8 Conclusion

I proposed in chapter 1 that two notable departures have been, in this Decade of Centenaries, the ‘democratisation’ of some archives and the position of women in the public historical narrative that differed significantly from previous anniversaries. Such moments of rupture and paradigm shift, to paraphrase Hall, are moments of high creativity, and it is the heterogeneity of discourse and critique ‘which make the archive live’: ‘An archive may be largely about “the past” but it is always “re-read” in the light of the present and the future’.¹ This thesis has demonstrated this relationship between commemoration and digital archives, and how such digitisations have been mediated and narrativized in this context of a national period of commemoration in the Republic of Ireland. Sandra Collins, Director of the National Library and former Director of the Digital Repository of Ireland, has described the national cultural institutions as trusted ‘custodians of Irish identity’ and this thesis began with the question of how these institutions have responded to their digital commemorative mandate and addressed opportunities for pluralising the past and re-shaping collective memory from a gender heritage perspective.² Complementing and extending out this understanding of a renewed gender historical consciousness, I explored in detail the nature of feminist remembrance culture on Twitter at a particular moment in time, and Twitter as a social media theatre of memory and a digital record of remembrance.

A major theoretical contribution to critical heritage studies and archives, I also defined ‘digital commemorative archives’ in the Irish context as heritage archives that are circumscribed by nationally significant commemorations. They are digitisations *for* commemoration and *for* a certain heritage. As has been shown, the digitisation of some collections was conceived of for commemoration as far back as 2006, others being prepared early in this Decade of Centenaries. The launch of some warranted the presence of high political office, some on multiple occasions during their release history, in all cases being highly mediatised above and beyond a standard digitisation. For some institutions, digitisation - and particularly of commemorative collections - has factored in their re-

¹ Hall, “Constituting an Archive,” 92.

² Sandra Collins and Natalie Harrower, “About the Pilot Project,” Inspiring Ireland, accessed October 24, 2018, <http://inspiring-ireland.ie/about-pilot-project>.

assertion of institutional identity and value, altering and augmenting the status, identity and physical infrastructure of others. In the case of the Military Archives, identified as a flagship capital redevelopment for 2016, this was *part of* the cultural and archival response to the centenary of 1916. These digitisations are also, generally, for a broader range of users than professional historians or academic researchers alone. Awakened, perhaps, to an historically conscious Irish public, this constellation of digitisations and accompanying rhetoric in a period of national commemoration characterise the kind of knowledge production and identity work they are collectively intended to give rise to: one that is at once historical, personal and familial, collective and national. Together they are shapers of culture in diffuse ways, an ‘archival jigsaw’ and commemorative assemblage that mediates memory and identity in Irish remembrance culture. As chapters 4-6 have demonstrated, such digitisations have greater cultural legitimacy with powerful symbolic potential for (re)framing historical consciousness and reaffirming or challenging nationally-held identities at such resonant moments as the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising, in addition to their evidentiary and social functions. These collections, individually and collectively, have been understood and subsequently framed as digital monuments to the centenary decade, as digital legacies of national remembrance, and they continue to be referenced in national funding strategizing and the continuing phases of the official Decade of Centenaries that seek to expand on this digital commemorative / archival assemblage established in the first half of the decade. If ‘the use of records fundamentally changes them, becoming part of their provenance’ then digitisation for commemoration is part of the story of these collections, fundamentally altering their afterlife as digital heritage collections, indeed another ‘metamorphosis’ in the process of ‘heritagisation’ that was elaborated in the literature review.³

In order to address the first research question proposed in chapter 1 as to how these memory institutions responded to their digital commemorative mandate, and in what ways these digitisations have articulated different narratives and identities, chapters 4-6 analysed three major state-institutional digitisations, deconstructing and situating them in order to decode and re-illuminate them as commemorative cultural productions.⁴ In this way, I have also addressed the second research question as to the ways in which these

³ Caswell, “‘The Archive’ Is Not an Archives,” 12.

⁴ Thylstrup, *The Politics of Mass Digitisation*, 7.

digitisations operate to include, exclude, and support debates about collective memory and identity. Four centenary collections were examined in chapter 4 as part of the National Archives 'Decade of Centenaries' series. It is clear that the NAI, in responding to its digital mandate, attempted to include a range of representations of the same historical moment or period, and in doing so being inclusive of a range of historical perspectives and identities, even as it re-asserted the primary actors of the Easter Rising, and the primacy of 1916 itself, underlined by the curation, aesthetic and narrative framing of this series of collections. What was not included as part of this series of collections, billed as representing the breadth of the commemorative decade, was equally important to question. These digital curation choices, however welcome in the broader drive to digitise and pluralise the past, may re-marginalise other histories and identities that shaped modern Ireland. Particularly the non-inclusion of already or recently digitised records of the suffrage movement typifies this asymmetry.

Chapter 5 addressed the National Library of Ireland's 1916 Digital Collections that focused on the papers of the Proclamation signatories, bookended by a themed web archive collection to capture the digital presence of the 2016 centenary year. The findings of this case study, as with the National Archives, were less about a failure to digitise records of women for commemoration. Rather this chapter has shown how women factored in the cultural logic of commemorative digitisation in the first place, and the messages that this sends when they are ultimately presented to the world as bespoke, authoritative digital heritage representations that continue to privilege an elite male aura in symbolizing the national heritage. Women are present yet muted in the presentation, communication and aestheticizing of this commemorative digital interface. Though foregrounded elsewhere, they are not paramount to the framing of this digital monument, leading to questions of the effectivity of one medium over another. At the same time, the web archive collection offers a balance or alternative to traditional notions of the archival record embodied in the Signatories collections, a contemporaneous archive both of and for commemoration.

Chapter 6 tracked the recent history of the Military Archives, centring on the Military Service Pensions Collection, and the related Bureau of Military History. The MSPC in particular has become a collection at the vanguard of the centennial digitisations,

repeatedly referenced in academic journal articles and historical texts for its historical significance *as* a collection and *as* a digitisation. And if digital archives are also shaped by use, this collection has proved ‘transformative’ for challenging the intellectual tradition of a masculinist revolutionary historiography, heightened and reinforced by a prolonged and saturated national commemorative backdrop to which it has been aligned from its inception. It has proved significant for family history and identity research and, importantly, feminist interventions in the MSPC have been foregrounded in this digital archive and the media that extend out from it, making clear the uses to which it has been put and reasserting its value as a source for researching women. It is also much easier to track such interventions in a collection that is so novel and historically significant in its own right. Resources are necessarily stretched much further in larger institutions than the Military Archives, precluding archival possibilities in certain respects, but it is clear that immense financial investment was afforded this institution for the centenary of 1916. Further to this, the genealogical logic of this collection - and of some of the NAI digitisations examined - cannot be entirely separated from its investment and enduring value, when we consider that the diaspora and the economic benefits of digitisation have since been asserted in long-term national funding strategies that take the 2016 centenary year as a point of reference.⁵ Furthermore, while the Military Archives was a national cultural institution before this period of national remembrance, as has been demonstrated, digitisation in times of commemoration has also served to render to it the kind of cultural gravitas we associate with National Archives and National Libraries that tend to be deeply historically established and are much larger and more diverse in their collections and remit. If the MSPC and BMH have been ‘transformative’ in pluralising the past (and pluralising access to the past) and especially from a gender heritage perspective, their digitisation may also dominate public (or ‘non-expert’) perceptions of archival availability. Nonetheless, its role in public awareness of Irish archives and access to archives may prove an equally enduring legacy.

What has become clear from these case studies is that the curation and narrativization of such digitisations sends a message about the nature and value of their contents and certain hierarchies of remembrance even as they pluralise and complicate the past. The

⁵ Government of Ireland, “Project Ireland 2040: Investing in Our Culture, Language & Heritage 2018-2017,” 36.

‘democratisation’ of archives is about the digital and aesthetic frameworks and routes of access - their conditions of use - that impact on what we encounter in the archives as much as the baseline of being digitised at all. Each of these institutions responded to their digital mandate by producing bespoke heritage collections or microsites, in some cases unparalleled in their wider digital portfolios. Some collections were already available, popular or high-use prior to their digitisation, others were novel in both their availability and digital accessibility. Each operates to include and exclude on different levels, and in more complex ways than a simple absence-presence binary. All, but particularly the NAI and NLI digitisations, are the product of a series of choices about what and whose records to digitise, curate, and invest with cultural legitimacy. We do not live in a post-feminist world necessitating us to think about the position of women (and other marginalised identities) in the national record and national narrative-of-self not solely in terms of presence alone. In some instances, absence, or the appearance of it, is revealed to be the product of curatorial or aesthetic framing and a discourse that mutes or neutralises the presence of women in the archives. This present absence is also revealed in the ‘cyberinfrastructure’ of digitising institutions where hyperlink networks have not been maximised to include certain gender histories in commemorative cultural productions. The asymmetrical quality of such digitisations (and by proxy the resources made available for them) also reaffirms the value of certain records over others in such heritage representations. Furthermore, what is included and what is not, what is centred and what is not, even where the records of women are digitised, sends a message about the hierarchy of remembrance and whose heritage is valued most in this digital terrain.

It has further become clear that independent projects like *Inspiring Ireland* were conduits for women’s records to be foregrounded in ways they were not afforded within some of these commemorative digitisations. Others, such as *Century Ireland*, provide a space for digital surrogates that otherwise would not have existed within the cyberinfrastructure of their digitising institutions. Thus, for some digitisers, collaborations and partnerships *make digitisations possible* where they otherwise suffer from inadequate resourcing, or as part of international co-operation; for others these activities are more so part of the dissemination and afterlife of their commemorative digital archives, which attempt to

‘animate the archive to get beyond a politics of minimal representation’.⁶ And while there is nothing novel about employing social media to disseminate heritage, its use has also proved variable in these case studies. While social media was an established outreach practice for the NLI in 2016, the centenary commemorations were an impetus to develop a presence on social media and in turn promote access to the NAI collections. Likewise, though previously established, the Military Archives created a social media presence dedicated to the MSPC alongside its regular account subsequent to the centenary year. In this way, the centenary proved the utility of social media, particularly Twitter, as a means of outreach and dissemination by digitisers who took up the practice or expanded their activity during or after this time. Digital access, much more than availability alone, has supported all of these processes outlined. Digital access is, for most, the path of least resistance and what is freely available online will always be accessed more and by a wider range of people. The disparity between reported footfall and online access at the National Archives and National Library, detailed in chapters 4 and 5, attests to this. A language around ‘democratising access’ to Irish archival heritage and ‘democratizing historical research’ by digital means is something of a legacy of the 2016 commemorations, which, alongside social media engagement, has been recognised by each institution in this study as increasingly important in their remit of activities.⁷

Reflecting on the decade of remembrance, McGarry suggests that more than ‘simply re-enacting the past, the most successful forms of commemoration allow for its energies to illuminate the possibility of alternative futures.’⁸ In this vein, the final two research questions were posed as to the critical and affective responses to the centenary online from a gender heritage perspective, and in what ways heritage was mobilised in online discourses of gender politics and national identity. As this thesis has shown, the heritage of 1916 was mobilised not alone in the digitisation of archives but in social media discourses around these politics of gender and identity with the same notions of absence, presence, visibility, and questions of ‘whose heritage?’ carrying through in this space in explicit ways and from the perspective of an engaged public. In this way, Twitter was a

⁶ Jaqueline Wernimont and Elizabeth Losh, “Problems with White Feminism: Intersectionality and Digital Humanities,” in *Doing Digital Humanities: Practice, Training, Research*, ed. Constance Crompton, Richard J Lane, and Ray Siemens, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2016), 43.

