


2018-5

## James Connolly's Bloodstained Vest: Mediating Death and Violence in Commemorative Exhibitions

Siobhan Doyle

Technological University Dublin, [siobhan.doyle@TUDublin.ie](mailto:siobhan.doyle@TUDublin.ie)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/gradcamart>

 Part of the [Military History Commons](#), [Museum Studies Commons](#), [Other History Commons](#), [Political History Commons](#), and the [Public History Commons](#)

### Recommended Citation

Doyle, S. (2018) James Connolly's Bloodstained Vest: Mediating Death and Violence in Commemorative Exhibitions' in Abraham, Florin and Kiss, Réka Földváryné (eds) (2018) *Remembrance and Solidarity Studies in 20th Century European History*. 46-59.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School of Creative Arts and Media at ARROW@TU Dublin. It has been accepted for inclusion in Articles by an authorized administrator of ARROW@TU Dublin. For more information, please contact [arrow.admin@tudublin.ie](mailto:arrow.admin@tudublin.ie), [aisling.coyne@tudublin.ie](mailto:aisling.coyne@tudublin.ie).



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 4.0 License](#)

## JAMES CONNOLLY'S BLOODSTAINED VEST: MEDIATING DEATH AND VIOLENCE IN COMMEMORATIVE EXHIBITIONS

Siobhán Doyle

Graduate School of Creative Arts and Media  
(GradCAM), Dublin School of Creative Arts in  
the Dublin Institute of Technology, Dublin

### ABSTRACT

*The actions surrounding the display of images and artefacts in museums – collection, conservation, research and exhibition – are bound up with how the past is presented and remembered. These conditions and decisions relating to exhibitions are largely invisible to viewers who are confronted with the apparent completeness of an exhibition display. By conducting a historical and visual analysis of the bloodstained vest of political leader James Connolly, this article uncovers how this artefact has become a relic of historical violence due to the way in which particular aspects of its configuration, form and trajectory have been manipulated in order to elicit powerful emotional responses from the exhibition's viewers.*

... I have done nothing but see  
in the National Museum of Ireland  
the rusty red spot of blood,  
rather dirty, on the shirt  
that was once worn on the hero  
who is dearest to me of them all ...  
(MacLean 1971, 270–71)

Sorley MacLean's poem 'National Museum of Ireland', written in 1971, contemplates the display of the bloodstained shirt of political leader James Connolly that he wore during the 1916 Rising. The shirt has been on display in the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) in several exhibitions and has been subject to considerable attention and research.<sup>1</sup> Another bloodstained

## JAMES CONNOLLY'S BLOODSTAINED VEST ...

item of Connolly's clothing – his vest – is part of the NMI collection and was displayed publicly for the first time in 2016 as part of their centenary commemorative exhibition. Connolly's vest, which is soiled with a bloodstain on the back of the left arm, marks the location of one of the wounds he received during this 20th century conflict.

As discussed by Mary M. Brooks, 'garments that protected, shaped and presented the body in life can become surrogate bodies in the museum, evoking and memorialising the absent wearer' (Brooks 2017, 20). The way in which the vest is carefully laid out in the exhibition display, creates a feeling that the vest has been untouched since Connolly last wore it and heightens its symbolic potency. This symbolism is created by the way the garment is folded in half with the arms crossed at the front. Positioning the folded arms in this way resembles the positioning of the arms of a deceased body and congeals the transfiguration of Connolly from a citizen, who took up arms with a view to achieving independence, into a martyr who gave the ultimate sacrifice for his country.

Brooks also contends how careful judgements when exhibiting garments is essential as artefacts must be comprehensible as dress in order to carry the meaning selected for a specific display context, whether as a work of art, a design statement or, in this case, as a representation of its previous wearer (Brooks 2017, 22). The positioning of the vest in the display case differs from other pieces of clothing in the exhibition. Rather than putting the vest on a life-size mannequin at eye level like all of the other forms of clothing within the exhibition, the vest has been folded and placed in a glass counter-top display case. This has been done for two reasons; firstly, in order to explicitly expose the bloodstain; and secondly, to evoke the absence of the deceased body it represents.

