

## On the Brink 1912-13 workshop made me think...

"About all the Troubles in Ireland and why wars happened and most of all why Ireland split in two"

"[understand] the conflict between unionists and nationalists in more detail"

"Useful to apply 'Home Rule' knowledge to a local 'Ballycastle', 'Portrush' context"

Teacher Ballycastle

"How some events in 1912 are similar to now"

"How divided Ireland was and the many different opinions there are in different communities"

"About the past and how my family could of been included in it"

For further information on this project, please contact **Mid-Antrim Museums Service**  
CALL 028 2563 592  
EMAIL [maria.cagney@ballymena.gov.uk](mailto:maria.cagney@ballymena.gov.uk)  
or **Causeway Museum Service**  
CALL 028 7034 7235  
EMAIL [cms@colerainebc.gov.uk](mailto:cms@colerainebc.gov.uk)



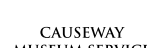
A project supported by the PEACE III Programme managed for the Special EU Programmes Body by the North East PEACE III Partnership.



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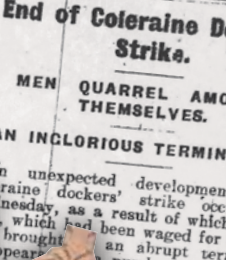
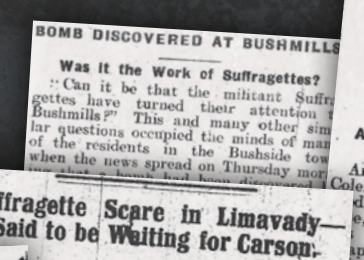
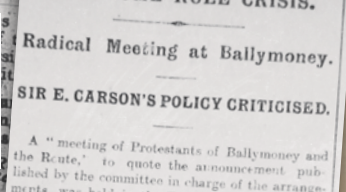
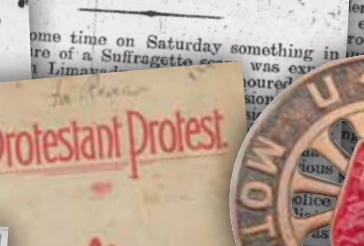
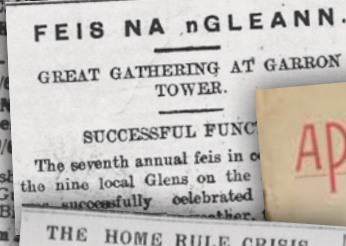
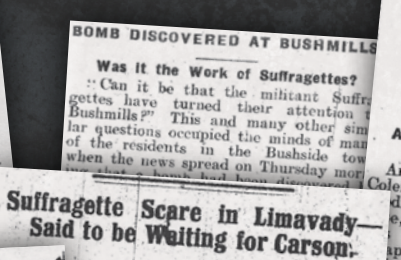
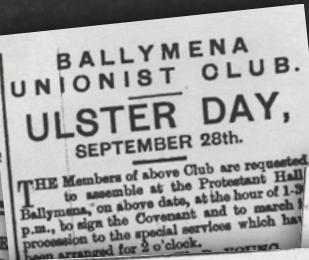


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Museums Service

# ON THE BRINK 1912-13 A YEAR OF PROTEST





# ON THE BRINK

## 1912-13 A YEAR OF PROTEST

### Introduction

*On the Brink 1912-13: A Year of Protest* is one of six heritage-based projects delivered by Causeway and Mid-Antrim Museum Services for the North East PEACE III Partnership Cultural Fusions programme 2011-13.

This project grew out of an identified need and commitment to support local communities engaging with the Decade of Centenaries (2012 -2023)\*. The latter, has highlighted a significant number of anniversaries from the period 1912 to 1923, and the challenges facing communities wishing to mark these.

By providing inclusive engagement opportunities, accurate histories and contextual learning resources for communities intending to mark the anniversaries of 1912- 1913, *On the Brink* has reduced the potential for narrow or one-sided interpretation of events to be commemorated.

\* This initiative is being led by the Community Relations Council (CRC) and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) though its objectives and principles are shared by PEACE III.

### TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT

A notice featured in *The Suffragette* newspaper highlighting the unjust handling of suffragette militancy in Ulster by the Government while the UVF continue to law-break

Irish language headline from the *Daily Herald* on the Dublin Lockout in 1913

Programme from an important anti-Home Rule meeting held on the eve of Ulster Day  
Image courtesy of Rt. Hon. Christopher Brooke

### BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT

Image of Carson's contingent making their way along Railway Road, Coleraine  
Coleraine Museum Collection

Image of carters and porters at Coleraine Docks circa 1910  
Image courtesy of Robert Anderson

Appetite in the community for *On the Brink* 1912-13 programming has confirmed the value of this project. Workshop participants have demonstrated a great willingness to explore, discuss and take on board multiple perspectives relating to this very complex period of our shared history. Such exploration has enabled many reflective and meaningful discussions on the legacy and relevance of these histories in the present.

