

ON THE BRINK

The Politics of Conflict 1914-1916 Project

PRO / ANTI HOME RULE

EASTER RISING & BATTLE OF THE SOMME

COMMEMORATION

FREDRICK FRANKLIN

As a schoolboy, Fredrick Robert Franklin was witness to the Easter Rising as it unfolded in Dublin in April 1916.

'Sackville Street, one of the finest streets in Europe, was a mass of smoking ruins. Nelson's Pillar stood alone in the midst of a scene of devastation ... The Post Office, banks, hotels and shops in that great thoroughfare shared a common fate. Hundreds were killed and wounded, and thousands reduced to destitution and want.'

Franklin came from Dublin and was a boarding pupil at Coleraine Academical Institution. He was home for Easter holidays during the Rising and wrote an article for the school magazine on his return, 'Experiences in Dublin during the Sinn Fein Rising'.

'Many stray bullets found their billets in our neighbourhood, fired, doubtless, by the rebels who were holding Northumberland Road in great strength. At night I took great care to pull my bed into the corner of the room, which I concluded was safer than immediately in front of the window ... People were wandering around with long faces telling each other that there was a battle raging in Belfast, that Cork was in flames, and that fighting was going on all over the country. One dear old lady produced the interesting statement that the Sinn Feiners had turned the gas into the Liffey, and all the fish were dead! A lady who lived in the neighbourhood wrote down all the stories in a book, which she called her "Book of Lies"... On Saturday the rumour that the rebels had surrendered caused a thrill of joy and excitement everywhere.'



To travel in and out of the city required a pass. Franklin was unable to get a pass but still managed to board a train back to school in Coleraine.

'as we moved slowly out of Dublin my principal emotion was joy at getting out of it, though I would have been sorry to have missed the excitement.'

Franklin was awarded the Clothworkers' Scholarship in 1916. In October 1916 he entered Trinity College, Dublin, and subsequently joined the Officer Training Corps. Franklin got a commission in Royal Irish Rifles in September 1917, and was killed in action in France on 9th December 1917, aged 19. He is remembered, along with 64 other old boys from Coleraine Academical Institute who died on service during World War One, on a brass plaque outside the school hall.

Fredrick Robert Franklin
Courtesy of Coleraine Academical Institution Museum