



**Professor Philip Nolan**  
President | Uachtarán  
Maynooth University

Tá Ollscoil Mhá Nuad thar a bheith mórtasach as a bheith ag treorú agus ag reáchtáil an tionscadail *Litreacha 1916*, tionscadal atá ar thús cadhnaíochta i dtaca le taighde i réimse na ndaonachtaí digiteacha agus na saoránach. Tá cartlann bheo dhigiteach de litreacha a scríobhadh timpeall an ama inar tharla Éirí Amach na Cásca á cruthú ag an tionscadal seo. Ciallaíonn an cur chuige sluafhoinisithe go bhfuil teacht ar réimse leathan d'fhoinse poiblí agus d'fhoinse príobháideacha agus go bhfuil solas an léinn á scairteadh anois ar mhórán ábhair nach raibh aon eolas air roimhe seo. Tá foireann 1300 tras-scríobhaí deonach ag obair ar bhreis agus 2500 litir a bailíodh. Tugann na litreacha spléachadh ar gach gné de shaol na gcomhfhreagrath, idir chomhfhreagrath poiblí agus chomhfhreagrath príobháideacha agus tá cur síos forleathan iontu ar chúrsaí polaitíochta, gnó agus cultúir na linne. Tá gach cosúlacht ann go dtabharfaidh an tionscadal speisialta uathúil seo an-léargas dúinn ar shaol na ndaoine ag an am sin agus ar thionchar na n-imeachtaí a bhain le hÉirí Amach na Cásca. Is sampla iontach é de léann den scoth, atá á reáchtáil ar bhealach nua spreagúil. Tá ár mbuíochas agus ár meas tuillte acu siúd ar fad atá páirteach ann.



Maynooth University is deeply proud to lead and host the *Letters of 1916* project, a project at the forefront of digital humanities and citizen research. The project is creating a living, digital archive of letters written around the time of the Easter Rising. The crowdsourcing approach casts the net wide across public and private sources, and brings much hitherto unknown material to the light of scholarship. A team of 1300 volunteer transcribers are working on the over 2500 letters collected. The letters give glimpses of all aspects of the lives of the correspondents, public and private, and comment widely on the politics, business and culture of the times. This unique and special project promises to give us deep insights into people's lives at this time, and the impact of the events surrounding the Easter Rising. It is a wonderful example of scholarship at its finest, conducted in a new and exciting manner; all those involved deserve our thanks and appreciation.

*Letters of 1916* is Ireland's first public digital humanities project. Its goal is to create a window onto life in Ireland, and how events in Ireland were viewed internationally, a century ago. Begun in September 2013, it has collected over 2500 letters from 45 private collections and 25 institutions.

Letters provide us with a window onto the past, a reminder of what has changed and what has remained the same, an intimate glimpse into a world left behind, but also part of our own. Letters, by their very nature, convey movement: traveling across time and space; these letters reach us, much as they reached their intended recipients a century ago, conveying the hopes and dreams, fears and joys, of people who, like us, sought to connect.

These letters remind us that we are all temporary custodians of the places we inhabit. As the historian G.M. Trevelyan so eloquently wrote in his autobiography:

*The dead were and are not. Their place knows them no more and is ours today... on this earth, once, on this familiar spot of ground, walked other men and women, as actual as we are today, thinking their own thoughts, swayed by their own passions, but now all gone, one generation vanishing into another, gone as utterly as we ourselves shall shortly be gone, like ghosts at cockcrow.*

*Letters of 1916* gives voice to stories which might otherwise remain hidden in archives or family attics to form a national mosaic, making their time as real and immediate as our own. Technology is the enabler of this unique resource, allowing us to bridge time and space through hundreds of letters connecting thousands of lives.

*Letters of 1916* has been to me, personally, a joy and a privilege to create. I have been blessed with a wonderful and committed team of people who have worked tirelessly to bring this project to fruition. This brochure is a small tribute to the many individuals who have so generously shared their letters, their time, and expertise in making *Letters of 1916* a success.



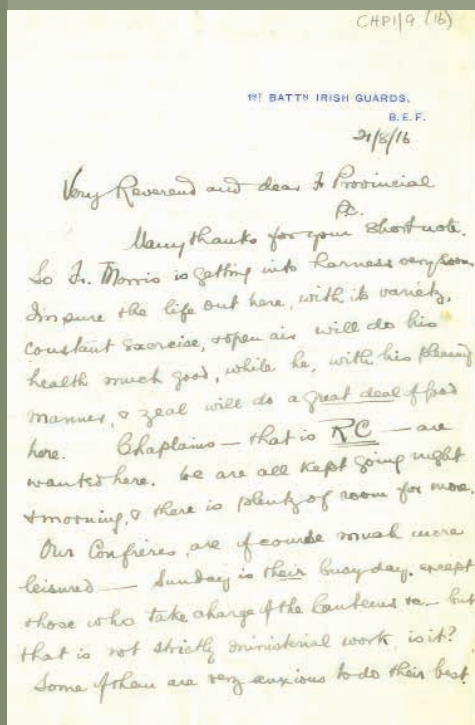
**Susan Schreibman**  
Letters of 1916 Founding Editor  
Maynooth University

The Irish Jesuit Archives doesn't have a physical exhibition space; therefore, contributing to the 'Letters of 1916' project provided the archives with a digital platform to showcase previously unseen material. Benefits from the project include archives advocacy, transcription of the letters by the public, and their long-term digital preservation. From a personal perspective, involvement in the project has heightened my awareness of digital humanities and provided an opportunity to learn new digital skills.