In keeping with our on-going commitment to support community engagement with the Decade of Centenaries, MAMS and CMS are currently planning the next phase of *On the Brink* which will focus on the period 1914-16. This will commence later this year.



## Background to Project

In 1912-13, Ireland was a complex place to live as sweeping social and political forces, shaped by international and national events, were challenging the country. People were up in arms. They protested about many issues, including Home Rule. Many of these protests led to key milestone events such as Ulster Day in 1912 and the Dublin Lockout in 1913. These milestones are now, one hundred years later, being commemorated in the community.

Mid-Antrim and Causeway Museum Services sought to develop resources to provide communities with a support system through which they could inclusively engage with these anniversaries. A research project drawing on local newspaper coverage in 1912-13 was completed. This material was supplemented with content from our museum collections to produce *On the Brink* workshops resources. Discussion-based workshops with schools and groups were then delivered from September 2012 to April 2013.

This DVD learning resource is the output of the *On the Brink* 1912-13 project. It covers four themes relating to protest including: 'Ulster Day', 'Up in Arms', 'Votes for Women' and 'Striking Workers'.

# USER NOTES

## Target users include:

- History teachers who can draw on DVD resources to support teaching of Union to Partition (specifically the Home Rule Crisis) with Key Stage III and IV students
- Community groups or individuals who wish to explore what was happening in their locality in 1912-13.

This learning resource does not aim to give a detailed account of the political events of 1912 and 1913. Instead, it presents a variety of local perspectives through newspaper reports and museum collections. Some material from 1911 and 1914 is also included in order to provide wider context for events covered.

## What is covered in the DVD resource?

'Protest', as a main theme meshes together four sub themes:

- 'Ulster Day' exploring Unionists' resistance to Home Rule, the build-up to September 28th 1912 (Ulster Day) as well as Nationalist reaction to this event:
- 'Up in Arms' highlights gun-running stories before the well-documented Larne and Howth Gun Runnings in 1914:
- 'Votes for Women' explores the militant and constitutional methods used by women to get the vote, division within their ranks and wider reaction from the public due to Home Rule politics
- 'Striking Workers' mainly highlights the terms and conditions workers demanded but also the division that occurred between union and non-union workers. Their role within strikes across Britain and Ireland is also briefly covered.

## Research Parameters

Due to the evolving nature of local museum collections and the fact that most local newspapers during this Home Rule 1912-13 period were owned and/or controlled by wealthy Unionists, it has been difficult to locate and portray Nationalist perspectives on all political issues and events covered. For this reason, newspaper reports from the *Derry Journal* and the *Irish News*, considered nationalist newspapers at this time, are invaluable in portraying this perspective.

While staff have endeavoured to provide best quality newspaper content in this resource, users must be mindful that material obtained in such archives is normally only suitable for reference purposes.

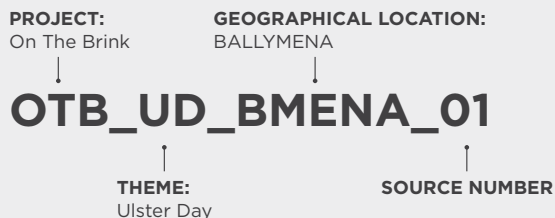
## Accessing DVD content

### • Thematic Folders/geographic location

On examination of DVD content, users will find four main thematic folders. Within each of these, resources have been filed into subfolders according to the geographical location/council area. One additional folder is also included containing other newspaper stories and visual material on this theme.

### • Source reference codes

All *On the Brink* digital files have been allocated a reference code based on theme/geographical location/source number.



## Four thematic codes

<b>UD</b>	Ulster Day	<b>VFW</b>	Votes For Women
<b>UIA</b>	Up In Arms	<b>SW</b>	Striking Workers

## Geographical locations

<b>BMENA</b>	Ballymena	<b>LIM</b>	Limavady
<b>BMON</b>	Ballymoney	<b>MOY</b>	Moyle
<b>BUSH</b>	Bushmills	<b>PRUSH</b>	Portrush
<b>COL</b>	Coleraine	<b>ADD</b>	Additional

## Newspaper Files

At the top of each newspaper article, the date on which it was published and the source is outlined.

## Printing resources

DVD resources have been designed so that they are printer friendly. However, if printing in black and white, please remember to select these printer settings.

## Engaging with newspaper sources

Newspapers from this period typically reported from either a Nationalist or Unionist viewpoint. Plenty of source material from both perspectives is provided, particularly in relation to reports on 'Ulster Day'. Compare the different headlines they used!