This article centres on James Connolly's bloodstained vest – a valuable material artefact of the 1916 Rising, which was loaned to the NMI by his family in 1941. With its display in the 'Proclaiming a Republic: The 1916 Rising' exhibition, this biographic relic has become symbolic as a tangible link to the death of a principal figure in Ireland's political history. By examining this artefact through the institutional processes of acquisition, preservation and exhibition, this article demonstrates how ordinary objects can foster particular historical understandings when they are authenticated and mediated within the museum environment. Using grounding principles of visual

culture, museology and material culture to undertake a visual analysis of this artefact and its display, I direct attention to the visual processes employed when representing death in exhibitions and raise questions about the ways in which exhibition displays can perpetuate particular aspects of violent events.

### **James Connolly and the 1916 Rising**

The 1916 Easter Rising is regarded as 'the most controversial event in modern Irish history' (McGarry 2010, 8). The conflict lasted for six days during which militant Republicans sought to seize political power from Britain, and declared – though unsuccessfully in the short term – an independent state (Brück and Godson, 2015, 1). At the time, the public perception of the Rising was hostile due to the unpredictability and chaotic nature of the rebellion from the outset.<sup>2</sup> As noted by David Fitzpatrick, the determination of the leaders to stage a rebellion marked by honour and chivalry was inevitably sullied by cases of brutal or cowardly conduct, callousness towards civilians, and looting; but the leaders emerged after the surrender with impressive dignity to meet their fate (Fitzpatrick 2016, 82–83).

James Connolly (1868–1916), socialist and revolutionary leader, is a significant figure in the story of the Rising and in the history of modern Ireland. Connolly was instrumental in establishing the Citizen Army in 1913 and during the Rising he commanded military operations. As Commandant General of the Republic's forces, he fought in the city centre where the majority of the battles took place until surrendering on 29 April. Connolly received several injuries during the six days of fighting with the most severe shattering his left ankle. He was court-martialled and was the last one of the fifteen leaders to be executed by firing squad. He was shot dead in Kilmainham Gaol on 12 May 1916 and was survived by his wife and six children.

The execution of the leaders of the Rising without trial caused widespread public consternation, encouraged sympathy and swayed public opinion in favour of the rebel forces. Darragh Gannon contends that the beatification of the dead of 1916 persisted through the publishing of obituary biographies of those who had been killed as a result of the Rising, along with photographs of the widows and children left behind that evoked natural sympathy (Gannon 2016, 218). Jack Elliott also notes how in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising, there was a proliferation of images of the executed leaders that circulated widely in newspapers and on pieces of mass-produced ephemera. These visual and material representations of the executed leaders

## JAMES CONNOLLY'S BLOODSTAINED VEST ...

played a particular role in shaping sympathetic and intelligible narratives of the conflict and created a familiarity with the appearance of the leaders (Elliott 2015, 91–95).

In a time when the visualization of the conflict was limited to newspapers and material artefacts, tangible entities became extremely significant in 'the construction of both personal and official histories' (Brück and Godson, 2015, 1). In April 1917, a three-day gift sale comprising of relics of the Rising and souvenirs of other Irish rebellions was held in support of Republican relief organizations. Many of the items auctioned that day eventually made their way into the MMI's Easter Week Collection, such as leader Éammon Ceannt's imitation ancient Irish costume worn when playing the Irish warpipes before Pope Pius X in 1908. Connolly's wife Lillie donated a pair of his gloves to the auction but their whereabouts today is not known. Material and artefacts within the Easter Week Collection associated with Connolly are mainly ephemeral, consisting of leaflets promoting his lectures, communicative documents used during the Rising and handwritten post-cards and letters. Given the limited nature of his material legacy, the NMI are immensely restricted in how they represent Connolly through artefacts.