⁷ McGarry, *The Rising in Ireland: Easter 1916*, xiv.

⁸ *Ibid.*, xv.

site of critical feminist debate and remembrance, underpinned by a politics of visibility and a discourse of women's liberation in the present, and this was in no small way driven by feminist academics active on the platform. From this analysis of public tweets, chapter 7 has made clear that 1916 was a site of dissonance from a feminist standpoint, corroborating further the gender turn in historiography and the digital archival turn in the commemorations, demonstrating the nature of critical and affective responses to the centenary from a gender heritage perspective. Actualising the women of 1916 in this networked commemorative space was evidenced through persistent discourses of absence, affect and equality alongside a wider politics of memory, feminist commemoration and making historical women visible.

As outlined in the methodological reflections, there are limits to what we can say about the effectivity of particular social media, salient to any subjectively experienced heritage engagement or representation. Yet, as chapter 7 has shown, remembrance and a particular 'relationship with the past' was further borne out in this social media space at a moment of heightened national commemoration, and these were simultaneously challenging power and authorising heritage: 'It is in the ephemerality of the virtual that affective claims to the political and power may be imagined, assembled, or suggested'.⁹ In 2016, the meaning of 1916 was not alone the legacy of civil war or partition, nor political rivalry; for many, it was the continued pursuit of gender equality, a pursuit contiguous with visibility, voice, and (re)negotiation of the national heritage and collective remembrance. Further, these processes were not happening in isolation, in a social media echo-chamber. These Tweets reflected on real world events and controversies as much as they remembered and offered personal reflections on the past:

Individuals, after all, experience, interpret, revisit, reinterpret - in short, they remember and forget. Nations, cultures, and institutions can't... Individuals can discover, recognize, ignore, cross-examine, fear, dream, hope.¹⁰

⁹ Zizi Papacharissi, *Affective Publics: Sentiment, Technology, and Politics*, *Oxford Studies in Digital Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 17.

¹⁰ Roy Rosenzweig, and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) 199.

The gendered absences of the past and in collective memory were held up and mirrored with the present, reflecting a sense of continuity as much as change in this theatre of memory. Remembering 1916 was for many about recognising and challenging its highly gendered legacy and commemoration and, as much as recovering women's stories, recapturing something like a feminist heritage understood to have been lost, hidden, untold, or 'unsung' and using it to make sense of and challenge the present, and to imagine different 'heritage futures'.¹¹

This analysis of Twitter data and the methodological development underpinning it also constitutes a major contribution to social media, digital humanities, digital heritage and critical heritage research, and speaks to a shift towards 'big data' research and approaches in the humanities at a time when access to such data is increasingly volatile, with APIs and privacy policies ever-changing and a concomitant need to adapt to new ethical considerations and technical demands. This contribution is both theoretical in advancing social media spaces as 'theatres of memory', and methodological in bringing a rigorous critical gender heritage lens to the study of 'big data'. More broadly, bringing together a suite of qualitative and digital methods and theories in this thesis is an important contribution to the ways in which we approach overarching questions of power and dialogical relationships in heritage representations and performances. And as has become clear, several avenues for future research, theory and methodological development have been drawn up in this thesis, especially around the remediation and reappropriation of history, memory and commemoration through social media. Not without its limitations, social media is a litmus test for public perceptions of the past, for the divisions, debates and controversies that characterise Irish commemorations of this period. A further study of feminist commemoration around the centenary of female suffrage in 2018, which intersected with an historic referendum on reproductive rights, as well as a consideration of anti-feminist backlashes in these contexts are of particular interest. Ripe for investigation are controversies over contested memory such as the Glasnevin Remembrance Wall (seen in chapter 7) or the fallout from the proposed commemoration of the Royal Irish Constabulary in 2019, cancelled due to a public backlash over the force's

¹¹ Harrison, "Heritage as Future-Making Practices," 35–36.

relationship to the notorious British ‘Black and Tans’ unit during the War of Independence. The intersection of this national period of commemoration with developing British-Irish relations regarding Brexit, and the status of Northern Ireland in this equation, are also potential areas of focus. Diaspora engagement making further use of ‘Tweet metadata and comparison with engagements in the ‘Decade of Anniversaries’ in the north are also possibilities within this framework. Further research is needed to address these messy politics of heritage online that go beyond authorising memory institutions, governing bodies and academe, and they require careful ethical consideration. Other research directions may include studying digitisation and the Irish commemorative impulse in a broader European context of commemorating, for example, the First World War centenary, and digitisation drives underpinned by a Europeanising ‘shared heritage’ agenda.

*

In 2016, Pařeta frankly observed that in terms of Irish women in history, less than ten years ago we scarcely had names beyond Constance Markievicz and Maude Gonne, and that the Bureau of Military History witness statements had changed this. She recalled the prevailing attitude that there simply were no archives for writing women in history, and went on to point out that ‘there was evidence out there before these [witness statements], people just had to start believing these women were worthy of study’.¹² This crystallises the ways in which historical narratives come to be written at all, are marginalised or become mainstream, contingent on the given social, cultural and political context in which both historians and the public operate, as much as the availability of archives. The Decade of Centenaries has created a pretext for histories to be revisited and new histories to be written in a very public way, further invigorated by novel, digitally accessible archives such as those addressed in this thesis, and participatory forces like social media. This work also benefits from a relatively novel willingness to fully recognise women’s contributions in official 1916 commemorations, coming on the back of decades of research and ‘feminist pressure’, including grassroots research and activism, as well as the affective economy of a national period of commemoration. A climate in which the social construction of gender

¹² Pařeta, “Where Were the Women in 1916.”

and power have become mainstream in public discourse has also driven this politics of recognition in the national heritage.¹³ Reflecting on the past three and a half years, and the CHEurope project, it remains clear that ‘heritage’ continues to wield great affective power in people, culture, and society, and in ways that have material consequences for our place in the world. Heritage means many things to many people and it is, eminently, tied to our agency in the world: whether in tearing down the statues of oppressors, calling on the ghosts of the past in the pursuit of reproductive justice; the protection of cultures and landscapes in the face of climate change; or refusing ‘silences’ in the historical record.

As acknowledged in chapter 2, it is not expected that everything can be digitised and made freely accessible, and no archive or collection is representative or complete in the stories they tell. Yet, coded by the commemorative impulse, digitisations may come to represent more than the sum of their contents, together in this ‘archival jigsaw’, this commemorative assemblage in which Irish national identities are shaped, reshaped and performed. My focused study of a Twitter memory space is, as much as these collections, just one of many stories being told, retold and debated through numerous social media in this ongoing decade of commemorations. These digitisations and digital public spaces are potent examples of the ‘practises, affects and physical things’ that together instantiate and are defined by the commemorative assemblage, which, as I have demonstrated in this thesis, has been a powerful authorising frame in the constitution of certain digital archives and confirming the place of revolutionary women in Irish historical consciousness. Digital archives have greater immediate resonance at such heightened moments of awareness of the national past that programmes like the Decade of Centenaries, but especially the 2016 centenary, have brought to bear upon an already historically engaged public. The push or pull of national identity work mediated by state bodies, heritage institutions, and social media, is propelled by the cultural and affective capital of commemoration. Moreover, this newly digital mode of commemoration and archival discovery may at once increase access to heritage as well as encourage a situation where, as Taylor and Gibson point out, ‘public values are expressed within a pre-defined framework of relevant heritage’ ultimately ‘intensifying the strength of the official narrative’.¹⁴ Digitisation in this way re-

¹³ Niomi O’Leary, “Ireland’s Feminist Revolution,” Politico, accessed May 15, 2019, <https://www.politico.eu/article/ireland-feminist-revolution/>.

¹⁴ Joel Taylor and Laura Kate Gibson, “Digitisation, Digital Interaction and Social Media: Embedded Barriers to Democratic Heritage,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 23, no. 5 (2017): 412-13, 416.

legitimises cultural narratives and in turn the institutions that bear them out even as they complicate the past, and as they also surface under-voiced stories and historical identities. Previously marginalised identities, such as historical Irish women, may thus become part of the 'official narrative' and a continuity with the past is simultaneously renegotiated and reaffirmed through the complex social framework of state commemorations.

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Appendix

A. Heritage labour force statistics

'Population Aged 15 Years and Over in the Labour Force 2011 to 2016 (Number) by Regional Authority, Detailed Industrial Group, Sex and Census Year'. Central Statistics Office.

