ACROSS THE HAWTHORN HEDGE

1914 1915

Across the hawthorn hedge the noise of bugles, Flares across the night, Somewhere on the lough was a prison ship for Germans, A cage across their sight. FROM CARRICKFERGUS BY LOUIS MACNEICE
From reprinted by permission of David Higham Associates, London

EUROPE AND IRELAND IN 1914

In 1914, European Imperial powers, harbouring old rivalries and constantly competing for territory and influence, were on the brink of conflict. Ireland, divided by the Home Rule issue, was on the brink of civil war.
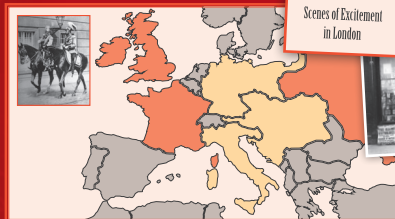
A CLASH OF EMPIRES

Europe in 1914 was dominated by Imperial powers formed into two major power blocks. The Triple Entente, an alliance of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, France and Russia, was opposed by The Triple Alliance, composed of Austria-Hungary, Germany and Italy.

Germany had emerged from a collection of independent states to become one of the world's most industrialised nations, eager to expand its territory and influence.

Below: Map showing The Triple Entente and The Triple Alliance. Italy later fought against Germany.

Below, inset King George V with his cousin, Kaiser Wilhelm II. The King was also first cousin to Tsar Nicholas II of Russia.
Courtesy of the Orwell War Primary Document Archive

The Triple Entente
The Triple Alliance

THE COUNTDOWN TO WAR

On 28th June 1914, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, was assassinated by a Serbian nationalist. In response, Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia. Russia stepped in to support Serbia. France's treaty with Russia drew them in. Germany marched on France, through neutral Belgium.

Britain declared war on Germany on 4th August 1914, under the terms of an old treaty with Belgium.

DIVIDED LOYALTIES IRELAND IN 1914

The Home Rule issue had polarised Ireland. The Irish Unionists, led by Edward Carson, opposed a Dublin Parliament and the Irish Nationalists, led by John Redmond, supported it. By 1914, the two sides had formed opposing militias – The Irish Volunteers, led by Eoin MacNeill and the Ulster Volunteers, commanded by Sir George Richardson. Both sides were armed with guns from Germany and Austria.

Above, left to right: Ulster Volunteers drilling in the courtyard of Galgorm Castle, Ballymena
Courtesy of Mr Kirk-Christopher Browne

Irish Volunteers on parade, after the Howth Gun-running of 26th July 1914
This image is reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland NLI. KE. 11. 1923.

Left: Courtesy of Ballballoo Newsletter

BELFAST NEWSLETTER
5th August 1914

WAR WITH GERMANY

Declaration Last Night

Scenes of Excitement in London

Below: MacKay's Shopfront Coleraine 1914
Coleraine Museum Collection

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Above: Abbeylands House, Whiteabbey, was burnt to the ground by militant suffragettes in April 1914
Larne Times and Weekly Telegraph 9th April 1914

1914 was a year of great militancy by Ulster suffragettes with a campaign of vandalism, arson and bombing. However, for many women, the Home Rule question took priority over women's rights.

Although Redmond and Carson held opposing positions on Home Rule, they had much in common. Both had conservative convictions, supported the British Empire and opposed women's suffrage.

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

In 1914, Irish trade unionism was taking stock after a period of military which had lasted since 1907. Many active trade unionists had served in the army and were mobilised when war was declared. By the spring of 1915, over half the membership of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union were in the trenches. However, industrial unrest did not stop because of the War.

Below: Irish Women Workers' Union members outside Liberty Hall, Dublin, 1914. This union was set up, in September 1911, to represent female workers who were excluded from the mainstream labour movement at this time.
This image is reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland NLI. KE 204.

