



# Agnes O'Farrelly

***At last the conviction that languages emphasises nationality is becoming universal in Ireland. Our dreams are fast turning to actual facts, and henceforth, whatever betides, life in Ireland must take on a richer, fuller hue in consonance with the thoughts of a people whose soul and conscience are awake.***

Agnes O'Farrelly, speech at the opening of the Ulster College of Irish, August 1918.



Agnes as a graduate 1899.  
Source: Cavan County Museum.

**Agnes O'Farrelly** was born in June 1874 in Raffony House, Virginia, Co. Cavan. She demonstrated an early interest in writing, publishing her first article, entitled *Glimpses of Breffni* in the *Anglo-Celt* in 1895. In 1899 she founded a women's branch of the *Gaelic League*, promoting the revival of Irish language and the active participation of women.



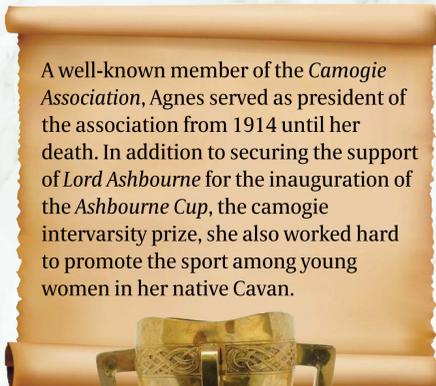
The Aran Islands c.1900.  
Source: The National Library of Ireland LROY 05049.

Agnes graduated with a B.A. in languages from the *Royal University*, a precursor to the *National University of Ireland* in 1899, and later achieved a Master's degree. She taught *Irish* in girls' secondary schools, before being appointed lecturer in *Modern Irish and Irish Literature* at *University College Dublin*. She remained in this post until 1932, when she was made *Professor of Modern Irish*. Under the pen-name *Uan Uladh*, Agnes wrote fiction and poetry in both *English* and *Irish*. Her best-known works were *Smaointe Ar Árainn*, which recorded life on the Aran Islands, and *Out of the Depths*, a 1921 collection of English-language poetry exploring the effects of the *War of Independence*.

Agnes was also involved in the 1914 formation of *Cumann na mBan*, a women's revolutionary organisation. She later quarrelled with some members due to her support for Irish wartime recruitment into the *British Army*, something many members of *Cumann na mBan* were opposed to.



First edition, *Leabhar an Athar Eoghan* 1903.



A well-known member of the *Camogie Association*, Agnes served as president of the association from 1914 until her death. In addition to securing the support of *Lord Ashbourne* for the inauguration of the *Ashbourne Cup*, the camogie intervarsity prize, she also worked hard to promote the sport among young women in her native Cavan.



The Ashbourne Cup.  
Source: The Camogie Association.



Gaelic League poster 1913.  
Source: The National Library of Ireland EDU/1910-20/1.



Camogie match between *University College Dublin* and *University College Cork* 1915.  
Source: Mary Moran/The Camogie Association.

Agnes died in November 1951, and her funeral was attended by the *Taoiseach* and *President*. Remembered as a popular and inspirational teacher, her promotion of the *Irish language*, and her belief that women should be educated, active participants in an independent Ireland made her a unique voice.

Professor Agnes O'Farrelly at conferring day in Maynooth 1944.  
Source: *University College Dublin*.  
Tierney/MacNeill Photographs. LA30/PH/8.