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25/08/2020

StatBank - data and statistics

Population Aged 15 Years and Over in the Labour Force 2011 to 2016 (Number) by Regional Authority, Detailed Industrial Group, Sex and Census Year

	2016
State	
Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities (91)	
Both sexes	4,631

25/08/2020











StatBank - data and statistics

Population Aged 15 Years and Over in the Labour Force 2011 to 2016 (Number) by Regional Authority, Detailed Industrial Group, Sex and Census Year

	2016
State	
Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities (91)	
Female	2,974

B. Google Analytics Infographics (MSPC)

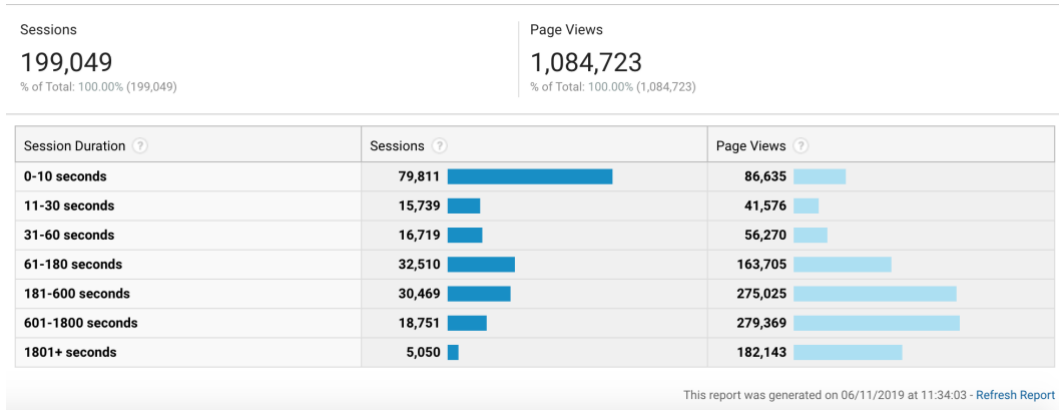
i. Users by country. Google Analytics for www.militaryarchives.ie, courtesy of the Military Archives of Ireland:

Country ?	Users ? ↓	Sessions ?	Pages/Session ?	Avg. Session Duration ?	% New Sessions ?	Bounce Rate ?
	114,862 % of Total: 100.00% (114,862)	199,049 % of Total: 100.00% (199,049)	5.45 Avg for View: 5.45 (0.00%)	00:04:05 Avg for View: 00:04:05 (0.00%)	57.66% Avg for View: 57.52% (0.26%)	37.20% Avg for View: 37.20% (0.00%)
1.  Ireland	64,481 (55.57%)	121,065 (60.82%)	6.25	00:04:48	52.66%	31.22%
2.  United Kingdom	21,255 (18.32%)	36,857 (18.52%)	5.05	00:03:44	56.68%	35.74%
3.  United States	9,943 (8.57%)	15,048 (7.56%)	4.15	00:02:58	65.81%	44.35%
4.  France	9,764 (8.41%)	10,226 (5.14%)	1.30	00:00:18	95.45%	93.70%
5.  Australia	2,704 (2.33%)	4,302 (2.16%)	4.27	00:03:16	62.51%	36.82%
6.  Canada	2,104 (1.81%)	3,241 (1.63%)	3.87	00:02:47	64.83%	40.64%
7.  New Zealand	584 (0.50%)	847 (0.43%)	4.31	00:02:56	68.83%	35.30%
8.  Germany	495 (0.43%)	882 (0.44%)	3.69	00:02:10	54.99%	53.29%
9.  Spain	485 (0.42%)	753 (0.38%)	4.56	00:03:38	62.28%	37.98%
10.  Netherlands	335 (0.29%)	502 (0.25%)	4.69	00:03:06	65.34%	40.04%

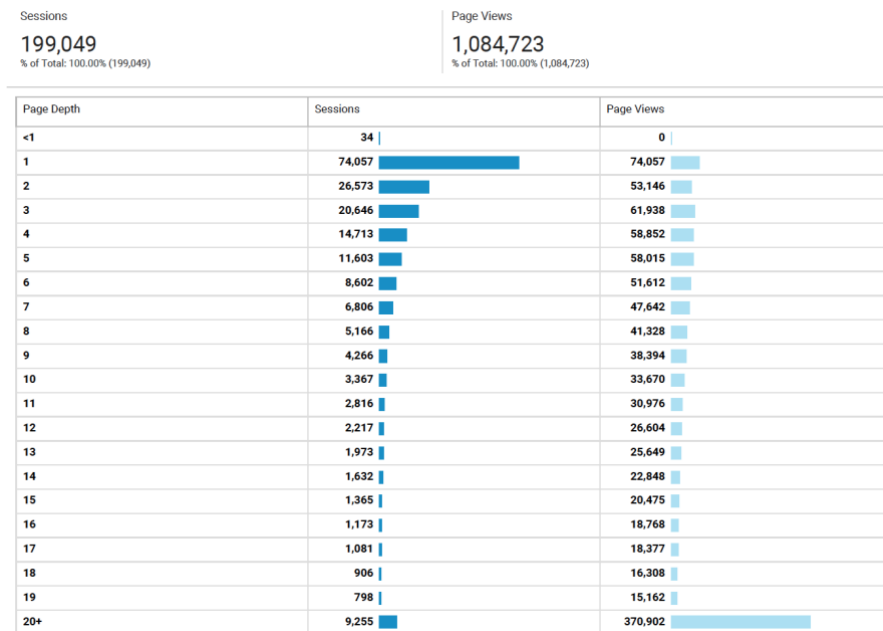
ii. Users by location: Cities. Google Analytics for www.militaryarchives.ie, courtesy of the Military Archives of Ireland:

City	Acquisition			Behaviour			Conversions		
	Users	New Users	Sessions	Bounce Rate	Pages/Session	Avg. Session Duration	Goal Conversion Rate	Goal Completions	Goal Value
	114,862 % of Total: 100.00% (114,862)	114,780 % of Total: 100.26% (114,488)	199,049 % of Total: 100.00% (199,049)	37.20% Avg for View: 37.20% (0.00%)	5.45 Avg for View: 5.45 (0.00%)	00:04:05 Avg for View: 00:04:05 (0.00%)	0.00% Avg for View: 0.00% (0.00%)	0 % of Total: 0.00% (0)	US\$0.00 % of Total: 0.00% (US\$0.00)
1. Dublin	38,907 (32.51%)	37,757 (32.90%)	70,895 (35.62%)	31.72%	6.20	00:04:42	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
2. (not set)	10,781 (9.01%)	10,043 (8.75%)	18,431 (9.26%)	32.94%	5.90	00:04:43	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
3. Paris	9,245 (7.73%)	9,272 (8.08%)	9,472 (4.76%)	97.77%	1.10	00:00:07	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
4. London	4,084 (3.41%)	3,843 (3.35%)	6,800 (3.42%)	35.76%	5.02	00:03:54	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
5. Cork	2,811 (2.35%)	2,673 (2.33%)	5,230 (2.63%)	31.17%	6.19	00:04:35	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
6. Belfast	1,605 (1.34%)	1,545 (1.35%)	2,859 (1.44%)	29.87%	5.94	00:04:08	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
7. Limerick	1,346 (1.12%)	1,273 (1.11%)	2,416 (1.21%)	29.68%	6.63	00:04:50	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
8. Galway	1,330 (1.11%)	1,265 (1.10%)	2,379 (1.20%)	29.00%	6.53	00:04:35	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
9. Londonderry	828 (0.69%)	785 (0.68%)	1,449 (0.73%)	35.40%	5.56	00:04:22	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
10. Chicago	820 (0.69%)	816 (0.71%)	921 (0.46%)	79.91%	1.99	00:01:05	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
11. Dundalk	740 (0.62%)	669 (0.58%)	1,392 (0.70%)	30.53%	6.80	00:04:55	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
12. Drogheda	672 (0.56%)	606 (0.53%)	1,127 (0.57%)	31.50%	6.12	00:04:58	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
13. Naas	663 (0.55%)	630 (0.55%)	1,196 (0.60%)	29.35%	7.00	00:05:34	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
14. Sydney	659 (0.55%)	648 (0.56%)	1,035 (0.52%)	37.29%	4.12	00:03:18	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
15. Melbourne	627 (0.52%)	613 (0.53%)	965 (0.48%)	35.54%	4.53	00:03:20	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
16. Waterford	564 (0.47%)	545 (0.47%)	978 (0.49%)	29.04%	6.15	00:04:38	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
17. New York	554 (0.46%)	536 (0.47%)	896 (0.45%)	41.52%	4.56	00:03:13	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
18. Wexford	529 (0.44%)	499 (0.43%)	900 (0.45%)	27.89%	6.07	00:04:40	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
19. Navan	526 (0.44%)	501 (0.44%)	878 (0.44%)	32.46%	6.92	00:05:22	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
20. Glasgow	474 (0.40%)	450 (0.39%)	705 (0.35%)	39.15%	4.38	00:03:37	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
21. Tralee	466 (0.39%)	452 (0.39%)	1,088 (0.55%)	35.39%	6.45	00:04:45	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
22. Birmingham	448 (0.37%)	421 (0.37%)	833 (0.42%)	35.29%	7.62	00:04:48	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)
23. Sligo	444 (0.37%)	438 (0.38%)	763 (0.38%)	28.96%	8.03	00:05:42	0.00%	0 (0.00%)	US\$0.00 (0.00%)

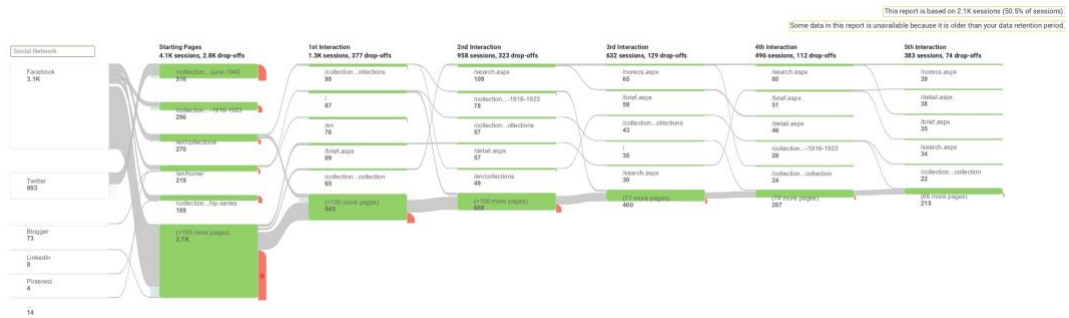
iii. Engagement: Session Duration. Google Analytics for www.militaryarchives.ie, courtesy of the Military Archives of Ireland:



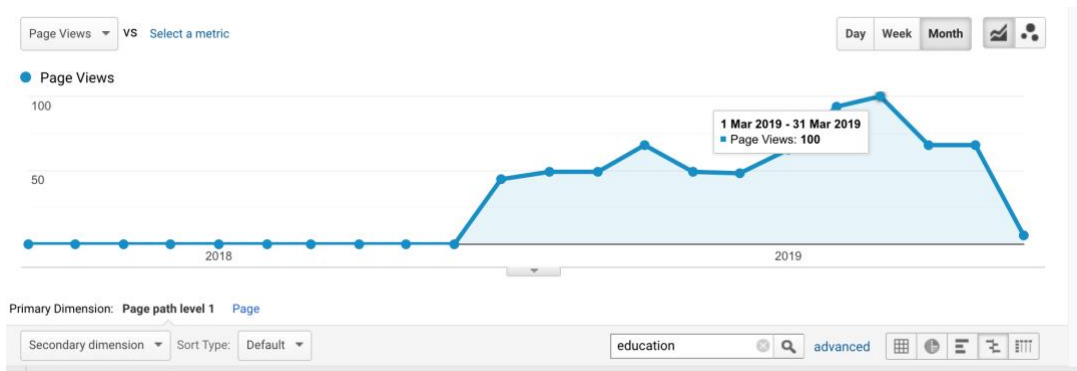
iv. Users: Page Depth. Google Analytics for www.militaryarchives.ie, courtesy of the Military Archives of Ireland:



vi. Social Users Flow: All Users. Google Analytics for www.militaryarchives.ie, courtesy of the Military Archives of Ireland:



vii. Content Drilldown: Education, All Users. Google Analytics for www.militaryarchives.ie, courtesy of the Military Archives of Ireland:



C. Research Ethics Approval

UCL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
OFFICE FOR THE VICE PROVOST RESEARCH



23rd May 2018

Dr Andrew Flinn
Department of Information Studies
UCL

Dear Dr Flinn

Notification of Ethics Approval with Provisos

Project ID/Title: 12755/001: The Decade of Centenaries and Irish Identity: Gender, Commemoration, and Digital Cultural Heritage

I am pleased to confirm in my capacity as Joint Chair of the UCL Research Ethics Committee (REC) that I have ethically approved your study until **31st May 2020**.

