

# Cork City and County Archives

## Fonds Level Description

### Identity Statement Area

**Reference Code:** IE CCCA/U271

**Title:** Liam De Roiste Papers

**Dates:** 1901-1947

**Level of description:** Fonds

**Extent:** 15 boxes

### Context

#### **Creator**

Liam De Roiste (b1882 – d1959) TD, Town Councillor

#### **Archival History**

The collection was donated to the Archives in 1980 by the De Roiste family and John and Richard O'Brien.

#### **Biographical History**

Born c.29 June, 1882, Tracton, South County Cork. Son of Edward Roche, primary school teacher. Worked in a Cork drapery store at age 17 and then took a post in Skerry's College, where he later held a teaching position.

An Irish language speaker and enthusiast, he was founder member in 1899, and in turn Secretary and Chairman, of the Cork branch of Conradh na Gaeilge (Gaelic League). Founder member of Coláiste na Mumhan in Ballineary. Founder member of the Cork Celtic Literary Society alongside figures such as Terence MacSwiney and Tomás MacCurtain, Seán O'Hegarty and Daniel Corkery. Secretary of the Cork Industrial Development Association, which he helped to found alongside George Crosbie.

Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Cork branch of Sinn Féin, chairing its first meeting, attended by Eoin MacNeill and Douglas Hyde, in 1906. Prominent early member of the Irish Volunteers movement, taking part in the march to Macroom on Easter Sunday 1916 and later helping to smuggle arms for the I.R.A.

In partnership with J.J. Walsh, he was elected an M.P. and Sinn Féin TD for Cork to the First Dáil in 1918, and to the Second Dáil in 1921. In 1921, a force of 'Black and Tans' raided his home in Sunday's Well and murdered a visitor, Rev. Seamus O'Callaghan, probably intending to assassinate De Roiste. Elected as Leas Ceann Comhairle (Deputy Chairman) of Dáil Éireann, and presided over many of the debates on the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December-January 1921-22. Took the pro-Treaty side, and was elected to Third Dáil as pro-Treaty candidate in June 1922. In the lead up to Civil War, he was part of a group that tried unsuccessfully to reconcile the pro- and anti- Treaty sides, but in doing so, he

alienated many of his supporters, and his future career in national politics was effectively ended. Stood unsuccessfully as a Cumann na nGael candidate at the June 1927 general election.

Served as an alderman on Cork Corporation (now Cork City Council) 1920-1922. Elected one of three Cumann na Gael councillors/members of the reformed Cork Corporation from March 1929. Lost his Cork Corporation seat in the first of the local elections held annually in 1930-1936. In 1936-1937, he was involved with the Irish Christian Front, support organisation for the nationalist faction in the Spanish Civil War, alongside Alfred O'Rahilly (b1884-d1969).

Later, he served again as one of 5 councillors for the newly formed Cork Civic Party for 2 periods from 1945-1950. He retired from politics in 1950

Secretary and Director of the Irish International Trading Corporation, Cork , an import/export business. To a limited extent a playwright and author, writing 2 plays and a pamphlet in his youth, and writing about Cork's gaelic and national freedom movements for the Cork Examiner in his later years. Lifelong member of the St. Vincent De Paul Society. Died 15 May 1959 and buried at St. Joseph's Cemetery, Cork. (A biography of De Roiste, by Diarmuid O'Murchadha, was published in 1976)

## **Allied Materials**

*CCCA:*

Cork City Council Minute Books (CP/CO/M)

## **Content and Structure**

### ***Scope and Content***

The most extensive part of the collection comprises of the personal diaries of De Roiste for the period 1902-1947 (except for the years 1908-1914). Entries include comment on, for example, the Irish National & Political situation; militarism; Irish Volunteers; the Great War, War of Independence. Also found is a set of incoming correspondence from various authors and in relation to various matters of interest to De Roiste both local and national in scope. The collection also holds significant but modest amounts of material, including printed items, relating to the Irish Volunteers in Cork including some original membership forms (the contents of which have been digitised), Sinn Fein, Dail Eireann, the early Irish Free State, Cumann na Gael, Cork Celtic Literary Society, Anti-Treaty IRA, Colaiste Na Mumhan, Irish Christian Front, the Cork Industrial Development association, Irish White Cross, local and national elections. The collection is of considerable interest to the study of Irish nationalism from 1902 onwards, and particularly for the 1914-23 period, and also the early years of the Irish Free State. It is also of interest to Cork local history including that of Cork Corporation.

### ***System of Arrangement***

- A. Diaries, 1902-1908, c.1914-1916, c.1918-1930, c.1940-1947
- B. Cork Celtic Society Minutes, 1901-5 also Manuscript Journal of the Cork Celtic Literary Society , 1901-6.
- C. Correspondence. Letters to Liam de Roiste.
- D. Cork Industrial Development Association material.
- E. Irish Volunteers. Cork Corps.
- F. Sinn Fein. Department of recruiting for Ireland.
- G. The Treaty, 1921.
- H. Local Government Material
- I. Gaelic League
- J. Colaiste na Mumhan

K. Munster University  
L. Military History Bureau  
M. White Cross.  
N. Irish Christian Front  
O. Muintir na Tíre

## **Conditions of Access and Use**

Access: Open for research to those holding a current readers ticket.

Language: English and a small amount of Irish

Finding Aid: List

## **Archivists Note**

Brian McGee, Archivist, Cork City & County Archives  
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