### **National Museum of Ireland (NMI)**

The NMI has a long history of hosting exhibitions commemorating the 1916 Rising with its first in 1932. In the years following the inaugural exhibition, the NMI collected materials and objects bound together only by their association with the Rising and established what is known as the 'Easter Week Collection' – the first thematic collection in the institution. The NMI still stands apart as the pioneer in hosting 1916 exhibitions and its collection built around this pivotal event in Irish history set the stage for the preservation and presentation of the material culture of Ireland.

The 'Proclaiming a Republic: The 1916 Rising' exhibition that opened in March 2016 is the NMI's eighth exhibition on the subject and has been the centrepiece of the NMI's centenary programme. Housed in the Riding School at the Department of Decorative Arts and History, Collins Barracks in Dublin, this exhibition has been described as revealing 'the physicalities of life in Ireland before, during and after the events of Easter Week in the form of three hundred objects, articles and images' (Gannon, 2016, xvi). Artefacts, which have visible traces of use because of the conflict, have been mobilized by curators throughout the exhibition in order to accentuate the

distress and physicalities of war. Many of these artefacts are everyday materials, which have become extraordinary because of their association with this significant event in Ireland's political history and illustrate how ordinary lives and actions collided during the conflict. Artefacts such as a crucifix hit by a stray bullet, a sign from the front of the burnt-out General Post Office (GPO) and James Connolly's bloodstained vest are examples of ordinary objects whose storytelling ability is enhanced because they have visible evidence of the physicalities of violence.

Many of the exhibited objects have never been on public display before while others, such as the flags that flew over the rebel garrisons around Dublin city, were specially conserved for this display. Through the combined effect of the objects, words and imagery of the period, visitors follow the stories of those caught up in the events of that momentous week – civilians, combatants and survivors alike.

The exhibition is laid out in a series of ten zones: introduction, the proclamation of the Irish Republic and early 20th-century Ireland; establishing the rebel garrisons and the British countermoves; surrender and the scenes of destruction; courts martial and execution; widows and orphans; deportation and imprisonment; commemorating the Rising through the last 100 years; Art Ó Murnaghan's national memorial; the legacy of 1916 and a resource room. The narrative ordering of the exhibition content presents episodes of the conflict semi-chronologically meaning that visitors get a general sense of the chronology of events, but this arrangement also allows visitors to make their own narrative connections between the different zones. For example, in the centre of 'Zone 3: Establishing Rebel Garrisons and the British Countermoves', there is a large glass case displaying the Irish Republic flag that flew from the GPO during the Rising. The flag was captured by British soldiers after the surrender, kept as a war trophy and entered the Royal Collection of King George V of England.<sup>3</sup> A large-format digital photograph of British soldiers with the captured flag immediately after the Rising features prominently on a display panel in 'Zone 4: Surrender and the Scenes of Destruction'. The displays do not refer to one another, encouraging viewers to connect both artefact and image autonomously.

Visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners are catered for using object displays, text panels, graphics, interactive touch screens, soundscapes, audio recordings and short film. Speakers in the main exhibition area play a looped audio

soundtrack, which contains noises of a street scene overwhelmed by explosions and guns. The overall mood of the soundtrack creates a sensory environment, which summons feelings of chaos and provides context for the exhibition. This soundscape is most prominent in 'Zone 3: Establishing Rebel Garrisons and the British Countermoves' but is phased out gradually so that 'Zone 5: Courts Martial and Execution' achieves a reverential mood for viewers to reflect silently and 'empathise with the executed leaders' (Heise and Tandem Design 2015). This is an intentional curatorial strategy implemented in order to promote intimacy and contemplation in this section of the exhibition.

### **'Zone 5: Courts Martial and Execution'**

As discussed by Jane Tynan, 'notions of tragic heroism dominate the memory of the Rising' – a narrative which also emerges in the 'Courts Martial and Execution' section of the exhibition (Tynan 2015, 32). This section of the exhibition details the last moments of the executed leaders of the 1916 Rising individually, by describing their last meetings with families and displaying artefacts, which were in their possession before they met their death by firing squad in the yard in Kilmainham Gaol. A generous graphic area introduces the executions, interprets the reaction of the public and the swing in public opinion that followed. The curators and exhibition designers have positioned this section in a particular way so that it is possible for visitors to bypass the display of last letters and objects if they choose. This positioning represents the exhibition makers' consciousness of the sensitive nature of the death-related content on public display. The possible bypassing of this section is not made explicit on display panels or in a disclaimer, so that visitors can come to their own decisions on how to deal with the complex nature of displaying artefacts closely associated with death and more specifically, execution.

