

Researching past and present Members –

A guide to print and online sources

This is a short guide to sources and approaches that could be used when researching biographical information on past and present Members of the Oireachtas. It is not intended to be an authoritative or definitive guide to all resources. It is updated on an annual basis.

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Past and Present Members' Guide

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1. Introduction

From time to time the Oireachtas Library & Research Service gets requests for bibliographical information on past and present Members of the Oireachtas. This short guide outlines the sources and approaches that we use when researching these requests.

This guide is not intended to be definitive, but it is hoped that it will be a useful starting point for anyone doing such research.

There are many published autobiographies and biographies of individual past and present Members of the Oireachtas. These are not listed in this guide. Please check in your local library or in the National Library, Kildare Street, Dublin 2, to see if a biography or autobiography has been published on the Member you are researching. The guides, directories etc. listed below can also be accessed in your local library or in the National Library.

2. Specialised guides, directories in hardcopy

Note: Individual guides are listed because title and/or publication details may have changed with different editions.

Flynn's Directories

Flynn's Directories were published between the years 1928 and 1945 and include biographical information on Members of both houses for that period. Unfortunately the 1928 edition only provides biographical details on Members elected in 1927 and does not cover the earlier elections. The directories also include information on elections, cabinets formed, committees, and Government departments.

1. The Oireachtas companion and Saorstát guide for 1928: Oireachtas Éireann 1922-1927 (Dáil and Seanad) /by William J. Flynn. Dublin: Hely's, [1928]
2. The Oireachtas companion and Saorstát guide for 1929 /by William J. Flynn. Dublin: Hely's, [1929]
3. The Oireachtas companion and Saorstát guide for 1930 /by William J. Flynn. Dublin: Hely's, [1930]
4. Free state parliamentary companion for 1932 /edited by William J. Flynn. Dublin Cork: The Talbot Press, [1932]

5. Irish parliamentary handbook 1939 /edited by William J. Flynn. Dublin: Stationery Office, [1939]
6. Irish parliamentary handbook 1945 /edited by William J. Flynn. Dublin : Stationery Office, [1945]

Nealon's Guides

Nealon's Guides have been published from 1973 to date and provide a good factual account of the political career of all Members elected to the Dáil and Seanad. The introductory chapters give an account of the election campaign. The guides also contain a lot of useful statistical analysis and details on the professions of Members elected, Members who lost their seat, new Members, women elected etc.

1. Ireland: a parliamentary directory 1973-74 /Ted Nealon. Dublin: IPA, 1974
2. Nealon's guide to the 21st Dáil & Seanad: election '77 /Ted Nealon /written in association with Frank Dunlop. Dublin: Platform Press, 1977
3. Nealon's guide to the 22nd Dáil & Seanad: election '81 /Ted Nealon. Dublin: Platform Press, 1981
4. Nealon's guide to the 23rd Dáil & Seanad: election '82 /Ted Nealon. Dublin: Platform Press, 1982
5. Nealon's guide to the 24th Dáil & Seanad: election '82 /Ted Nealon. Dublin: Platform Press, 1983
6. Nealon's guide to the 25th Dáil & Seanad: election '87 /Ted Nealon. Dublin: Platform Press, 1987
7. Nealon's guide to the 26th Dáil & Seanad: election '89 /Ted Nealon. Dublin: Platform Press, 1989
8. Nealon's guide to the 27th Dáil & Seanad: election '92 /Ted Nealon. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1993
9. Nealon's guide to the 28th Dáil and Seanad: election '97/Ted Nealon. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1997
10. Nealon's guide to the 29th Dáil and Seanad /edited by Geraldine Kennedy. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2002
11. Nealon's guide to the 30th Dáil & 23rd Seanad /edited by Stephen Collins. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2007
12. Nealon's guide to the 31st Dáil and 24th Seanad/edited by Stephen Collins. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2011

Magill Guides

The Magill Guides were published between 1981 and 1983 and provide an alternative to the Nealon's Guides for that period. The biographies of Members include critical comment as well as the factual content contained in Nealon's. The original guide published in 1981 also provides information on all elections going back to 1923. It contains biographies of many of the Members elected between 1923 and 1981 and is a particularly good source of information on many Members elected between 1945 (last Flynn Guide) and 1973 (first Nealon's Guide).