Ethical approval is subject to the following conditions:

Notification of Amendments to the Research

You must seek Chair's approval for proposed amendments (to include extensions to the duration of the project) to the research for which this approval has been given. Each research project is reviewed separately and if there are significant changes to the research protocol you should seek confirmation of continued ethical approval by completing an 'Amendment Approval Request Form'

<http://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/responsibilities.php>

Adverse Event Reporting – Serious and Non-Serious

It is your responsibility to report to the Committee any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to participants or others. The Ethics Committee should be notified of all serious adverse events via the Ethics Committee Administrator (ethics@ucl.ac.uk) immediately the incident occurs. Where the adverse incident is unexpected and serious, the Joint Chairs will decide whether the study should be terminated pending the opinion of an independent expert. For non-serious adverse events the Joint Chairs of the Ethics Committee should again be notified via the Ethics Committee Administrator within ten days of the incident occurring and provide a full written report that should include any amendments to the participant information sheet and study protocol. The Joint Chairs will confirm that the incident is non-serious and report to the Committee at the next meeting. The final view of the Committee will be communicated to you.

Final Report

At the end of the data collection element of your research we ask that you submit a very brief report (1-2 paragraphs will suffice) which includes in particular issues relating to the ethical implications of the research i.e. issues obtaining consent, participants withdrawing from the research, confidentiality, protection of participants from physical and mental harm etc.

D. Research Ethics Low Risk Application Form

The application was amended in April 2020. Signatures and contact information have been removed for privacy.

UCL Research Ethics Committee

Note to Applicants: It is important for you to include all relevant information about your research in this application form as your ethical approval will be based on this form. Therefore anything not included will not be part of any ethical approval.

You are advised to read the Guidance for Applicants when completing this form.

Application For Ethical Review: Low Risk

Are you applying for an urgent accelerated review? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
If yes, please state your reasons below. Note: Accelerated reviews are for exceptional circumstances only and need to be justified in detail.	
Is this application for a continuation of a research project that already has ethical approval? <i>For example, a preliminary/pilot study has been completed and is this an application for a follow-up project?</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, provide brief details (see guidelines) including the title and ethics id number for the previous study:	

Section A: Application details

1	Title of Project	The Decade of Centenaries and Irish Identity: Gender, Commemoration, and Digital Cultural Heritage
2	Proposed data collection start date	01/05/2018
3	Proposed data collection end date	31/05/2021
4	Project Ethics Identification Number	12755/001
5	Principal Investigator	Dr Andrew Flinn
6	Position held (Staff/Student)	Staff

7	Faculty/Department	Dept. Information Studies
8	Course Title <i>(if student)</i>	
9	Contact Details Email: Telephone:	
10	Provide details of other Co-Investigators/Partners/Collaborators who will work on the project. Note: <i>This includes those with access to the data such as transcribers.</i>	
	Name: Hannah Smyth Position held: PhD Student Faculty/Department: Information Studies Location (UCL/overseas/other UK institution): UCL Email:	Name: Position held: Faculty/Department: Location (UCL/overseas/other UK institution): Email:
	If you do not know the names of all collaborators, please write their roles in the research.	

11	If the project is funded <i>(this includes non-monetary awards such as laboratory facilities)</i>	
	Name of Funder	European Commission – Horizon 2020 – Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions
	Is the funding confirmed?	Yes

12	Name of Sponsor
	The Sponsor is the organisation taking responsibility for the project, which will usually be UCL. If the Sponsor is not UCL, please state the name of the sponsor. UCL

13	If this is a student project	
	Supervisor Name	Dr Andrew Flinn
	Position held	Reader in Archival Studies and Oral History, Departmental Graduate Tutor
	Faculty/Department	Information Studies
	Contact details	

Section B: Project details

The following questions relate to the objectives, methods, methodology and location of the study. Please ensure that you answer each question in lay language.

14	<p>Provide a <i>brief</i> (300 words max) background to the project, including its intended aims.</p> <p>This study is part of the CHEurope EU-funded PhD training network. It is part of Work Package 3: 'Digital Heritage: The future role of archive collections in a digital world.'</p> <p>The purpose of the study is to investigate engagement with the digital presence of the Decade of Centenaries project in Ireland, the role of digital archival collections in the articulation of different Irish identities, and how in turn they may operate to include or exclude. The Decade of Centenaries is a programme running from 2012-2022 that 'aims to commemorate each step that Ireland took between 1912 and 1922 in a tolerant, inclusive and respectful way.' 'Decade of Centenaries' is the name of the programme's official website and the term is widely used to reference the current decade, or alternatively the 'decade of commemorations.' The research seeks to investigate how the cultural heritage narratives that these digital resources present are constructed, communicated and experienced. It will investigate these intersections of digital cultural heritage and identity in the digital cultural heritage emerging from this period and in the online discussions around these centenaries.</p>
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15	<p>Methodology & Methods (tick all that apply)</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Interviews* <input type="checkbox"/> Focus groups* <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Questionnaires (including oral questions)* <input type="checkbox"/> Action Research <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Documentary analysis (including use of personal records) <input type="checkbox"/> Audio/visual recordings (including photographs) <p><i>*Attach copies to application (see below).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collection/use of sensor or locational data <input type="checkbox"/> Controlled Trial <input type="checkbox"/> Intervention study (including changing environments) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Systematic review <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary data analysis – (See Section D) <input type="checkbox"/> Advisory/consultation groups <input type="checkbox"/> Other, give details:
16a	<p>Provide – <u>in lay person's language</u> - an overview of the project; focusing on your methodology and including information on what data/samples will be taken (including a description of the topics/questions to be asked), how data collection will occur and what (if relevant) participants will be asked to do. This should include a justification for the methods chosen. (500 words max)</p> <p>Please do not attach or copy and paste a research proposal or case for support.</p> <p>Two phases of data collection and analysis will be undertaken in order to answer the research questions posed: a systematic critical analysis of the content and presentation of a selection of digital archives and heritage websites emerging from</p>	

	<p>the current commemorative period, collection and analysis of social media data from the platform Twitter surrounding certain past and forthcoming commemorative moments.</p> <p>The selected digital archival material and heritage websites will be managed and codified using MS Excel and addressed through qualitative analysis.</p> <p>Historical Twitter data will be acquired from two separate third parties, and real-time Twitter data will be acquired directly by real-time web-scraping by the researcher in 2018. In the case of historical data purchased from Twitter Inc., the dataset will be determined and requested by a series of search queries e.g. 'Easter Rising,' '#Somme100' '#womenof1916' etc. Up to 1,000 queries may be included in the data request and this will affect the sample size – it is anticipated up to 1 million Tweets will be returned from both private citizens using Twitter and a number of State or heritage organisations. A smaller set of data will be acquired from the website <i>Century Ireland</i> - this will consist of circa four 28-day analytics reports from their Twitter account in the form of a CSV file. It is expected that Python will be used to scrape real-time data for a short period in 2018 (in addition to the purchased data) and will be used to process and analyse all of the raw Twitter data. Topic modelling, sentiment analysis, and topic-based sentiment analysis will likely be conducted using this data, as well as textual analysis of discourse based on predetermined themes/concepts e.g. gender.</p>
16b	<p>Attachments</p> <p>If applicable, please attach a copy of any interview questions/workshop topic guides/questionnaires/test (such as psychometric), etc. and state whether they are in final or draft form.</p> <p>See attached.</p>

17	<p>Please state which code of ethics (see Guidelines) will be adhered to for this research (for example, BERA, BPS, etc).</p>
<p>ESRC Framework for Research Ethics</p>	

<p>Location of Research</p>	
18	<p>Please indicate where this research is taking place.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UK only (Skip to 'location of fieldwork')</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Overseas only</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> UK & overseas</p>
19	<p>If the research includes work outside the UK, is ethical approval in the host country (local ethical approval) required? (See Guidelines.) N/A</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If no, please explain why local ethical approval is not necessary. N/A</p> <p>If yes, provide details below including whether the ethical approval has been received. N/A</p> <p>Note: Full UCL ethical approval will not be granted until local ethical approval (if required) has been evidenced.</p>

20	<p>If you (or any members of your research team) are travelling overseas in person are there any concerns based on governmental travel advice (www.fco.gov.uk) for the region of travel? N/A</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Note: Check www.fco.gov.uk and submit a travel insurance form to UCL Finance (see application guidelines for more details). This can be accessed here: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/finance/secure/fin_acc/insurance.htm (You will need your UCL login details.)</p>
----	--

21	<p>State the location(s) where the research will be conducted and data collected. For example public spaces, schools, private company, using online methods, postal mail or telephone communications.</p> <p>Using online methods.</p>
22	<p>Does the research location require any additional permissions (e.g. obtaining access to schools, hospitals, private property, non-disclosure agreements, access to biodiversity permits (CBD), etc.)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please state the permissions required.</p>
23	<p>Have the above approvals been obtained? N/A Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please attach a copy of the approval correspondence.</p> <p>If not, confirm they will be obtained prior to data collection. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Section C: Details of Participants

In this form 'participants' means human participants and their data (including sensor/location data, observational notes/images, tissue and blood samples, as well as DNA).