*It is hard to believe Nationalist and Unionist newspapers were even reporting on the same event.*

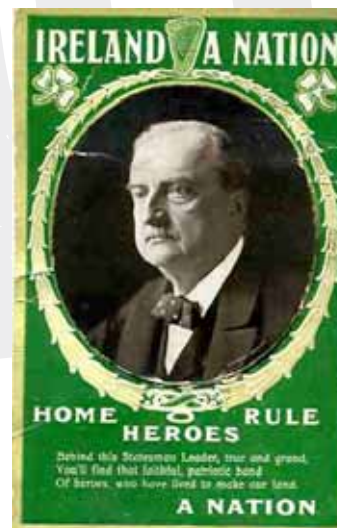
The following sections of this booklet offer some context which can be used to support exploration of *On the Brink* DVD resources.

# ULSTER DAY

*In 1801, the Irish parliament was abolished in Dublin when Ireland became a constituent part of United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.*

Home Rule was the means by which Irish Nationalists campaigned for a devolved parliament in Dublin. In 1886 and 1893, the Tory-dominated House of Lords blocked Irish Nationalist attempts to secure this. In February 1910, Edward Carson became leader of the Ulster Unionist Party and guided Ulster Protestants in their overwhelming resistance to Home Rule.

In 1910, John Redmond became leader of the Irish Nationalist Party and formed an alliance with Liberal government. In exchange, Redmond demanded a Home Rule Bill. Liberal government's opposition was the Conservative Unionist Party which included Ulster Unionists. They were appalled by the prospect of Home Rule, not wishing to see the Union broken up or Ulster's industrial wealth and strong Protestant faith jeopardized by a poor, Catholic-dominated government in Dublin. They relied heavily upon the House of Lords to block future Home Rule bills.



**ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT**  
Pro-Home Rule postcard  
honouring John Redmond  
Image courtesy of  
The Linen Hall Library

Ulster Day coverage included in a scrapbook assembled by a member of the Young Family who were staunch Ulster Unionists in Ballymena  
Image courtesy of Rt. Hon. Christopher Brooke



**ABOVE**  
Postcard identifying Edward Carson as the leader of anti-Home Rule resistance in Ulster  
Mid-Antrim Museum Collection

However in 1911, the Parliament Act was passed which removed the House of Lords' power to reject a bill. In April 1912, the third Home Rule Bill was finally introduced to the Commons. It was only a matter of time before it became law.

On Ulster Day, 28th September 1912, the Ulster Covenant was signed by 237,368 men, and the Declaration by 234,046 women, pledging to defend Ulster from Home Rule by 'all means necessary.'

*On the Brink 1912-13* DVD resources relating to Ulster Day describe this landmark event in towns across the north east. The Ulster Covenant text can also be examined in the visual resources file for this theme.



# UP IN ARMS

*On 13th December 1912, the Ulster Unionist Council decided to bring together disparate groups of drilling unionists.*

In January 1913, the Ulster Volunteer Force was formally established and they were prepared to use military tactics to resist Home Rule. By 1914, 90,000 men had signed up.

On the 25th November 1913, the Irish Nationalists formed the Irish Volunteers. Eoin MacNeill, originally from Glenarm, was its chief-of-staff. A month later, it became illegal to import guns into Ireland. Nationalist and Unionist Volunteers were defiant and the law was withdrawn. By mid-1914, all Ireland Irish Volunteer membership was estimated at 180,000 members.

While most arms were brought into Ulster in 1914 through the well-documented Larne Gun Running, the UVF and to a much lesser extent, the Irish Volunteers, most certainly owned arms before then.



## AMMUNITION SEIZED AT COLERAINE HARBOUR.

### ABOVE

A newspaper report from the *On the Brink* DVD resource evidencing the importation of arms into Coleraine Harbour

### LEFT

Replica of a UVF gun  
Larne Museum Collection

### BELOW

UVF motor corps badge  
Image courtesy of  
Mr Alan Stewart



As early as September 1911, the RIC noted that many Unionists owned cheap firearms which could be bought over the counter. One year later, they were certain that large numbers of rifles were being hidden away by Unionists across Ulster.

On December 12th 1913, the *Ballymena Observer* wrote "Unionists of the Northern province are already in possession of enough magazine rifles and ammunition to equip a force of nearly 50,000 men". This report clearly identifies that Unionist preparation for armed resistance was intensifying and that the Government and police were turning a blind eye to the importation of guns.

By August 1914, both volunteer forces were armed. Ireland was on the brink of civil war but the outbreak of World War One ironically put this battle on hold.

Gun-running was widespread in Ulster and across the north east well before the historic Larne Gun Running in 1914. *On the Brink 1912-13* DVD resources reveal this fact, highlighting newspaper reports on the importation and movement of arms locally.