1. The Magill book of Irish politics: the personalities, the parties, the elections, the photographs of sixty years, incorporating election '81 / Vincent Browne with Michael Farrell. Dublin: Magill Publications, 1981
2. The Magill guide to election 82 /Vincent Browne. Dublin: Magill Publications, 1981
3. Magill: book of Irish politics 1983 /Brian Trench. Dublin: Magill Publications Ltd, 1982
4. Magill book of Irish politics 1984 /edited by Michael Farrell with [others]. Dublin: Magill Publications Ltd,1983

Sean Donnelly Guides

Sean Donnelly's guides contains a wealth of detailed statistics, analysis and background information on the general and local elections for the years covered and include some biographical information on Members.

1. Poll Position: an analysis of the 1991 local elections /Seán Donnelly. Rathcoole, Co. Dublin: S. Donnelly, 1992
2. Partnership: the story of the 1992 General Election /by Sean Donnelly /with profiles of TDs by Renagh Holohan. Rathcoole, Co. Dublin: S. Donnelly, 1993
3. Elections '97 / Seán Donnelly. Dublin: Sean Donnelly, 1998
4. Elections '99: all kinds of everything / Seán Donnelly. Dublin: Sean Donnelly, 1999
5. Elections 2002 / Seán Donnelly. Dublin: Seán Donnelly, 2002.
6. Local Elections 2004 / Seán Donnelly. Dublin: Seán Donnelly, 2012

7. Elections 2007 / Seán Donnelly. Dublin: Seán Donnelly, 2012
8. Local Elections 2009 / Seán Donnelly. Dublin: Seán Donnelly, 2012
9. Elections 2011 / Seán Donnelly. Dublin: Seán Donnelly, 2012

Tallyman's Guides

1. The tallyman's guide: local and European elections 1999 / John Mullen and Noel Whelan. Dublin: Limelight Communications, 1999
2. The tallyman's campaign handbook to election 2002 / Noel Whelan. Dublin: Limelight Communications, 2002
3. The tallyman's campaign handbook: election 2007 / Noel Whelan. Dublin: New island, 2007
4. The tallyman's campaign handbook: election 2011 / Noel Whelan. Dublin: Liberties Press, 2011

Other Guides, Directories and books,

Political Who's Who

RTÉ the week in politics election 2011 and 31st Dáil / edited by Deirdre McCarthy. Dublin: RTE Publishing, 2011

Dáil stars: from Croke Park to Leinster House / Conor McMorrow. Dublin: Mentor Books, 2010

Who's who in Irish politics: the top 500 /Jim Farrelly. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1989 and second edition, 1990

Who's who in the Seanad Election 1925. Cumann na nGaedhael, 1925?

Who's who in the Irish War of Independence and Civil War, 1916-1923 /Padraic O'Farrell. Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1997

The Sunday Tribune guide to Irish politics /edited by Stephen Collins. Dublin: Tribune Publications, 1997

That's politics: a guide to politics in Ireland /Mary Kerrigan, 2004.

Chairman or Chief? : The role of Taoiseach in Irish Government /Brian Farrell. Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, c1971

Leaders and men of the Easter Rising: Dublin 1916 /edited by F. X. Martin. London: Methuen, 1967

Hindsight: ten meetings of minds / Liam P. O Murchú. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2000

Memorial to founders of the Irish state: President Arthur Griffith, General Michael Collins, Vice-President Kevin O'Higgins: unveiling of portraits at Dáil Éireann on 21st January 1944. Dublin: Printed at the Sign of the Three Candles, Ltd., 1944

Dynasties: Irish political families/ Johnny Fallon. Dublin: New Island Books, 2011

Local and Regional

Heirs to the kingdom: Kerry's political dynasties / Owen O'Shea. Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2011

A political directory of County Tipperary 1918-2010: parliamentary election results, deputies and senators / William Corbett County. Tipperary Joint Libraries Committee, 2010

Local elections Leinster: detailed results and appraisal of the local elections in the province of Leinster in 1979 /John Colgan. Dublin: Tyrconnell Press, 1981

Brennan's key to local authorities /Séamus Brennan and Eric Murphy. Dublin: Landscape Press, 1986

From Malin Head to Mizen Head: the definitive guide to local government in Ireland /Kevin Rafter and Noel Whelan. Dublin: Blackwater Press, 1995