24	<p>Does the project involve the recruitment of participants?</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete all parts of this Section. Yes, for the web survey - voluntary recruitment.</p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/> Move to Section D.</p>
----	---

Participant Details

25	<p>Approximate maximum number of participants required:</p> <p>Approximate upper age limit: _____ Lower age limit: 1</p> <p>Justification for the age range and sample size:</p>
Recruitment/Sampling	
26	<p>Describe how potential participants will be recruited into the study.</p> <p>Note: This should include reference to how you will identify and approach participants. For example, will participants self-identify themselves by responding to an advert for the study or will you approach them directly (such as in person or via email)?</p>
Informed Consent	
27a	<p>Describe the process you will use when seeking to obtain consent.</p> <p>Note: This should include reference to what participants are being asked to consent to, such as whether their contribution will be identifiable/anonymous, limits to confidentiality and whether their data can be withdrawn at a later date.</p> <p><i>(An annotated template information sheet and consent form have been provided for your use.)</i></p>
27b	<p>Attachments Please list them below:</p> <p><i>Ensure that a copy of all recruitment documentation (recruitment emails/posters, information sheet/s, consent form/s) have been attached to the application.</i></p>
27c	<p>If you are not intending to seek consent from participants, clarify why below:</p> <p>I do not intend to seek participant consent for Twitter data as it is considered to be in the public domain. It will nonetheless be treated sensitively. The participants' consent is subject to the privacy policy outlined in the terms and conditions of the social media platform, in this instance Twitter, upon signing up to an account. 'Participants' are considered to have given consent upon agreeing to the terms of service and privacy policy that state that any Tweet is public information "by default" unless deleted or otherwise restricted through the users' personal account privacy settings:</p> <p><i>Most of the information you provide us through Twitter is information you are asking us to make public... Twitter broadly and instantly disseminates your public information to a wide range of users, customers, and services, including search engines, developers, and publishers that integrate Twitter content into their services, and organizations such as universities, public health agencies, and market research firms that analyze the information for trends and insights... Our default is almost always to make the information you provide through the Services public for as long as you do not delete it, but we generally give you settings or features, like protected Tweets, to make the information more private if you want. (Tweets, Following, Lists, Profile, and Other Public Information, Twitter – Privacy, https://twitter.com/en/privacy)</i></p>

	<p>If not, do you have the owner's permission/license? (This only applies in the case of Century Ireland data) Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No* <input type="checkbox"/></p>
33	<p>Is the data anonymised? Twitter Inc. data: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Is the data anonymised? Century Ireland data: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If not: (Twitter Inc.)</p> <p>i. Do you plan to anonymise the data? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No* <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>ii. Do you plan to use individual level data? Yes* <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>iii. Will you be linking data to individuals? Yes* <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
34	<p>Is the data sensitive (DPA 1998 definition)? Yes* <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>The Twitter Inc. is potentially sensitive as it may contain political opinions or beliefs that could be traceable to individual users, however this will be mitigated through anonymization and generalisation.</p>
35	<p>Will you be conducting analysis within the remit it was originally collected for? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No* <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>In the case of the Century Ireland data yes – this data will be analysed to understand engagement levels with different topics and overall engagement with the website's social media presence.</p>
36	<p>If not, was consent gained from participants for subsequent/future analysis? N/A Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No* <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Section E: Ethical Issues

Ethical Issues	
37	<p>Please address clearly any ethical issues that may arise in the course of this research and how they will be addressed. Further information and advice can be found in the guidelines.</p> <p>Note: All ethical issues should be addressed - do not leave this section blank. All projects give rise to ethical issues. If you think there are no ethical issues, you need to provide an explanation as to why.</p> <p>The collection of social media data poses potential ethical issues because it will</p>

	<p>contain individual identifiers in its raw format. To mitigate this the data in all instances will be anonymized by the removal of individual identifiers such as usernames. It will be referenced in the reporting of results in such a way as to minimize participant traceability or identification of individuals i.e. limiting direct quotations or free text; significant re-wording of text or generalizing of the meaning of text in demonstrating and supporting arguments; reducing the precision of reporting geo-referenced data (if it occurs e.g. specific geo-tagged small towns / villages /districts) by aggregation.</p>
--	--

Risks & Benefits	
38	<p>Please state any <i>benefits</i> to participants in taking part in the study (this includes feedback, access to services or incentives).</p> <p>None.</p>
39	<p>Do you intend to offer incentives or compensation, including access to free services)?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, specify the amount to be paid and/or service to be offered as well as a justification for this.</p>
40	<p>Please state any <i>risks</i> to participants and how these risks will be managed.</p> <p>The principal risk is the identification of individuals by inference from the reporting of results or by unsolicited accessing of the original data by a third party. In order to avoid individual identification:</p> <p>Participant social media data will not be shared or published as a whole entity. The data in all instances will be anonymized by the removal of individual identifiers such as usernames. It will be referenced in the reporting of results in such a way as to minimize participant traceability or identification of individuals i.e. limiting direct quotations or free text; significant re-wording of text or generalizing of the meaning of text in demonstrating and supporting arguments; reducing the precision of reporting geo-referenced data (if it occurs e.g. specific geo-tagged small towns / villages /districts) by aggregation.</p>
41	<p>Please state any <i>risks</i> to you or your research team and how these risks will be managed.</p> <p>There are no risks to myself or any other researchers.</p>

Section F: Data Storage & Security

Please ensure that you answer each question and include all hard and electronic data.

42	<p>Will the research involve the collection and/or use of personal data?</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Personal data</i> is data which relates to a living individual who can be identified</p>
-----------	---

	<p><i>from that data OR from the data and other information that is either currently held, or will be held by the data controller (the researcher).</i></p> <p><i>This includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>any expression of opinion about the individual and any intentions of the data controller or any other person toward the individual.</i> – <i>sensor, location or visual data which may reveal information that enables the identification of a face, address, etc (some postcodes cover only one property).</i> – <i>combinations of data which may reveal identifiable data, such as names, email/postal addresses, date of birth, ethnicity, descriptions of health diagnosis or conditions, computer IP address (if relating to a device with a single user).</i> <p>If you do not have a registration number from Legal Services, please clarify why not:</p> <p>Application made, pending receipt of registration number.</p>
--	--

43	<p>Is the research collecting or using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – sensitive personal data as defined by the UK Data Protection Act (racial or ethnic origin / political opinions / religious beliefs / trade union membership / physical or mental health / sexual life / commission of offences or alleged offences), and/or – data which might be considered sensitive in some countries, cultures or contexts. <p>If yes, state whether explicit consent will be sought for its use and what data management measures are in place to adequately manage and protect the data.</p> <p>Yes, the research is potentially collecting data through a social media platform - Twitter - that may contain personal data such as those listed above. Explicit consent will not be sought as the data is considered to be in the public domain and a large amount of data is expected to be collected through automation. Anonymization of data will be carried out at the processing and write up stages, and data will be securely managed and stored on the UCL internal network and only accessed through a UCL computer (on-site) or through UCL Remote Desktop Access (to be kept at a minimum). The data will not be made available for sharing for research purposes outside of this study and as such will be securely erased at a later date.</p>
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44	<p>All research projects using personal data must be registered with Legal Services before the data is collected, please provide the Data Protection Registration Number:</p> <p>If you do not have a registration number from Legal Services, please clarify why not:</p>
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During the project (including the write up and dissemination period)	
45	<p>State what types of data will be generated from this project (i.e. transcripts, videos, photos, audio tapes, field notes, etc).</p>

	<p>Textual data files, data visualisations/charts/graphs, open source code.</p> <p>How will data be stored, including where and for how long? This includes all hard copy and electronic data on laptops, share drives, usb/mobile devices.</p> <p>The data collected will be collected in electronic format.</p> <p>Raw Twitter data will be collected and analysed on a UCL computer and stored on the UCL network using N-Drive. Data will therefore not leave the UCL campus at any time during the research. Any access to or work on the data using UCL Remote Desktop Access will be carried out using an encrypted personal laptop, however this will be kept to a minimum. The data will continue to be securely stored in this way in anticipation of further post-doctoral research,</p> <p>The reporting on the data in the write up of the PhD thesis will be available in hard copy shelved instore and catalogued by the UCL library (consultation only), and electronic copy available in open-access through UCL Discovery. Any journal publications relating to the study and reporting on the data collected will be available in open-access as stipulated by funder guidelines.</p> <p>Who will have access to the data, including advisory groups and during transcription?</p> <p>Only I, the data collector and researcher, will have access to the Twitter data during this time, plus my research supervisors.</p>
46	<p>Do you confirm that all personal data will be stored and processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA 1998).</p> <p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If not, please clarify why.</p>
47	<p>Will personal data be processed or be sent outside of the European Economic Area (EEA)?*</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please confirm that there are adequate levels of protection in compliance with the DPA 1998 and state what the arrangements are below.</p> <p>*Please note that if you store your research data containing identifiable data on UCL systems or equipment (including by using your UCL email account to transfer data), or otherwise carry out work on your research in the UK, the processing will take place within the EEA and will be captured by Data Protection legislation.</p>

After the project

48 What data will be stored and how will you keep it secure?

The Twitter data will be stored on the UCL N-Drive.

	<p>Where will the data be stored and who will have access?</p> <p>The Twitter data will be securely stored on the UCL network using N-Drive. Only I, the researcher, will have access.</p> <p>Will the data be securely deleted? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please state when this will occur:</p> <p>On or before 31 May 2024.</p>
--	--

49	<p>Will the data be archived for use by other researchers? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If yes, please provide further details including whether researchers outside the European Economic Area will be given access.</p>
----	---

Section G: Declaration

I confirm that the information in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature	
-----------	--

Date	24 April 2020
------	---------------

If student:

I have met with and advised the student on the ethical aspects of this project design.

Supervisor Name: Dr. Andrew Flinn

Supervisor Signature:	
-----------------------	--

Date:	24/4/20
-------	---------

Signature of Head of Department (or Chair of the Departmental Ethics Committee)

Part A

I have read the 'criteria of minimal risk' as defined on page 3 of the Guidelines (<http://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/forms/guidelines.pdf>) and I recommend that this application be considered by the Chair of the UCL REC.

Yes No

Part B

I have discussed this project with the principal researcher who is suitably qualified to carry out this research and I approve it. I am satisfied that** (highlight as appropriate):

1. Data Protection registration:

- has been satisfactorily completed
- has been initiated
- is not required

2. A risk assessment:

- has been satisfactorily completed
- has been initiated

3. Appropriate insurance arrangements are in place and appropriate sponsorship [funding] has been approved and is in place to complete the study.