The *Letters of 1916* project has led to a democratisation of access to archives. This has empowered the public to unmask and investigate letters which have remained hidden for a century.

**Damien Burke**  
Assistant Archivist  
Irish Jesuit Archives

# INSTITUTIONS



**Letter from Fr Francis M Browne SJ to Fr Thomas V Nolan SJ**  
21 August 1916  
*Irish Jesuit Archives*



**Letter from Nellie May Preston to Albert G. Woodman**  
4 May 1916  
*Joyce Timms, Private Collection*

# PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

I collaborated with the *Letters of 1916* project because I have a letter which was kept carefully by my grandfather and thereafter my mother, as it contained my grandmother's personal account of this historic time in Ireland. I think history told through personal experience becomes much more alive and relevant when it speaks of the impact on the individual, no matter how slight that might be.

**Joyce Timms**  
Granddaughter of Albert and Nellie Woodman





# EDUCATION

The greatest strength of the project is to make archival material, the daily lived reality of 1916, accessible through social media and encourage a conversation about the events, what they meant in 1916 and what they mean now in 2016.

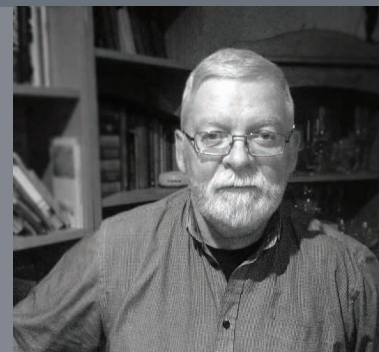
**Dominic Price, Teacher and Author**  
Drimnagh Castle Secondary School

I was immediately struck by the myriad exciting possibilities for application in the classroom. Transition Year, in particular, with its focus on facilitating student-led research, group work, presentation and communication skills lends itself beautifully to a dedicated module based on the letters.

**Helene O’Keeffe, Teacher and Author**  
St. Angela’s College, Cork

I really enjoyed this History project as I thought it was a completely new way of learning about history. I think more people should learn this way as I found it stayed in my mind better. I was actually visualising someone and their life.

**Julie Mackey, Transition Year student**  
St. Angela’s College, Cork



**Philip Costello**

Curiosity first drew me to the *Letters 1916* project. Before long I was transcribing on a daily basis and, in the process, learning fascinating background details.

This led me to much reading outside of the project on the subject of the 1916 Rising and also Irish involvement in WW1. The insights I have gained through my involvement have been immensely valuable to me in other projects I have undertaken since.

The availability of a searchable database of letters has to be a very useful tool for any researcher.

# TRANSCRIBERS



# FUNDERS

Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Digital Repository of Ireland / HEA / PRTL15

Digital Scholarly Editions Initial Training Network (DiXiT) / Framework 7

Maynooth University

Researcher Night funded by the European Commission / Marie Curie Actions

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Discover Programme

Trinity College Dublin, The Faculty of Engineering, Mathematics, and Science

Science Foundation Ireland has funded the *Letters of 1916* Project under its SFI Discover Programme Calls 2014 and 2015. The project provides a novel means of engaging people with the benefits of technology through their interest in history and heritage. The geographical spread of the events presents a great opportunity to engage with people nationwide in this centenary year.



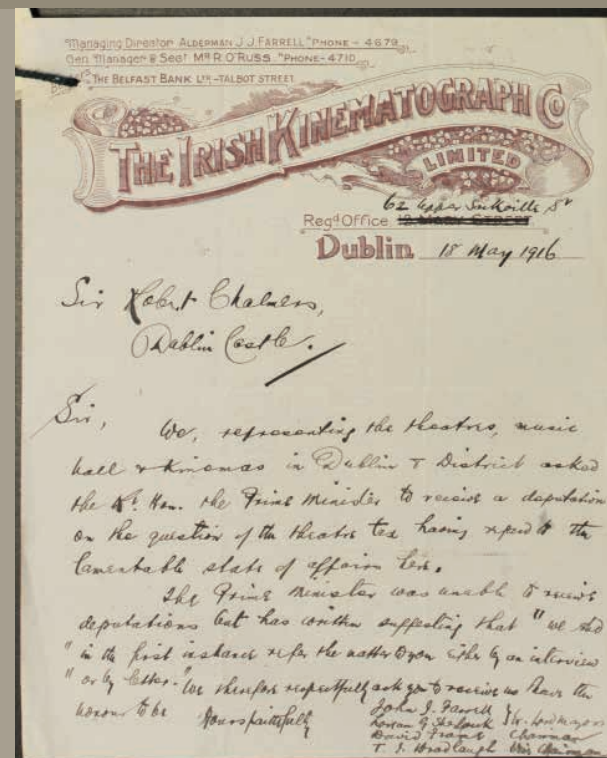
**Professor Mark Ferguson**  
Director General  
Science Foundation Ireland and Chief Scientific Adviser  
to the Government of Ireland

# RESEARCHERS

What excites me about 'Letters' is the potential that it has in changing perceptions about oral history. While it may seem an oxymoron to refer to written materials as 'oral history', I strongly believe that there is a case for examining ephemera, such as letters, as 'oral' data. Letters, after all, tell stories – they are narratives.



**Thérèse McIntyre**



**Letter from John J. Farrell et al. to Robert Chalmers**  
18 May 1916  
National Archives of Ireland

[www.letters1916.maynoothuniversity.ie](http://www.letters1916.maynoothuniversity.ie)



**Be part of the research process**

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