The central feature of this section is a long bespoke display case, where each execution is treated separately with its own grouping of objects. The 'last objects' are housed within the case, with the associated last letter and death certificate viewable within a drawer positioned directly underneath the case. Visitors can listen to dramatized readings of each of the last letters on a bank of listening pods that helps them to 'decipher the letters of the often difficult to read handwriting and understand the emotions behind the words' (Heise and Tandem Design, 2015). The objects belonging to the leaders include a button from Michael Hanrahan's uniform, which he gave to his sisters during their last visit to him, rosary beads given by Joseph Plunkett

to firing squad member Sergeant W. Hand before his execution and a silver cigarette case inscribed by John MacBride during Easter Week. The object that materially represents Connolly in this section is his bloodstained vest. As Albano has outlined, by displaying such artefacts as biographical material evidence, not only is something about the objects themselves revealed, but information about those who acted on them is also uncovered (Albano 2007, 17). The aim of this display strategy is to produce a human connection between the exhibited artefacts and the viewer.

James Scott asserts how the perception of objects can be influenced heavily by what surrounds them in displays (Scott 2015, 500). The difference between Connolly's vest and the other objects on display within the 'Courts Martial and Execution' section of the exhibition is that the majority of artefacts representing the other leaders were gifted to visitors before they met their death, indicating a conscious effort to leave a material legacy of their last moments. This gifting of artefacts by the leaders before their executions is an example of what Guy Beiner refers to as 'prememory' – 'the anticipations and expectations of those who are committed to predetermine how history will be remembered' (Beiner 2016, 34). Unlike the other leaders who bequeathed material artefacts to trusted individuals during their final visits from family and final moments with others in Kilmainham Gaol, Connolly did not intentionally leave a 'prememory' personal possession.<sup>4</sup> The bloodstained vest was among Connolly's possessions, which were returned to his family after his death along with his watch and wallet.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps if Connolly had bequeathed his watch or wallet during the final visit with his wife and daughter, curators of the exhibition may have selected those objects to represent his last moments instead of a piece of clothing that he possibly last wore two weeks prior to his execution. The watch and wallet were not donated to the museum by the Connolly family, but were instead kept as private relics of his last possessions. In fact, the vest and undershirt are the only material artefacts in the NMI collection that were donated by Connolly's family and which can be tangibly associated with his execution.<sup>6</sup>

That said Connolly's execution was different to that of the other leaders due to the severity of the injuries he had sustained during Easter Week. Upon arrival at Kilmainham Gaol, Connolly was removed from the ambulance in a stretcher and unlike the other leaders who were positioned on wooden boxes pending the gunshots from the firing squad, Connolly was strapped to a chair where he sat in an extended position with his head falling backwards.<sup>7</sup>



## JAMES CONNOLLY'S BLOODSTAINED VEST ...

It is unlikely that Connolly wore this vest during his execution as it was stated by witnesses that he was wearing only his pyjamas prior to execution and had lost a lot of blood after the shots were fired, meaning that the bloodstains on the vest do not correspond with the details of his death.<sup>8</sup> However, the display of the vest in relation to the other last objects on display and the selective information in the accompanying display label suggest that the curators may, in fact, intend visitors to *assume* it was worn by Connolly during his execution. While many of the other artefacts describe how they were distinctly used or gifted during the leaders' final moments with their loved ones, the information accompanying Connolly's vest makes no reference to the visit but instead focuses on the injuries he received during Easter Week and how the vest was deposited in the National Museum.