CULTURE

Artists, photographers, poets and musicians enlisted, serving as war correspondents, photographers and artists. Those unable to serve increasingly sought other ways to contribute, such as civil service. For many artistic work dried up as the War continued.

Below: Artists and writers including Hugh Thomas's contributed to Blinded Soldiers and Sailors Gift Book published in 1915 by, kandel and facer, to raise funds to support the work of St Dunstan's Regent Park.
Coleraine Museum Collection

THE BLINDED SOLDIERS AND SAILORS GIFT BOOK

Below: Badge of the Ulster Women's Unionist Council who campaigned against Home Rule, viewing it as a threat to the social and economic welfare of Ulster and to their children's future.
Mid-Antrim Museum Collection

WOMEN'S UNIONIST
IN GOD OUR TRUST

Causeway Museum Service

SERVING YOUR COUNTRY

Across the hawthorn hedge the noise of bugles, Flares across the night. Somewhere on the lough was a prison ship for Germans, A cage across their sight.
FROM CARRICKFERGUS BY LOUIS MACNEICE
Poem reproduced by permission of David Higham Associates, London

At the outbreak of war in 1914, every European country but one had a large standing army of conscripted troops. The exception was Britain, which had a small army.

20,000 Irishmen serving as soldiers and 30,000 reservists were part of the British Expeditionary Force, entering Belgium in August 1914.

Right Recruitment poster illustrating the conflicts, including Ypres and Gallipoli, in which Irishmen were engaged during the early years of the War.
© Imperial War Museum Art.IWM PST 13566

Lord Kitchener, Secretary of State for War, led the campaign to recruit the 'New Army' of volunteers. The 10th (Irish) Division was made up of some of the first 100,000 to sign up. It had brigades with bases in all four provinces.

Below Cart ferry to popular belief, this image of Lord Kitchener was not a recruiting poster. It was used on the cover of London Opinion in September 1914.
© Imperial War Museum

Above Private John Peoples 1914–1919 Star medal.
Courtesy of John O'Kane

DOUBTS

In Ireland, there were doubts on both sides. Why should the Ulster Volunteers fight against Kaiser Wilhelm II, the strongest defender of Protestantism in Europe? Why should the Irish Volunteers fight for Britain given their efforts to secure Home Rule? Initially, both sides agreed to serve only as home defence forces.

Carson held meetings with Kitchener regarding the role the UVF could play in the War. Ulster Volunteers enlisted together into battalions of UVF corps, forming the 36th (Ulster) Division.

Redmond called for Irish Volunteers to serve in the War, causing a split. The majority followed Redmond becoming the National Volunteers, sometimes referred to as the Irish National Volunteers. Large numbers enlisted in what became the 16th (Irish) Division. The remaining Irish Volunteers stayed at home.

Below Ballycastle Company National Volunteers support John Redmond.
Courtesy of Derry Journal

Above Pro- and anti-Home Rule sentiments were expressed and illustrated on postcards and other items.
IWM Amlin Museum Collection

Above Call for Irishmen to enlist, published in the Irish News and the Belfast Telegraph on the same day – 30th October 1914.
Courtesy of the Inverse War Museum (AP) 2013

Below The Landing in Suvla Bay, Early Morning, 7th August 1915.
Courtesy of The Inverse War Museum (AP) 2013

RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGNS

In early 1915, the Central Council for the Organisation of Recruitment in Ireland was established and began producing posters appealing directly to the Irish.

Across Ireland, soldiers paraded, bands played, officers and local dignitaries gave speeches at recruitment events organised by each of the Irish regiments. These also occurred across the counties of Londonderry and Antrim. The Royal Irish Rifles formed two new service battalions, with the 11th and 12th recruited in South and North Antrim. In Coleraine and Limavady men joined the 10th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

Many women joined up too, serving with Queen Alexandra's Imperial Nursing Service, the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry or the Territorial Force Nursing Service.