# VOTES FOR WOMEN

*By the late 1800s, suffragists had secured certain rights for women.*

For example, they could own their own property and access second-and-third level education. By the early 1900s, twenty suffrage societies had been formed in Ulster. The parliamentary vote for women across the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland now became their goal.

A new era of educated Irish women had emerged and they wished to participate in decision-making at a national level. However, by 1912 this particular endeavour was to become dogged by Home Rule politics.

Female enfranchisement had formerly united Irish suffragists but the constitutional crisis brought about by the third Home Rule bill created division. Women of Nationalist affiliation sought the inclusion of female enfranchisement in the Home Rule Bill for a parliament in Dublin. Unionist women wished the same to be included in the provisional government being planned by Ulster Unionists in 1913, which aimed to protect Ulster in the event that Home Rule became law. One thing that united John Redmond, leader of the Irish



## ABOVE

Anti-Home Rule postcard mocking Irish Nationalists and Irish suffrage campaigns. Image courtesy of National Library of Ireland



## ABOVE

Image of Irish Suffragettes featured in the *The Irish Citizen*, June 1912. *The Irish Citizen*

## VOTES FOR WOMEN

Nationalist Party and Edward Carson, leader of Ulster Unionist Party, was their opposition to women's suffrage.

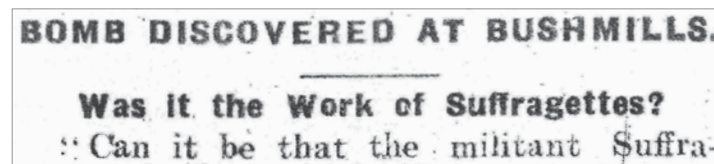
Whether women's suffrage activities were constitutional or militant, most people in Ireland viewed their campaign for the vote as an unwelcome distraction from the principal concern of the day, Home Rule. In anger and frustration, suffragettes became more militant and destroyed property associated with key male political figures and government buildings. They were arrested, often imprisoned and frequently went on hunger strike for their cause.

With the outbreak of war in August 1914, suffrage activity became significantly reduced. The war revolutionised the industrial position of women. In acknowledgement of their huge contribution to the war effort, in 1918, women of property over the age of 30 were given the right to vote.

*On the Brink* 1912-13 DVD resources explore the impact of suffrage campaigns across the north east and beyond. It highlights local reaction to these women who were often jeered, heckled and attacked by crowds who viewed them as disloyal to the cause of Ulster, Empire and Home Rule.

## BELOW

A headline from a suffragette story relating to Bushmills explored in the *On the Brink* DVD learning resource



# STRIKING WORKERS

*The years leading up to the First World War saw the rise of a 'new trade unionism' across Britain and Ireland.*

In 1907 in Belfast, the infamous trade unionist Jim Larkin convinced 5000 strikers to down tools. He inspired workers' solidarity and used sympathetic strikes to demand higher wages for workers from employers. For a short time, he united workers across the religious divide but soon Home Rule strife resumed.

In 1911, workers across Britain, including huge numbers of dock labourers, National Railway workers and miners went out on strike. This year in British history became known as 'The Great Unrest'.

In 1912, James Connolly was now Larkin's Union representative in Belfast. He could not affect change here, such was the extent of the sectarian violence in the dockyards of Belfast due to heightened Home Rule tensions. Back in Dublin, Larkin and Connolly then formed the Irish Labour Party.



**ABOVE**  
Iconic image of Jim Larkin rallying strikers during the Dublin Lock-out in 1913  
Image courtesy of History Ireland



**ABOVE**  
Captain Jack White from Broughshane (pictured centre) was co-founder of the Irish Citizen Army  
Mid-Antrim Museum Collection

**BELOW**  
Newspaper headline on a strike in the Braidwater Mill covered in the *On the Brink* DVD learning resource

The year 1913 brought the great Dublin Lockout which lasted for an epic eight months under Larkin's leadership. Much brutality was used by the city's Metropolitan Police as they followed government's orders to quash the strike. Connolly set up the Irish Citizen Army to protect the striking people. The result of the 1913 Lockout was in Connolly words 'a drawn battle'. Workers lacked even basic resources to continue striking and returned to work, but employers would not treat them with the same indifference again.

In relation to the mindset of workers in 1913 in north-east Ulster, Connolly wrote, 'the question of Home Rule is not a settled question in men's minds, much less settled politically, [...] [so] that all other questions such as wages, hours, conditions of labour, must take a subordinate place and lose their power to attract attention, much less to compel action'.

As Connolly noted, Home Rule was the main concern for workers in this period but ad hoc strikes did occur in the north east and these are explored in the *On the Brink* DVD learning resource.

**STRIKE IN BALLYMENA.  
BRAIDWATER MILL CLOSED.  
1,200 WORKERS IDLE.**  
The Braidwater Mill was closed on Wednesday evening until further notice. as