Yes No

4. A Disclosure and Barring Service check(s):

- has been satisfactorily completed
- has been initiated
- is not required

Note: Links to details of UCL's policies on the above can be found at: <http://ethics.grad.ucl.ac.uk/procedures.php>

****If any of the above checks are not required please clarify why below.**

Name:	Elizabeth Shepherd
Signature:	
Date:	24/4/2020

E. Tweet Metadata Template

```
[
  {
    'created_at': 'Tue Nov 11 10:41:28 +0000 2018',
    'id': xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx,
    'id_str': 'xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx',
    'full_text': 'This is the full metadata of a Tweet',
    'truncated': False,
    'display_text_range': [0, 280],
    'entities': {
      'hashtags': [],
      'symbols': [],
      'user_mentions': [],
      'urls': []
    },
    'metadata': {
      'result_type': 'popular',
      'iso_language_code': 'en'
    },
    'source': '<a href="http://twitter.com/download/iphone"
rel="nofollow">Twitter for iPhone</a>',
    'in_reply_to_status_id': None,
    'in_reply_to_status_id_str': None,
    'in_reply_to_user_id': None,
    'in_reply_to_user_id_str': None,
    'in_reply_to_screen_name': None,
    'user': {
      'id': xxxxxxxx,
      'id_str': 'xxxxxxxx',
      'name': 'Tweet M. Data',
      'screen_name': 'T_metadata',
      'location': 'Twittersphere',
      'description': 'I Tweet, therefore I am',
      'url': 'https://t.co/xxxxxxxxxx',
```



```

'entities': {
  'url': {
    'urls': [{
      'url': 'https://t.co/xxxxxxxxxx',
      'expanded_url': 'http://www.tweetmetadata.com',
      'display_url': 'tweetmetadata.com',
      'indices': [0, 23]
    }]
  },
  'description': {
    'urls': []
  }
},
'protected': False,
'followers_count': 500,
'friends_count': 500,
'listed_count': 1,
'created_at': 'Mon Nov 01 14:13:45 +0000 2018',
'favourites_count': 500,
'utc_offset': None,
'time_zone': None,
'geo_enabled': False,
'verified': True,
'statuses_count': 500,
'lang': 'en',
'contributors_enabled': False,
'is_translator': False,
'is_translation_enabled': False,
'profile_background_color': 'XXXXXX',
'profile_background_image_url':,
'profile_background_image_url_https':,
'profile_background_tile': True,
'profile_image_url': None,
'profile_image_url_https': None ,
'profile_banner_url':
'profile_link_color': 'XXXXXX',

```

```
'profile_sidebar_border_color': '000000',
'profile_sidebar_fill_color': '000000',
'profile_text_color': '000000',
'profile_use_background_image': False,
'has_extended_profile': False,
'default_profile': True,
'default_profile_image': True,
'following': None,
'follow_request_sent': None,
'notifications': None,
'translator_type': 'regular'
},
'geo': None,
'coordinates': None,
'place': None,
'contributors': None,
'is_quote_status': False,
'retweet_count': 500,
'favorite_count': 500,
'favorited': True,
'retweeted': False,
'lang': 'en'
}
]
```



```

# LABEL = '1918ElectionCentenary'

# Filename and structure of the table
file_name = "fullarchive.csv"

NUMBER_OF_REQUESTS = 60

is_new_file = True

print("RUNNING PREMIUM TEST")

# REQUEST LOOP (WE GENERATE A NEW REQUEST TO THE API EACH TIME)

total_num_tweets = 0

for i in range(NUMBER_OF_REQUESTS):

    print("Request number ", i)

    dict_ = {"request": [], "id": [], "date": [], "text": [], "location": [], "place": [], "coordinates": [], "favorite_count": [],
"retweets": [],

            "language": [], "quote_count": [], "reply_count": [], "in_reply_to_status_id": [], "source": [], "query": [], "entities":
            []}

    last_id = 0

    current_tweet_num = 0

    num_tweets = 0

    # date = time.strftime('%Y%m%d%H00', time.gmtime())

    date = 'YYYYMMDD0000'

    now = time.strftime('%Y-%m-%d %H:%M', time.gmtime())

```

```

if os.path.exists(file_name):

    print('File exists')

    with open(file_name, "r") as file:

        print('Opened file ', file_name)

        is_new_file = False

        csvfile = csv.DictReader(file)

        for row in reversed(list(csvfile)):

            current_tweet_num = int(row['index']) + 1

            #print("ID column: ", row['id'])

            print("Query column: ", row['query'])

            if row['query'] == SEARCH_TERM:

                last_id = int(row['id'])

                #print("MAX ID:", last_id)

                created_at = row['date']

                date = time.strptime('%Y%m%d%H%M',time.strptime(created_at, '%a %b %d %H:%M:%S +0000 %Y'))

                print("LAST DATE: ', date)

                break

    else:

        print('Creating new file ', file_name)

        print("TO DATE: ', date)

        # if last_id != 0:

        # SEARCH_TERM += ' max_id:' + str(last_id-1)

        from_date = 'YYYYMMDD0000'

        # This should stop requests when they reach this date

        if int(date) <= int(from_date): break

r = api.request("tweets/search/%s!:%s" % (PRODUCT, LABEL),

```

```

# {'query': SEARCH_TERM, 'maxResults':'100', 'toDate': date})

{'query': SEARCH_TERM, 'maxResults':'500', 'fromDate': from_date, 'toDate': date})

# {'query': SEARCH_TERM, 'toDate': date})

# {'query': SEARCH_TERM})

# This loops through all the tweets in r

for item in r:

    #print(item['text'] if 'text' in item else item)

    # This loops through all the tweets in python_tweets

    # dict_['user'].append(status['user']['screen_name'])

    #dict_["num"].append((current_tweet_num + num_tweets))

    dict_["request"].append(str(i+1)+' - '+now)

    dict_["id"].append(item["id"])

    dict_["date"].append(item["created_at"])

    # text = re.sub(r"(?:\@)|S+", "@USER", item["text"])

    text = item["text"]

    text = text.encode(encoding='utf-8', errors='ignore')

    dict_["text"].append(str(text))

    #dict_["text"].append(str(item["text"]))

    dict_["location"].append(str(item["user"]["location"]).encode(encoding='utf-8', errors='ignore'))

    dict_["place"].append(json.dumps(item["place"]))

    dict_["coordinates"].append(json.dumps(item["coordinates"]))

    dict_["favorite_count"].append(item["favorite_count"])

    dict_["retweets"].append(item["retweet_count"])

    dict_["language"].append(item["lang"])

    dict_["quote_count"].append(item["quote_count"])

    dict_["reply_count"].append(item["reply_count"])

    dict_["in_reply_to_status_id"].append(item["in_reply_to_status_id"])

    dict_["source"].append(item["source"])

    dict_["query"].append(SEARCH_TERM)

    dict_["entities"].append(json.dumps(item["entities"]))

```



```
auth_type='oAuth2')
```

```
TWEET_ID = 'XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX'
```

```
r = api.request('statuses/show/' + TWEET_ID)
```

```
tweet = r.json()
```

```
print(tweet['user']['screen_name'] + ': ' + tweet['text'] if r.status_code == 200
```

```
    else 'PROBLEM: ' + r.text)
```

```
'''
```


G. Data cleaning script

```
# CSV read/write library
import csv

# Text processing library
import spacy

# Regular expression library
import re

# Something that just works
import ast

import html

file_name = 'fullarchive.csv'
save_file = 'NEW_SAVEFILE.csv' #save cleaned text in new file
print('Reading file: ', file_name)

def clean_text(text):
    # Remove line break characters
    result = text.replace("\n", ' ')
    # Remove URLs
    result = re.sub(r"http\S+", '', result)
    # Remove hashtags
    result = re.sub(r"#S+", '', result)
    # Remove user handles
    result = re.sub(r"@S+", '', result) #comment out each as needed

    result = html.unescape(result)
    return result

nlp = spacy.load('en_core_web_sm')

# Opens the file in variable file_name
with open(file_name, 'r', encoding='utf-8') as f, \
    open(save_file, 'w+', encoding='utf-8') as s: #opens new file into which cleaned text will be written
    # Reads the file (f) as a CSV file
    data = csv.reader(f)
    writer = csv.writer(s)

    # Read the first row of the CSV file
    header = next(data)
    writer.writerow(header)

    # Create a dictionary of column names:
```

```

# 1. Goes through every element in the header list
# 2. Enumerates all of the elements in the list (e.g. 0-'index', 1-'request', etc.)
# 3. Creates a dictionary where the column name is the key and the column number is the value
# With this dictionary we can ensure we always get the right column number for a given column name
cols = {col_name: col_num for col_num, col_name in enumerate(header)}

i = 0

# We cycle through every row in our CSV file
for row in data:
    decoded_row = []

    # CODE TO IGNORE RETWEETS
    # print(row[cols['text']][2:5]) # this line just prints the first three chars in the text

    #if row[cols['text']][2:5] != 'RT ': # uncomment this to skip any tweet that starts with 'RT '
    if True: # filler code, comment it if removing RTs

        for col_name in cols.keys():
            if col_name != 'text' and col_name != 'location':
                decoded_row.append(row[cols[col_name]])
            else:
                # Get the column number for 'text'
                text_col_num = cols[col_name]

                # Print the contents of the column for text
                text = ast.literal_eval(row[text_col_num]).decode(encoding='utf-8', errors='ignore')
                text = clean_text(text)[2:-1]
                doc = nlp(text)

                print(doc)
                decoded_row.append(str(doc))

        # for token in doc:
        #     print(token.text, token.pos_)

        # When working with complete files, remove these two lines
        if i > 100: break
        i += 1

    writer.writerow(decoded_row)

```

H. Data Parsing Script

```
import csv

# Text processing library

import spacy

# Regular expression library

import re

# Something that just works

import ast

import html

# Parse JSON objects (for entities)

import json

from dateutil.parser import parse as dateparse

file_name = 'NEW_FILE_easterrising_rt_1_copy.csv'

save_file = 'NEWFILE_easterrising_rt_clean.csv' #create file where data will be copied

print('Reading file: ', file_name)

# Opens the file in variable file_name

with open(file_name, 'r', encoding='utf-8-sig') as f, \
    open(save_file, 'w+', encoding='utf-8-sig') as s:

    # Reads the file (f) as a CSV file

    data = csv.reader(f)

    writer = csv.writer(s)

    header = next(data)
```

```

cols = {col_name: col_num for col_num, col_name in enumerate(header)}

new_header = ['date', 'time', 'screen_name', 'text', 'mentions', 'hashtags', 'location', 'favorite_count', 'retweets',
'urls','entities']

new_dict = {col_name: " for col_num, col_name in enumerate(new_header)}

i = 0

writer.writerow(new_header)

# We cycle through every row in our CSV file

for row in data:

    new_row = []

    if True: # filler code, comment it if removing RTs

        entities = json.loads(row[cols['entities']])

        hashtags = ', '.join([hashtag['text'] for hashtag in entities['hashtags']])

        print(hashtags)

        entities = json.loads(row[cols['entities']])

        mentions = ', '.join([mention['screen_name'] for mention in entities['user_mentions']])

        print(mentions)

        entities = json.loads(row[cols['entities']])

        urls = ', '.join([url['expanded_url'] for url in entities['urls']])

        print(urls)

        datetime = dateparse(row[cols['date']])

        date = datetime.date()