Some people remained opposed to the War. However, many, compelled by their humanitarianism, served with the Voluntary Aid Detachment, driving ambulances, bearing stretchers or carrying out other duties which did not involve fighting.

Right Local nurses collect bags of sphagnum moss for use in the making of surgical dressings to treat the wounded of the War.
Larne Museum Collection

Above Call for UVF men to enlist.
Carrickfergus Museum AP September 1914

Above 10th Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers on Lodge Road, Coleraine, May 1915.
Coleraine Museum Collection

Below Image of the learning camp at Clandeboye collected in a scrapbook by Sam Henry.
Sam Henry Collection, Coleraine Museum

DERRY JOURNAL
14th August 1914

Ballycastle Company Irish National Volunteers...

'We hereby agree...
to volunteer for home defence
and are also willing to
co-operate with the Ulster
Volunteers in defence of
the shores of Ireland.'

LIFE AT HOME

Across the hawthorn hedge the noise of bugles, Flares across the night. Somewhere on the lough was a prison ship for Germans, A cage across their sight. FROM CARRICKFERGUS BY LOUIS MACNEICE
From reproduced by permission of David Higham Associates, London

The relatively small British Expeditionary Force reached Mons, in southern Belgium, on 22nd August 1914. Men from Counties Antrim and Londonderry were there from the beginning of the War.

Back home, life went on. People went to work. There was sport, music and dancing. However, the War, and home support for it, began to affect every aspect of life.

SUPPORT FOR THE TROOPS

There was enthusiastic support for the war effort in towns and villages. Local organisations raised money and gathered supplies to send to the troops.

In Ballymena, the Urban Council organised a committee to administer donations to the Prince of Wales National Relief Fund. Mary Alice Young, of Galgorm Castle, President of the local branch of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association (SSFA) appealed for hand-knitted socks for the Royal Irish Rifles.

Left: Queen Alexandra Christmas Box sent to troops in 1914.
Coleraine Museum Collection

Below: The Kilkeel Fort Cannon was installed in 1910. As the War progressed, the scrap and power of German battleship guns increased, rendering this weapon obsolete.
Courtesy of Nigel Thompson and Graham Mahon

The Portrush Branch of the Irish Women's Association to Aid Irish Regiments and Prisoners of War requested householders to subscribe a penny a week to pay for the boxes of goods sent to prisoners of war.

Left: This Work for Women Fund was founded by Queen Mary in 1914 to help secure paid employment for women whose partners were fighting overseas.
Larne Museum Collection

"I received the tobacco quite safe, and you can't have how much it was valued out here."

"Ballymena Observer"
TOBACCO FUND.

STATE CONTROL

Above: Ballymena Observer readers raised funds to buy comforts for the men at the Front and ambulances to send to the wounded.
Courtesy of The Ballymena Times

Mobilising the home front brought the state to the point where daily life and local economies had to be controlled in the name of the war effort. The Aliens Restriction Act was passed, requiring all foreign nationals to register at a police station. This was followed by The Defence of the Realm Act.

As the War went on, more restrictions were introduced. Pub opening hours were reduced, a 'no treating order' laid down that no one could buy drink for another person.

Left Appeal to ablymena Observer readers encouraging them to subscribe to the newspaper's Tobacco Fund.
Courtesy of The Ballymena Times

Below: Government proposals to increase daily six alcohol.
Carrickfergus Advertiser 30th April 1915

Below & bottom: Defence of the Realm Act: 1914, 1914 and selected extracts.
Ballycastle Museum Collection

Among a long list, it was forbidden to –
Talk about naval or military matters in public places

Light bonfires or fireworks

Ring church bells

It also empowered the government to –
Try any civilian breaking these restrictions

Take over any factory or workshop

Take over any land it wanted to

Censor newspapers

Life goes on

Despite the War, everyday life carried on. In Ballymena, a new Catholic Hall was opened, concerts continued in the Protestant Hall and the Picture House drew large audiences. Musical and Dramatic Recitals were held in the Victoria Hall, Larne. Sporting events also continued, but used their activities to support the War.