Display texts in museums can provide a basic starting point for directing viewers towards the politics of exhibition – the unseen features of artefacts such as their creation, acquisition and historical background. Considering that many of the other leaders' biographies detail their final moments prior to execution and display material evidence of those moments, the avoidance of this description in Connolly's case may represent a conscious curatorial strategy, which is implemented in order to heighten the emotional strength of the vest. Examining such aspects of display outlines the importance of considering the invisibility of the construction of exhibition displays and exposes the extent to which museums control visitors' engagement with the past. Focusing on the institutional acquisition of the vest after Connolly's death can be seen as a selective manipulation of certain attributes of the artefact in order to correspond with other artefacts on display and to validate the NMI's role in displaying this contested personal possession, despite the original owner's unwillingness to engage in material acts of 'prememory'.

### **Historical configuration of the vest**

On Thursday, 27 April 1916, surrounded by burning buildings and a hail of gunfire and artillery shelling, James Connolly led 30 volunteers out into a street to erect a barricade at the rear of the GPO, which was the insurgent's headquarters for the duration of the Rising. A few minutes later, Connolly returned to the building and asked the medical orderly, Jim Ryan, if he could speak to him somewhere in private. Behind a screen, Connolly took off his coat and revealed a flesh wound in his arm where he had just been shot. After having the wound dressed, he told Ryan: 'Not a word about this to anyone' and returned outside to the fighting (Nevin 2005, 654).

This sequence of events uncovers three aspects that affect the display of the vest in the museum environment. Firstly, the witness accounts of Connolly's injury correspond with the configuration of the bloodstain, authenticating the description presented by the NMI in the exhibition display. Secondly, it reveals reluctance on the part of Connolly for his injuries to become common knowledge and demonstrates how the eventual trajectory of personal artefacts often goes beyond the control of their owners.<sup>9</sup> Finally, they reveal how an everyday artefact can be transformed into a tangible link and a symbolic representation of a first-hand experience of a violent conflict in Irish history.

After his execution, Connolly's daughter Nora recalled going to Dublin Castle to retrieve some of his personal items:

We went to the Castle after that, to claim his watch, his wallet, or anything they might have belonging to Daddy. We thought there might be a chance of getting his uniform; but we did not. We only got his underclothes; and they were marked with his blood, where he had been hit by a sniper. I have given them to the Museum also.<sup>10</sup>

Nora's wish to retrieve her father's uniform accentuates the emotional weight that is attached to personal items of clothing, particularly in the absence of their wearer. Nora loaned the bloodstained vest and undershirt to the Easter Week Collection in 1941, where they remain in the care of the NMI. The transfer of these items from a private collection to a national collection in a public institution shows an awareness, on the part of the Connolly family, of the significance and potential value of such soiled artefacts.

As outlined by Annie E. Coombes, the way an object is used, how it is moved around and its very survival is an indication of value and meaning (Coombes 1988, 89). The display label states that 'The vest, along with the shirt he wore over it, was returned to his family after execution and his daughter Nora, kept it until she deposited in the National Museum.' This selective information gives viewers an insight into the actions surrounding the collection and acquisition of this artefact; and offers an understanding of the range of actions that take place in order for an object to become part of a museum collection and subsequent display. There is limited information available in the NMI archives on the vest and undershirt aside from the dates of donation and a request some years later from Connolly's other daughter

## JAMES CONNOLLY'S BLOODSTAINED VEST ...

Ina to view the items.<sup>11</sup> The preservation of the vest by the wearer's family and the NMI memorializes and authenticates Connolly's presence in the violent battles of the 1916 Rising.

### **Form and style of the vest**

Eastop and Brooks have outlined the importance of leaving stained textiles untouched as the stains often 'contain' considerable historical and cultural evidence (Eastop and Brooks 1996, 688). It is a specific event in Irish history – the 1916 Rising: Connolly being shot for the first time – which caused its eventual configuration and the reason why this artefact was collected as a historic relic, loaned to the museum, conserved and now on display to the public. Like many other soiled historical artefacts, the form and style of this artefact is configured by an unintentional event – that is, the vest only looks the way it does by accident (residue of blood from a flesh wound after a stray bullet hit Connolly). Furthermore, the vest was not intended by its user to be made visible as presumably it would have been worn underneath his uniform and as already mentioned, the wearer hoped to keep his injury secret. Instead, it was the subsequent custodians of the vest – Connolly's family – who deliberately collected and donated his bloodstained underclothes as evidence of the experience and conditions of the 1916 Rising. As the vest has remained in the care of the NMI since it was loaned in 1941, it is their institutional practices of collection, conservation and curation that now control the cultural visibility of the vest after Connolly's death.

