

# REVOLUTION 1916 THE ORIGINAL & AUTHENTIC EXHIBITION



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Collectio

## THOMAS MACDONAGH (1878-1916) TOMÁS MAC DONNCHADHA (1878-1916)

Thomas MacDonagh was born in Cloughjordan, County Tipperary, to Joseph and Mary Louise who had arrived the previous year as teachers for the newly-opened School. Thomas proved to be a talented scholar and was sent to Rockwell College in 1894, where after a period as a trainee teacher he was appointed to a teaching post in St Kieran's College, Kilkenny, where he became an active member of the Gaelic League.

During a further posting in Cork from 1901-1906 at St Colman's College Fermoy, Thomas produced some of his best known literary works translating Cathal Bhuidhe MacGiolla's poem An Bonnán Buí (The Yellow Bittern) and he also co-founded the Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (ASTI).

Meeting Pádraig Pearse on the Aran Islands led to a new post as assistant headmaster of the new school set up in Ranelagh named after the patron saint of the Islands, St Enda. MacDonagh graduated from University College Dublin in 1911 with a first class masters degree which gained him a lectureship there. Also in 1911 he married Muriel Gifford whose sister Grace was later to marry another signatory Joseph Plunkett. They had two children Donagh and Barbara.

Becoming more politically aware Thomas was active in the Irish Women's Franchise League and the Dublin Industrial Peace Committee set up during the 1913 Lockout. He joined the Volunteers in 1913 and played an active part in the Howth Gun Running and was one of the main organisers for the O'Donovan Rossa Funeral in 1915.

He believed that the cause of Irish freedom could be advanced by war if necessary and was a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood from April 1915. It took another year until just before the Rising for MacDonagh to be appointed to the IRB's Military Council. He was a signatory of the Proclamation and is thought to have contributed to the content.

During the Rising MacDonagh was commandant of the 2nd Battalion Dublin Brigade and was in command at Jacobs Biscuit Factory on Bishop Street. Although a prominent building the garrison saw little action and was by-passed as the British forces concentrated on other garrisons and the GPO

Thomas MacDonagh was visited in Kilmainham Jail by his sister, Sr Francesca, just before his execution and she gave him a set of her rosary beads which she received back later that week with six beads shot off. A British Officer later wrote of the executions on that morning; "they all died well, MacDonagh died like a prince".

*"I am to die at dawn 3.30 am, 3rd May. I am ready to die and thank God that I die in so holy a cause. My Country will reward my dust richly"*

Thomas was third to be executed on the morning of May 3rd 1916 and both his next in command John MacBride and his close friend Michael O'Hanrahan were also executed.

Tháinig Tomás Mac Donnchadha ar an saol i gCloch Shiurdáin i gContae Thiobraid Árann. Bhí a thuismitheoirí Joseph agus Mary Louise i ndiaidh teacht chuig an gceantar bliain roimhe sin mar mhúinteoirí sa scoil nua. Scoláire cumasach é agus cuireadh go Coláiste Charn Tobair é in 1894 agus i ndiaidh dó seal a chaitheamh mar ábhar oide ceapadh ina mhúinteoir i gColáiste Chiaráin, Cill Chainnigh, é, áit a thosaigh sé ag glacadh páirt gníomhach i gConradh na Gaeilge.

Le linn dó bheith ag obair i gCorcaigh idir 1901 agus 1906 i gColáiste Cholmáin, Fear Maí, scríobh Tomás cuid dá saothar liteartha ba clúití, ina measc aistriúchán ar dhán Cathal Búí Mac Giolla Ghunna, an Bonnán Buí. Chomh maith bhí sé ar chomhbhunaitheoir Chumann na Meánmhúinteoirí na hÉireann (ASTI).

Casadh Pádraig Mac Piarais air ar Oileáin Árann agus as an cairdeas seo ceapadh é ina phríomhoide cúnta ar an scoil nua a bunaíodh sa bhliain 1908 i Ragnallach a ainmníodh as éarlamh na nOileán, Naomh Éanna. Fuair sé céim mháistreachta den chéad ghrád ó Choláiste na hOllscoile Baile Átha Cliath i 1911 agus ceapadh ina léachtóir ansin é. Ba sa bhliain chéanna a pósadh é ar Muriel Gifford, deirfiúr Grace, an bhean a bhí le sínitheoir an Fhorógra eile, Seosamh Pluincéid. Bhí beirt páiste aca, Donagh agus Barbara.

De réir mar a mhéadaigh a eolas ar an bpolaitíocht bhí Tomás gníomhach sa Chonradh Cirt Vótála do Mhná na hÉireann, agus i gCoiste Tionsclaíoch Síochána Bhaile Átha Cliath, a bunaíodh le linn Fhrithdhúnadh 1913. Chuaigh sé leis na hÓglaigh sa bhliain 1913 agus bhí páirt ghníomhach aige i dTuirlingt na nGunnáí i mBinn Éadair agus bhí sé ar dhuine de phríomheagraithe Shochraid Uí Dhonnabháin Rossa i 1915.

Chreid sé go bhféadfadh cúis shaoirse na hÉireann a chur chun cinn le cogáocht dá mo gá, agus bhí sé ina bhall de Bhráithreachas Poblacht na hÉireann (IRB) ó Aibreán 1915 ar aghaidh. Chuaigh bliain eile isteach sular ceapadh Mac Donnchadha ar an gComhairle Mhíleata an IRB. Bhí sé ina shínitheoir ar Fhorógra na Poblachta agus meastar gur cheap sé cuid de.

Le linn an Éirí Amach bhí Mac Donnchadha ina cheannfort ar Dhara Cathlán Bhríogáid Bhaile Átha Cliath agus bhí sé i gceannas ar Mhonarcha Brioscaí Jacobs ar Shráid an Easpag. Cé gur foirgneamh tábhachtach í, ní fhaca an garastún mórán den chomhrac toisc gur dhírigh fórsaí na Breataine aird ar garasúin eile agus ar Ard-Oifig an Phoist.

Thug a dheirfiúr, an tSiúr Francesca, cuairt air i bPríosúin Chill Mhaighean díreach sular cuireadh chun báis é agus thug sí coróin Mhuire dó. Nuair a fuair sí thar n-ais é níós déanaí an tseachtain sin bhí sé chloch di séidte di. Scríobh Oifigeach de chuid Arm na Breataine faoi na básaithe an mhaidin sin: "they all died well, MacDonagh died like a prince".

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Bé Tomás an tríú Óglach a cuireadh chun báis ar maidin 3ú Bealtaine 1916. Cuireadh a leascheannfort, John MacBride, agus a dhlúthchara Michéal Ó hAnracháin, chun báis freisin.