Showtime or substance? : A voter's guide to the 2007 election /Noel Whelan. Dublin: New Island, 2007

The Members of Parliament for Laois and Offaly (Queen's and King's Counties), 1801-1918 /Patrick F. Meehan. Portlaoise: Leinster Express, 1983

President

The lives and times of the Presidents of Ireland / Kevin Kenna. Dublin: Liffey press, 2010

The Irish presidency: power, ceremony and politics / edited by John Coakley and Kevin Rafter. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2013

A presentation of Uachtaráin na hÉireann (Presidents of Ireland): Áras an Uachtaráin (House of the President), Páirc an Fhionnuisce (Phoenix Park) /Tom Keating. Dublin: T.J.Keating, 1992

Political Parties

Labour Party elected Members 1922-2004 /Aidan McNamara, Ita McAuliffe and Marie Whelan. Dublin: Labour Party, 2005

Irish Labour lives: a biographical dictionary of Irish Labour Party deputies, senators, MP's and MEP's /Charles Callan and Barry Desmond. Dublin: Watchword Limited, 2010

The Irish Labour Party: 1922-73 /Niamh Puirseáil. Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2007

Democratic Left: the life and death of an Irish political party / Kevin Rafter. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2011

Days of blue loyalty: the politics of membership of the Fine Gael party / Michael Gallagher and Michael Marsh. Dublin: PSAI Press, 2002

Fine Gael: party at the crossroads / Kevin Rafter. Dublin: New Island, 2009

Hiding behind a face: Fine Gael under FitzGerald / Stephen O'Byrnes. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1986

Road to power: how Fine Gael made history / Kevin Rafter. Dublin: New Island, 2011

The Cosgrave party: a history of Cumann na nGaedheal, 1923-33 / Ciara Meehan. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2010

The resurrection of Ireland: the Sinn Fein Party, 1916-1923 / Michael Laffan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999

Sinn Féin and the politics of left republicanism / Eoin Ó Broin. London: Pluto Press, 2009

The long war : the IRA and Sinn Fein : from armed struggle to peace talks / Brendan O'Brien. Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1995

The Workers' Party in the Dail: the first 10 years / Workers' Party. Dublin: Workers' Party, 1981

The lost revolution: the story of the official IRA and the Worker's Party / Brian Hanley and Scott Millar. Dublin: Penguin Ireland, 2009

The Clann: the story of Clann na Poblachta / Kevin Rafter. Cork: Mercier press, 1996

People, politics and power: from O'Connell to Ahern /Stephen Collins. Dublin: O'Brien, 2007

The power game: Fianna Fáil since Lemass /Stephen Collins. Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2000

Fianna Fáil: A biography of the party/Noel Whelan. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan 2011

Breaking the mould: how the PDs changed Irish politics /Stephen Collins. Dublin : Gill and Macmillan, 2005

Political parties in the Republic of Ireland /Michael Gallagher. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1985

Women

Women in parliament: Ireland, 1918-2000 /Maedhbh McNamara and Paschal Mooney. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 2000

The women who won: women of the 27th Dáil /Una Claffey. Dublin: Attic Press, 1993

General Who's who

Dictionary of Irish Biography / edited by James McGuire and James Quinn. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009. Online <http://dib.cambridge.org/>

Thom's Irish who's who: a biographical book of reference of prominent men and women in Irish life at home and abroad. Dublin: Alexander Thom & Co. Ltd, 1923

Great Irish heroes / Sean McMahon. Cork: Mercier Press, 2008

Who's who, what's what and where in Ireland. Dublin London: G. Chapman, 1973

Who's who in Ireland: the influential 1,000 /edited by Maureen Cairnduff. Dun Laoghaire : Vesey Publications, 1984

Who's who in Ireland: the influential 1,000 /edited by Maureen Cairnduff. Dun Laoghaire : Hibernian, 1991

The influential 1000: who's who in Ireland: plus 200 rising stars /edited by Maureen Cairnduff. Dublin: Checkout Publications, 1999

Who's who in Ireland: the influential Irish /edited by Angela A. Phelan. Dublin: Madison, 2006

A dictionary of Irish biography /compiled by Henry Boylan. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1998

Modern Irish lives: dictionary of 20th-century Irish biography /general editor: Louis McRedmond. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1996

A new dictionary of Irish history from 1800 /D.J. Hickey, J.E. Doherty. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2003

A concise dictionary of Irish biography /by John S. Crone. Dublin: Talbot Press, 1928

Who's who in Irish Business. Supplement to Business & Finance magazine. Dublin: Moranna, 2006

3. Online Sources

Political parties & individual Members' websites

Biographical information on current Members is available on party websites and is also available on their individual websites.