As discussed by Jane Tynan, the peculiar dynamics of the Rising demanded an equivocal attitude to uniform (Tynan 2015, 31). The rebel leaders for example, wore uniforms that were dark green in colour and distinct from the other Volunteer uniforms. However not all of the insurgents were noted for their elegant appearance. Due to financial hardship, lack of military experience and the chaotic unfolding of events, the majority of participants in the fighting had a casual and unmilitary appearance (Tynan 2015, 29).

Connolly was described as wearing 'a green Volunteer uniform with rings on his arm, and a wide-awake hat' (Nevin 2005, 665). His daughter Ina elicited the delight she felt the first time seeing her father in his green Volunteer uniform: 'How splendid he looked! How pleased I was to see him in the uniform of Ireland's green! Wouldn't mother be proud of him if she could get one glance of him?'<sup>12</sup>

## JAMES CONNOLLY'S BLOODSTAINED VEST ...



James Connolly's vest marked with a bloodstain from one of the wounds he received during the 1916 Rising.

This image is reproduced with the kind permission of the National Museum of Ireland (HE:EWL.292.2).

Connolly's 'splendid' appearance was not maintained in the aftermath of the conflict as he was brought to Kilmainham Gaol to meet his death wearing 'his pyjamas only'.<sup>13</sup> His material legacy in the 'Proclaiming a Republic' exhibition is reflective of the unheroic image chosen to represent the Rising, which as Tynan has asserted 'features what appears to be a working class man wearing civilian clothes' (Tynan 2015, 33).<sup>14</sup> This vest has agency as material culture as it communicates either the physical body or presence of its owner and signifies his personal identity through its traces of use, general wear and tear and personal style. The proximity to the body it represents is intensified by the presence of a visible bodily residue, which is exposed by the particular positioning of the vest in the display case.

### Conclusion

The actions surrounding the display of images and objects in museums – collection, conservation, research and exhibition – are bound up with how

the past is presented and remembered. These conditions and decisions of exhibition display are largely invisible to viewers who are confronted with the apparent completeness of an exhibition display.

Conducting a historical and visual analysis of this bloodstained vest has uncovered how particular aspects of this artefact have been manipulated in order to be appropriate alongside other artefacts within the exhibition. Other than representing his clothing and reinforcing the casual heroism of the Rising, Connolly's vest was not crucial to the theme of the 'Courts Martial and Execution' section of the exhibition. Instead its significance lies in the particular positioning of the artefact in the display case in order to make the bloodstain fully visible. This mode of display intentionally gives the vest a heightened sense of tangible connection to the violence of the Rising in an attempt to elicit powerful emotional responses from the exhibition's viewers.

#### SIOBHÁN DOYLE

*Siobhán Doyle is a PhD scholar at the Dublin School of Creative Arts in the Dublin Institute of Technology and received the Dean of the College of Arts & Tourism scholarship award in March 2016. Siobhán's research project investigates representations of death in commemorative exhibitions in national cultural institutions and the challenges facing museums when commemorating historical conflict. Other research interests include the historiography of visual and material culture and dark tourism. Siobhán has written a chapter 'Funerary Traditions and Commemorative Practices in Glasnevin Cemetery and Museum' in *Grave Matters: Death and Dying in Dublin 1650–2000* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, June 2016).*

#### ENDNOTES

1 The shirt has been on display in the 'Soldiers and Chiefs' exhibition at the NMI since 2006 and was featured in the *History of Ireland in 100 Objects* initiative which began as a column in *The Irish Times* by Fintan O'Toole and culminated in an illustrated book, website and series of stamps. This collection of one hundred objects was selected to illustrate Ireland's history and in doing so, directed readers to where each object was on public display.