```

```
time = datetime.time()

new_dict['date'] = str(date)
new_dict['time'] = str(time)
new_dict['screen_name'] = row[cols['screen_name']]
new_dict['text'] = row[cols['text']]
new_dict['mentions'] = mentions
new_dict['hashtags'] = hashtags
new_dict['location'] = row[cols['location']]
new_dict['favorite_count'] = row[cols['favorite_count']]
new_dict['retweets'] = row[cols['retweets']]
new_dict['urls'] = urls
new_dict['entities'] = row[cols['entities']]

for col_name in new_header:
    new_row.append(new_dict[col_name])

print(new_row)

i += 1

writer.writerow(new_row)
```

I. Search Query Easter Rising 1916

```
SEARCH_TERM = '#SaveMooreStreet OR #Reclaim1916 OR (Easter Rebellion 1916) OR #1916rebellion OR (#rebellion 1916) OR #EasterRising OR #EasterRising1916 OR #1916EasterRising OR #Easter1916 OR #1916Rising OR #1916LIVE OR #ÉiríAmach1916 OR #1916Centenary OR #Ireland2016 OR #Eire2016 OR #ReflectingtheRising OR #Dublin1916 OR #Galway1916 OR #Cork1916 OR #Kerry1916 OR #Belfast1916 OR #1916 OR #ProclamationDay OR #Letters1916 OR #InspiringIreland OR #rte1916 OR #decadeofcentenaries OR #1916Portraits OR "Easter Rising" OR "1916 Rising" OR (1916 (commemoration OR centenary)) OR #Womenof1916 OR #woman0f1916 OR #WomenIn1916 OR #CumannNamBan OR #Mná1916 OR #Women1916 OR (women ("Easter Rising" OR "1916 Rising")) OR "cumann na mban" OR (women centenary (1916 OR "Easter Rising")) OR (women commemoration (1916 OR "Easter Rising")) OR "women of 1916" OR (#wakingthefeminists 1916) OR #1916Proclamation OR (Proclamation 1916 (Easter OR Republic OR Irish)) OR (1916 (("Easter Rising" OR Rising) (archive OR archives OR "digital archive")))) lang:en -from:xxxxxxxxxx'
```

```
until:2017-01-01 since:2015-12-31
```

J. Extended word and hashtag frequencies

Hashtag Frequencies 1-200

Women of 1916

Term	Count
womenof1916	1070
easterrising	413
ireland2016	247
1916rising	245
internationalwomensday	233
iwd2016	188
wakingthefeminists	172
ireland	138
rebellion	110
women	106
cumannnamban	101
irish	90
irishhistory	87
birthofanation	79
onthisday	79
womenoftherising	78
dublin	69
markievicz	65
easter1916	55
history	54
iwd16ni	50
women1916	49
otd	48
feminism	46
1916live	44
womenin1916	44
repealthe8th	40
rising	37
rte1916	36
inspiringireland	34
rising1916	32
centenary	27
dublin1916	27
jointherising	27
rcsi1916	27
sevenwomen	25
uniteblue	25

Easter Rising 2016

Term	Count
easterrising	22965
ireland2016	20815
1916rising	10885
ireland	4196
rte1916	4093
proclamationday	3296
easter1916	3116
dublin	2618
centenary	2187
savemoorestreet	2178
reflectingtherising	1839
easter	1814
dublin1916	1715
irish	1666
rebellion	1502
1916live	1330
1916centenary	1167
womenof1916	960
history	872
irishhistory	821
news	754
stpatricksday	676
letters1916	627
easterweekend	621
rising1916	621
rising	619
jointherising	540
inspiringireland	508
gpo	496
ge16	494
onthisday	489
1916easterrising	487
happyeaster	477
lovedublin	467
ww1	404
cork	390
eastersunday	351

equality	24
ge16	24
easter	22
gaillimh2016	22
vimeo	22
proclamationday	20
kerry1916	19
nwcisoapbox	18
stpatriksday	18
heritageweek	16
mná1916	16
gpo	15
savemoorestreet	15
sligo	15
twitterstorians	15
1916women	14
reflectingtherising	14
revolutionarywomen	14
1916centenary	13
éirígí	13
femfest	13
iwd16	13
lovedublin	13
womensday	13
culturenight	12
ireland1916	12
markievicz16	12
news	12
sfaf16	12
intocongress16	11
iwd	11
louthlibraries	11
tocs2016	11
womenshistorymonth	11
art	10
feminist	10
free	10
nollaignamban	10
tyhist	10
100years	9
afitwife	9
asl2016	9
corbyn	9
mnánahéireann	9
uniformity16	9

kerry1916	332
ireland1916	315
eastermonday	310
proudtobeirish	293
globalirish	275
easterrising1916	264
periscope	260
100years	256
anationsvoice	254
rte	247
otd	240
proclamation	236
gaa	231
art	226
eire	223
nyc	220
travel	215
galway	214
gaillimh2016	207
commemoration	203
edchatie	203
ulster	201
liverpoolirish	196
easterjoy	192
jamesconnolly	191
belfast	190
proud	190
internationalwomensday	185
easter2016	184
éirígí	184
bbc	182
centenary1916	181
manchester	166
1916portraitsandlives	163
world	155
vinb	146
iwd2016	139
rtept	137
godspan	134
therising	134
moorestreet	133
catholics	132
photography	132
liveblog	131
eire2016	129

womeninarmy	9
womeninstem	9
connollycafe	8
constancemarkievicz	8
cork	8
countess	8
derry	8
didyouknow	8
edchatie	8
grace	8
herstory	8
iwdccd	8
kindle	8
proud	8
therising	8
wakingthenation	8
waterford	8
1916portraits	7
amblogging	7
cnamb	7
countessmarkievicz	7
ibwconf	7
internationalwomenday	7
irishrepublic	7
irishstudies	7
proclaimingarepublic	7
theatre	7
ucd1916	7
coldeye	6
constance	6
donegal	6
easterrising1916	6
easteruprising	6
gaa	6
genderequality	6
kilmainhamgaol	6
lchist	6
leftbehind	6
letters1916	6
liveblog	6
mural	6
rtept	6
seeforyourself	6
skibbereeneagle	6
stmarylshist	6

laochra	129
rogercasement	126
limerick	125
women	124
crowdsourcing	123
mayo	121
goodfriday	120
theatre	120
music	119
ninews	119
luas	118
somme100	118
lego	117
brexit	115
dublinrising	114
heisrisen	114
tcd1916	114
glasnevin	112
twitterstorians	108
coybig	107
london	106
uk	106
easterbunny	103
casement	102
waterford	102
elsiemcdermid	101
éire2016	100
kerry	99
somme	98
donegal	97
irishart	95
euro2016	94
freedom	94
repealthe8th	94
birthofanation	93
follow	93
reclaim1916	93
podcast	92
iamireland	90
irishrepublic	90
1916proclamation	89
loveirishresearch	89
wildatlanticway	89
yeats	89
dfb1916	88

womenshistory	6
womensrights	6
ww1	6
aylesbury	5
belfast	5
british	5
cdnpoli	5
cobh	5
dail	5
enniscorthy	5
gender	5
irishwomen	5
iwdul16	5
kilmainham	5
limerick	5
lissadell	5
liveline	5
loveirishresearch	5
mallowlibrary	5
mna1916	5
rdguk	5
revolutionary	5
sinnféin	5
skinnider	5
surrender	5
todaysor	5
uniformity	5
wmnhist	5
womenrights	5
1916easterrising	4
amreading	4
amwriting	4
anjlgroupl	4
army	4
awovensilence	4
bbc	4
bravewomen	4
centenary1916	4
cnb16	4
commemoration	4
detroit	4
dingle	4
dublinbus	4
dublincastle	4
easter2016	4

independence	88
vr	88
cumannnamban	87
british	86
easterrising100	84
easterrisingcentenary	84
liveline	84
pearse	84
rang1916	84
resurrectionsunday	83
bitcoin	82
celtic	82
latelateshow	82
wexford	82
michaelcollins	81
wakingthefeminists	80
mckennasfort	78
louthlibraries	77
homeless	76
proclaimingarepublic	76
1916today	75
ire	75
jesus	75
sligo	75
16letters	74
gaelic	74
kilmainhamgaol	74
tweettherising	74
liamneeson	73
poetry	73
blockchain	72
genealogy	72
republic	72
imagininghome	71
irishandproud	71
kerry2016	71
parade	71
derry	70
athlone	69
easterparade2016	69
peace	67
pride	65
sinnfein	65
musicmakers	64
video	64

echoesof1916	4
eire	4
equalityforall	4
explorearhives	4
éire2016	4
fascinatingfacts	4
feature	4
fionavar	4
freedom	4
gaze2016	4
girlpower	4
hero	4
historians1916	4
irishfilm	4
irishmusicparty	4
irishscones	4
labour	4
latelateshow	4
latelatetoyshow	4
leadersdebate	4
leitrim	4
majdcu	4
margaretskinnider	4
men	4
mp	4
nurse	4
nyc	4

dh	63
finegael	63
love	63
lovindublin	63
nigeriandailynews	63
éire	62
sidebyside	62
enemyfiles	61
irishwater	61
jobs	61
politics	61
rise16	61
saloneire100	61
frongoch	60
enniscorthy	59
marian	59
monicarobertsdiary	59
wwi	59
free	57
rt	57
stockport	57
ucd1916	57
enniscorthyrising	56
golf	56
popart	56
ge2016	55
jobsearch	55

Word Frequencies 1-200

Women of 1916

Word	Count
women	4750
1916	3480
rising	2389
markievicz	2050
easter	1808
irish	1441
countess	1273
cumann	945
constance	927
mban	926
years	704
woman	698
grace	688
still	600
fighting	552
gifford	538
ireland	493
margaret	449
today	419
skinnider	418
olivia	414
plunkett	404
great	403
dublin	352
o,Áóleary	346
elizabeth	338
role	335
first	331
joseph	330
kathleen	299
history	293
clarke	289
o'farrell	273
2016	263
revolutionary	252
carney	250
centenary	226
winifred	223
story	213
exhibition	212