Fine Gael <http://www.finegael.ie/>

Labour Party <http://www.labour.ie/>

Fianna Fail <http://www.fiannafail.ie/>

Sinn Fein <http://www.sinnfein.ie/>

The Green Party <http://www.greenparty.ie/>

The Socialist Party <http://www.socialistparty.net>

People Before Profit – The United Left Alliance <http://www.peoplebeforeprofit.ie/>

All current Members and some former Members have individual websites, blogs etc.

Sean Donnelly website

This website has concise electoral history for each Member including their share of the first preference vote at each election, seat filled, count elected and their share of the vote. It also has a useful link to biographical details relatives of Members who were ever elected.

Sean Donnelly website: <http://electionsireland.org/>

KildareStreet.com

KildareStreet.com is a searchable archive of everything that's been said in the Dáil and all written parliamentary questions since January 2004, and everything said in the Seanad since September 2002. The site has information on all current Members including their voting record, debate contributions and the text of their entry in the Register of Members Interests. An alert can be set up to follow the Dáil or Seanad contributions by a Member.

Kildarestreet.com: <http://www.kildarestreet.com/>

Dáilwatch

Dailwatch describes itself as a non-profit, politically neutral platform for citizens and their representatives to engage in direct, respectful communication with each other.

Dailwatch.ie allows you to:

- Find the politicians that represent your constituency in the Dáil
- Question your representatives in a public environment
- Access each politician's previous speeches and committee membership
- View how each TD's voting records

Dáilwatch - <http://www.dailwatch.ie>

Irish Elections: Geography, Facts and Analyses

Blog of Dr. Adrian Kavanagh who is a Lecturer in Department of Geography, NUI Maynooth. His blog includes information on election candidates, former and current politicians.

The blog is available at: <http://adriankavanaghelections.org/>

Media sources

National and local newspapers are worth searching for biographies, profiles etc. of Members and former Members. Obituaries are a particularly useful source. The date of death of a former Member is usually available on the Houses of the Oireachtas Member's Database page on the Oireachtas website (see below).

4. Parliamentary and Oireachtas sources

Houses of the Oireachtas Members' database

Includes details on party Membership, electoral history, cabinet positions held, dates of birth/death, profession etc. This is a good starting point in all searches, especially when information available at the outset is imprecise, because it provides exact dates when Members served in either house.

Houses of the Oireachtas member's database is available at:
<http://www.oireachtas.ie/Members-hist/>

Dáil and Seanad Debates

Expressions of sympathy in the Dáil and Seanad following the death of a Member or former Member are a good source of biographical information on the career of the Member. Although expressions of sympathy are not taken in all cases, they are in most cases, and especially on the death of a high profile Member or one who held high office.

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/oireachtasbusiness/parliamentarydebates/>

Former Members' Association

The Former Members' Association secretariat can be contacted at (01) 618 3582 (Tuesday and Thursday mornings only) and formerMembers@oireachtas.ie
They are worth contacting for biographical information when time permits, although some of their records may be confidential.

5. Other Libraries/Archives

National Library of Ireland and the National Archives

The collections of the National Library of Ireland and the National Archives should also be checked. The National Library of Ireland collection includes all books published in Ireland, so it is a good place to get biographies and autobiographies of current and former Members. Papers belonging to some past Members may have been lodged in these collections.

The National Library catalogue: <http://catalogue.nli.ie/>

National Archives catalogue: <http://www.nationalarchives.ie/search-the-archives/>

UCD Archives

UCD Archives has specialised in the acquisition of private paper collections associated with the history and development of the modern Irish state. It now preserves the papers of a great many Irish public figures, including Members of government and the judiciary, presidents and European Union Commissioners.

UCD Archives also acquires the records of significant organisations such as political parties, trades unions, professional and cultural associations.

UCD Archives: <http://www.ucd.ie/archives/html/depositedcollections.htm>

Local libraries

Local libraries should also be checked for biographical information in local papers, local studies/journals/newsletters.