2 The Rising was originally scheduled to take place on Easter Sunday, 23 April 1916 but Eoin MacNeill issued a cancellation of 'manoeuvres' which led to the non-participation of many potential rebels. The countermand was only partly successful and caused confusion, especially outside Dublin. Consequently there was no Rising in Cork or Limerick. The dissidents delayed their plans by 24 hours and launched the Rising on Easter Monday, 24 April 1916.

3 The flag was returned by the British state to the Taoiseach Sean Lemass as gesture of reconciliation in 1966. Lemass formally presented the flag to the NMI in the hope that

## JAMES CONNOLLY'S BLOODSTAINED VEST ...

it would be 'preserved as one of the important relics of that important event of Irish history and as a source of inspiration to all who come to this museum'. ('Exhibition Tells Story of the Rising: Post Office Flag on View', *Irish Times*, 13 April 1966, 11.)

**4** Connolly gave a copy of his Court Martial statement to his daughter Nora during the final family visit the night before his execution, which is on display in the pull-out drawer underneath the glass display case.

**5** Bureau of Military History (1949): Witness Statement of Nora Connolly-O'Brien (WS286). <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0286.pdf#page=1>. Accessed 6 November 2017.

**6** The items were originally on loan to the NMI from 30 April 1941 and include a portrait of James Connolly and a shirt and vest worn by James Connolly when he was wounded during Easter Week 1916. Both are stained with his blood. The loan register lists the lender as Nora Connolly O'Brien (daughter of James Connolly), 39 The Rise, Glasnevin, Dublin. NMI Archives: NMIAS.AI.EWL.0097.003.00034. Accessed 3 November 2017.

**7** Bureau of Military History: Witness Statement of Peter Paul Gilligan (WS170). <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0170.pdf#page=1>. Accessed 6 November 2017.

**8** Bureau of Military History: Witness Statement of 2nd Lieutenant R.C. Barton (WS0979). <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B9JG21-1AMNPUTNhNGoxRFFqNnc>. Accessed 16 January 2017.

**9** Despite returning to duty immediately after receiving the wound on his arm dressed, Connolly received a much more severe injury to his ankle shortly afterwards that immobilized him for the remainder of the conflict, and up until his execution two weeks later.

**10** Bureau of Military History (1949): Witness Statement of Nora Connolly O'Brien (WS286). <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0286.pdf#page=1>. Accessed 6 November 2017.

**11** NMI Archives: NMIAS.AI.EWL.0097.003.00034 (9). Accessed 3 November 2017.

**12** Bureau of Military History (1954): Witness Statement of Ina Connolly Heron (WS0919) <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0919.pdf>. Accessed 6 November 2017.

**13** Bureau of Military History: Witness Statement of 2nd Lieutenant R.C. Barton (WS0979). <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B9JG21-1AMNPUTNhNGoxRFFqNnc>. Accessed 16 November 2017.

**14** Tynan, Jane (2015) 'The Unmilitary Appearance of the 1916 Rebels', in *Making 1916: Material and Visual Culture of the 1916 Rising*, ed. Lisa Godson and Joanna Bruck. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

### LIST OF REFERENCES

#### Published Sources:

**Albano, Caterina** (2007) 'Displaying Lives: The Narratives of Objects in Biographical Exhibitions'. *Museum and Society*, 5, no. 1. 15–28.

**Beiner, Guy** (2016) 'Making Sense of Memory: Coming to Terms with Conceptualisations of Historical Remembrance', in *Remembering 1916: The Easter Rising, the Somme and the Politics*

## JAMES CONNOLLY'S BLOODSTAINED VEST ...

of *Memory in Ireland*, ed. Richard S. Grayson and Fearghal McGarry, 25–36. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Brooks, Mary M.** (2017) 'Reflecting Absence and Presence: Displaying Dress of Known Individuals', in *Refashioning and Redress: Conserving and Displaying Dress*, ed. Mary M. Brooks and Dinah D. Eastop, 19–32. Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute.