Easter Rising 2016

Word	Count
rising	56063
easter	48966
1916	42428
ireland	15428
irish	14400
centenary	13223
dublin	10025
today	7674
commemoration	7253
years	6349
great	4940
women	4915
events	3864
parade	3707
history	3689
mark	3402
anniversary	3401
2016	3317
british	3174
event	2952
video	2849
people	2839
just	2603
happy	2459
100th	2421
proclamation	2380
year	2367
part	2290
rebellion	2156
street	2088
news	2040
commemorations	2015
place	2012
well	1940
story	1931
proud	1866
republic	1862
april	1853
time	1806
michael	1788

rebel	211
talk	204
elected	202
just	191
part	183
mary	181
remember	179
book	164
fought	161
equality	158
female	157
event	153
tonight	151
mural	147
skeffington	146
sheehy	145
theatre	137
hanna	136
love	132
born	129
eight	129
1918	128
happy	127
house	126
video	126
brave	122
free	122
celebrates	121
like	121
connolly	118
involved	118
interesting	117
abbey	116
british	116
memorial	116
read	116
republic	116
proud	115
time	114
launch	112
amazing	111
home	110
member	110
library	109
remembering	109

still	1764
good	1710
weekend	1700
exhibition	1695
sunday	1686
read	1683
president	1681
marks	1608
commemorate	1600
first	1581
connolly	1541
free	1532
march	1528
celebrations	1514
like	1508
week	1504
tonight	1497
james	1446
flag	1444
since	1441
watch	1438
pearse	1411
thousands	1373
last	1363
fifa	1360
ceremony	1349
wreath	1308
looking	1301
remember	1287
celebrating	1276
leaders	1275
photos	1274
book	1259
celebrate	1255
tour	1243
back	1227
tomorrow	1219
done	1216
show	1216
world	1213
city	1212
rebels	1205
take	1202
thanks	1190
belfast	1175

stories	108
article	107
made	107
1916'	106
international	106
also	104
last	104
celebrating	103
life	102
piece	102
play	102
thanks	102
week	101
higgins	100
kilmainham	99
looking	99
republican	99
sinn	99
pearse	98
prison	98
well	98
next	97
tribute	97
year	97
short	96
died	95
became	94
gore	94
many	93
married	93
surrender	93
booth	92
know	92
lives	92
march	92
playwright	92
forgotten	89
right	89
take	88
played	87
really	87
commemoration	85
forward	85
show	85
wonderful	85

held	1175
moore	1162
know	1155
state	1154
live	1133
commemorating	1121
check	1114
remembering	1091
really	1084
national	1066
rule	1058
higgins	1055
independence	1053
love	1052
special	1040
family	1034
marking	1030
role	1024
talk	1012
programme	993
amazing	991
look	989
times	985
children	970
school	970
rebel	966
life	964
patrick	957
taking	952
stories	949
country	934
monday	934
interesting	923
next	923
everyone	915
attend	911
need	905
freedom	900
night	891
post	891
fought	889
john	878
morning	878
fighting	871
takes	869

'the	84
make	84
rebellion	84
james	83
hall	82
lecture	82
info	80
mullally	80
project	80
photo	79
banner	78
hear	78
leader	78
celebrate	77
tomorrow	77
back	76
glasnevin	76
school	76
wounded	76
april	75
members	75
night	75
president	75
street	75
george	74
news	74
took	74
watch	74
wedding	74
film	72
revolution	72
think	72
rights	71
casement	70
army	69
britain	69
fascinating	69
people	69
honour	68
never	68
share	68
airbrushed	67
come	67
plaque	67
reading	67

made	867
launch	862
many	853
died	851
series	842
piece	840
song	840
york	833
fantastic	829
beautiful	825
cumann	818
forward	812
join	812
executed	803
watching	802
best	799
wonderful	797
think	796
action	794
around	790
want	790
come	789
please	788
going	774
never	773
volunteers	768
commemorative	765
documentary	764
laying	764
celebration	755
miban	750
cork	746
work	744
remembrance	742
thomas	742
sinn	740
army	739
involved	739
right	736
reading	733
home	729
also	723
nothing	723
article	722
hall	719

sunday	67
wall	67
excellent	66
freedom	66
good	66
talking	66
corbyn	65
times	65
welcome	65
labour	64
rising'	64
roger	64
seized	64
death	63
inspired	63
seat	63
college	62
gaol	62
honouring	62
independence	62
insult	62
join	62
post	62
sign	62

green	717
brilliant	714
library	708
streets	707
view	707
much	698
battle	694
terrible	693
coming	690
nation	690
republican	685
coverage	682
centennial	681
play	677
legacy	676
film	674
soldiers	674
make	673
somme	665
full	662
excellent	656
casement	653
past	653
scotland	650

K. NVivo Codebook 'Women of 1916'

Name	Description	Files	References
Women and 1916		0	0
Absence		0	0
Airbrushing	#airbrushing OR airbrush OR airbrushed OR airbrushes OR airbrushing OR erased OR erasing OR erasure OR #eirebrushing OR #eirebrushed OR silence OR silenced OR silencing OR exclude OR excluded OR excluding OR eire-brushed OR eire-brushing	2	131
Forgotten	'forgotten OR 'forgotten' OR forgotten OR forget	2	124
Herstory	herstory OR herstory' OR #herstory OR hidden OR untold	1	71
Rebellion Series	Mini- #rebellion OR 'rebellion' OR rebellion	1	197
Sisterhood	#sisterhood OR sisterhood	1	49
History	#history OR @history OR histories OR history OR history' OR historical	1	402
Affect		0	0
Bravery	brave OR brave' OR bravely OR braving OR bravery OR #brave OR courage OR courageous OR #fearless OR fearless OR fearlessness	1	208
Heroines	heroin OR #hero OR #heroes OR hero OR heroes OR heroic OR heroines OR #heroine OR heroine OR shero	1	142
Leaders	#leader OR #leaders OR leader OR leader' OR leaders	2	125
Radical	radicalising OR radical OR radicalised OR radicals	1	52
Emotion	feel OR feeling OR feelings OR feels OR emotional OR emotionally OR emotions OR emotive OR #moving OR moving	1	67

Name	Description	Files	References
Inspiration	#inspired OR inspiration OR inspiration' OR inspirational OR inspire OR inspired OR inspires OR inspiring	1	133
Pride	#proud OR proud OR proudly OR #pride OR pride	1	129
Honour	honors OR honour OR honoured OR honouring OR honours OR honored OR honourable OR honoring OR honor OR tribute OR tributes OR thankful	1	305
Legacy	#legacy OR legacies OR legacy	1	65
Centenary Commentary		0	0
Celebration	#celebrating OR 'celebrate OR celebr OR celebrate OR celebrated OR celebrates OR celebrating OR celebration OR celebrations OR celebrations'	1	365
Commemoration	#commemoration OR #commemorations OR commemorate OR commemorated OR commemorates OR commemorating OR commemoration OR commemorations OR commemorative OR #centenary OR @centenaries OR centenaries OR centenary	1	542
Constance Markievicz	#markievicz OR markievicz OR markievicz' OR markievicz'' OR markievicz' OR #countess OR 'countess OR 'countess' OR countess OR countess' OR #constance OR 'constance OR constance	1	4351
Events	#event OR event OR event' OR events	1	208
Ceremonies	ceremonial OR ceremonies OR ceremony OR wreath	1	76
Performances	perform OR performance OR performances OR performed OR performer OR performing OR performs	1	43
Theatre	play OR plays OR #theatre OR theatre	1	254
Grace Gifford	#grace OR 'grace' OR grace OR grace' OR graces OR Gifford	1	1244

Name	Description	Files	References
Margaret Skinnider	'margaret OR margaret OR #skinnider OR skinnider	1	874
Remembering	rememb OR remember OR remembered OR remembered' OR remembering OR remembers OR remembrance	1	351
Memory	#memory OR memories OR memory	1	41
Recognition	recognition OR recognising OR #recognising OR #recognition	1	40
Equality	#equality OR equal OR equality OR equality' OR equality' OR equally OR equals OR inequality or #inequality	2	170
Feminism	feminism OR feminism' OR #feminist OR #feminists OR 'feminist OR feminist OR feminists OR 'feminists' OR #feminism OR #femfest	1	165
Waking Feminists	the #wakingthenation OR #wakingthefeminist OR #wakingthefeminists OR #WTFeminists OR #WTF OR @AbbeyTheatre OR Abbey OR @wtfeminists #wakingthenation OR #wakingthefeminist OR #wakingthefeminists OR #WTFeminists OR #WTF OR @AbbeyTheatre OR Abbey OR @wtfeminists	1	304
Fighting	fighter OR fighters OR #fighting OR fight OR fighting OR fought OR still OR stilled OR stills	1	442
Freedom	#freedom OR freedom OR freedome OR free OR #free OR emancipation OR emancipation' OR #liberation OR liberate OR liberated OR liberating OR liberation	2	139
Gender	#gender OR 'gender OR gender OR gendered	1	46
LGBTQ+	lesbian OR lesbians OR gay OR #relationships OR relationship OR relationships OR #LGBT OR lgbt OR #marref OR queer OR queers	1	43

Name	Description	Files	References
Masculinity	masculine OR masculinity OR male OR man	1	44
International Women's Day	#international OR international OR internationalism OR internationally OR #iwd2016 OR #internationalwomenday OR #internationalwomensday	1	500
Proclamation	#proclamation OR proclamation OR #proclamationday	1	66
Rights	right OR rightful OR rightly OR rights OR #womensrights	1	168
Repealthe8th	#repealthe8th OR repeal OR #repeal OR abortion OR #notacriminal OR @freesafelegal	2	54
Socialism	socialist OR socialists OR #socialist OR socialism OR #socialism OR workers	1	97
Historical Information		0	0
GLAMs	libraries OR library or #library OR #libraries OR archive OR archives OR archival OR #archives OR records OR sources OR material OR #museum OR museum OR museums OR gallery OR collection OR collections OR #letter OR letter OR letters OR image OR images OR photograph OR photographed OR photographic OR photographs	1	374
Exhibitions	#exhibition OR exhibit OR exhibiting OR exhibition OR exhibitions	1	236
Live-Tweeting	#OnThisDay OR #OTD #ThisDay OR #irishhistory OR #1916LIVE	1	259
Research	#research OR research OR researched OR researchers OR researching	1	37
Books	#book OR #books OR book OR book' OR books	1	200
Documentaries	#documentary OR documentary OR documentaries	1	53

Name	Description	Files	References
Lectures and Conferences	#lecture OR lecture OR lectures OR #conference OR conference	1	147
Role of Women	#role OR 'role OR role OR roles OR involve OR involved OR involvement OR #twitterstorians OR #womenshistory	1	532
Cumann na mBan	#cumann OR 'cumann OR cumann OR mban OR mban'	1	1888
Rebels- Revolutionaries	#revolutionaries OR #revolutionary OR 'revolutionaries OR 'revolutionary OR revolutionaries OR revolutionaries' OR revolutionary OR revolutionary' OR revolutionary'' OR #rebels OR rebel OR rebel' OR rebelled OR rebels OR rebels' OR rebels'	1	619
Stories	#story OR stories OR stories' OR story	1	324
Suffrage	#suffragette OR #suffragettes OR suffragette OR suffragettes OR suffrage OR #suffrage	1	91

