



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.



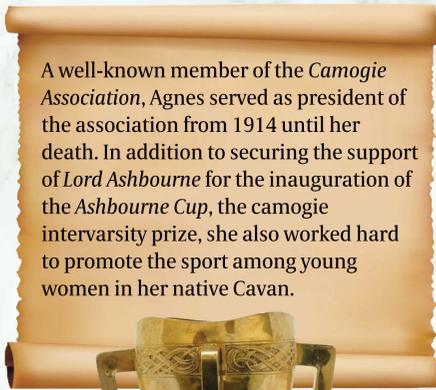
The Aran Islands c.1900.
Source: The National Library of Ireland LROY 05049.

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.



The Ashbourne Cup.
Source: The Camogie Association.



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



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

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.