Right Swimmers continued at holiday at Whitehead, while in Portrush there was a picturepost debate about the controversial subject of 'mixed bathing'.
Carrickfergus Museum Collection

Engagement diary belonging to the Hezlet family.
Home Catholic, Coleraine Museum.

He's down!

From the outset, news from the Front provided constant reminders of the conflict. The dread phrase 'He's down!' was heard when a man was reported dead or missing.

Below: North Irish Horse in Limavady. William Moore from Ballyquin, Limavady, was in France with the North Irish Horse in August 1914. He was cut down by machine gun fire the following month.
Courtesy of Hezlet Hayes

MAKING A LIVING

Across the hawthorn hedge the noise of bugles, Flares across the night. Somewhere on the lough was a prison ship for Germans, A cage across their sight. **FROM CARRICKFERGUS BY LOUIS MACNEICE**
Poem reproduced by permission of David Higham Associates, London

Huge resources were piled into the war effort. A strong economy at home was essential to support this. While there were challenges for both agriculture and industry, there were also opportunities.

TRADE & INDUSTRY

The linen industry was crucial to the local economy. The sudden loss of imported flax from Russia and Belgium was a threat, forcing prices up and drastically cutting working hours. However, by early 1915, the Coleraine Chronicle market news reported that 'the high prices achieved a few weeks ago were not reached'.

The *Ballymena Weekly Telegraph* reported that most workers in the cotton handkerchief factories were on half-time as their European buyers had defaulted on their payments. However, the slump was short lived. New sources were found and government orders were placed for uniforms, munitions, ships and other supplies for the War.

Left Ram Mills, Carrickfergus, from which many men went to war.
Carrickfergus Museum Collection

Below Children's Mill in Coleraine. The Lindsay family supported the women and mothers of all employees signing up for service. In any division of children's New Year box.
Courtesy of the Lindsay family

THE LAND

A series of Land Acts from 1870–1903 had made it possible for tenants to purchase land. About nine million acres were transferred to former tenants. They now had a stake in the economy of the country. As supplies from Europe were cut off, Ireland became Britain's larder.

Above In Limavady, Britain's hydroelectric power station on the Roe River was given a boost when the coal-dependent lighting system in the town was affected by lack of supply.
Limavady Museum Collection

FOOD SUPPLY

People, fearing shortages, began to stockpile goods. This reduced supply and pushed up prices. Newspapers reported the rising price of food.

The *Carrickfergus Advertiser* carried instruction on 'How To Increase The Food Supply' by planting vegetables. It was 'the duty of all who have gardens or plots of land to sow at once'.

Right Farmers buy and sell cattle at the Fair Hill market, Ballymena. The shortage of food imports, due to war, increased demand for their produce.
Mid Antrim Museum Collection

Workers

Recruitment led to a shortage of skilled workers in many industries. The *Ballymena Weekly Telegraph* of 12th December 1914 reported a shortage of trained scutch mill workers. 600 Ulster mills were short of hands.

The Hiring Fair was traditionally the place where agricultural workers signed up to work. Army recruiters turned up at the fairs encouraging more men into uniform. The Coleraine Chronicle in May 1915 noted that 'The attendance was not at all up to that of previous hiring fairs.' This meant that 'wages naturally had an upward tendency'.

Above Scutch mill workers.
Tum Henry Collection, Coleraine Museum

Regulations regarding school attendance were relaxed to allow children to work on the farms – pupils could be continuously absent for up to three months.

Background Hiring Fair, Ballymena.
Ballymena Museum Collection

Right Every May and November, those seeking employment with local farmers attended Hiring Fairs in Ballycastle.
Courtesy of Ballymoney Heritage Council

Below Downtown's, Ballymoney. The Irish News reported that food prices in Ballymoney had risen sharply.
Ballymena Museum Collection