**Brück, Joanna and Lisa Godson** (2015) 'Approaching the Material and Visual Culture of the 1916 Rising: An Introduction', in *Making 1916: Material and Visual Culture of the 1916 Rising*, ed. Lisa Godson & Joanna Brück, 1–11. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

**Coombes, Annie E.** (1988) 'Museums and the Formation of National and Cultural Identities', *Oxford Art Journal*, 11, no. 2. 260–72.

**Eastop, Dinah D. and Brooks, Mary M.** (1996) 'To Clean or Not to Clean: The Value of Soils and Creases', in *Preprints of the 11th Triennial Meeting of the ICOM-CC, Edinburgh*, ed. Janet Birdgland, 687–91. London: James & James.

**Elliott, Jack** (2015) "'After I am Hanged my Portrait will be Interesting but not Before": Ephemera and the Construction of Personal Responses to the Easter Rising', in *Making 1916: Material and Visual Culture of the 1916 Rising*, ed. Lisa Godson and Joanna Brück, 91–8. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

'**Exhibition Tells Story of the Rising: Post Office Flag on View**' (1966) *Irish Times*, 13 April, 11. Accessed 29 January 2018: <http://0-search.proquest.com.ditlib.dit.ie/docview/524705417?accountid=10594>

**Fitzpatrick, David** (2016) 'Instant History: 1912, 1916, 1918', in *Remembering 1916: The Easter Rising, the Somme and the Politics of Memory in Ireland*, ed. Richard S. Grayson and Fearghal McGarry, 77–98. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Gannon, Darragh** (2016) *Proclaiming a Republic: Ireland, 1916 and the National Collection*. Kildare: Irish Academic Press.

**Godson, Lisa and Joanna Brück, eds** (2015) *Making 1916: Material and Visual Culture of the 1916 Rising*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

**MacLean, Sorley** (2011) 'National Museum of Ireland', in *Sorley MacLean: Collected Poems*, ed. Christopher Whyte and Emma Dymock, 270–71. Edinburgh: Polygon.

**McGarry, Fearghal** (2010) *The Rising: Ireland, Easter 1916*. New York, Oxford University Press.

**Nevin, Donal** (2005) *James Connolly: 'A Full Life'*. Dublin: Gill and MacMillan.

**Scott, James** (2015) 'Objects and the Representations of War in Military Museums', *Museum and Society*, 13, no. 4. 489–502.

**Tynan, Jane** (2015) 'The Unmilitary Appearance of the 1916 Rebels', in *Making 1916: Material and Visual Culture of the 1916 Rising*, ed. Lisa Godson and Joanna Brück, 25–33. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

### Primary Sources:

**Bureau of Military History** (1949) Witness Statement of Nora Connolly O'Brien (WS286). Accessed 6 November 2017: <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0286.pdf#page=1>

**Bureau of Military History** (1954) Witness Statement of Ina Connolly Heron (WS0919). Accessed 6 November 2017: <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0919.pdf>



## JAMES CONNOLLY'S BLOODSTAINED VEST ...

**Bureau of Military History:** Witness Statement of 2nd Lieutenant R.C. Barton (WS0979). Accessed 16 November 2017: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B9JG21-1AMN-PUTNhNGoxRFFqNnc>

**Bureau of Military History:** Witness Statement of Peter Paul Gilligan (WS170). Accessed 6 November 2017: <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0170.pdf#page=1>

**Heise, Sandra and Tandem Design** (2015) 'National Museum of Ireland: Easter Week Remembered Concept Design (Issue 1)', 26 June 2015. National Museum of Ireland Archives: AI/16/111. Accessed 18 September 2017.

**National Library of Ireland** (1917) *Irish National Aid and Volunteer Dependents' Fund: Catalogue of Gift Sale to be Held in Aid of above at the Mansion House, Dublin on Friday and Saturday, 20 and 21 April 1917*: MS. 35,262/27(1). Accessed 22 November 2017.

**National Museum of Ireland Archives:** NMIAS.AI.EWL.0097.003.00034 (9). Accessed 3 November 2017.