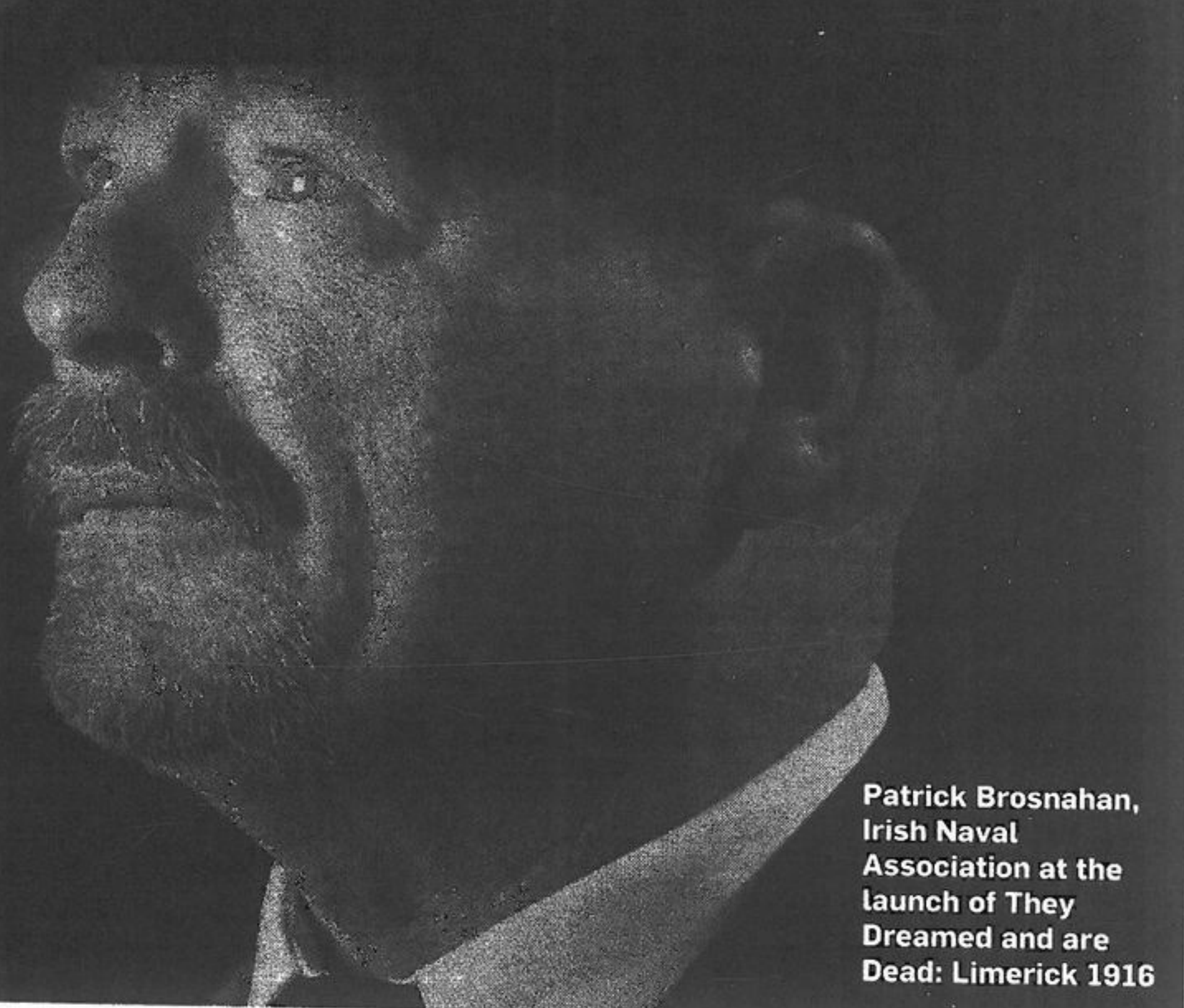


1916 CENTENARY

Limerick's role in 1916 Rising recounted at City Hall exhibition



Patrick Brosnahan, Irish Naval Association at the launch of *They Dreamed and are Dead: Limerick 1916*

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ON a perfectly still evening, Limerick city hall was transported back 100 years to give a fascinating insight into life in the Treaty City during the 1916 Rising.

People of all ages came in their dozens to attend the launch of 'They Dreamed and are Dead: Limerick 1916', which depicted Limerick's role in the Easter Rising.

The exhibition and a related publication by Limerick Museum and Archives also focused on the cultural and social aspects of life in a city where hundreds of its young men were away fighting with the

British army on the Western Front.

While there was no direct military action in Limerick during Easter Week 1916, there were strong local connections to those who fought and died on the streets of Dublin during the largest uprising against British rule since the 1798 Rebellion.

Prior to the the launch, spectators were entertained by the St Mary's Prize Band, and Róisín Ní Gallóglaigh of UL's Irish World Academy, who sang rebel songs from the Fenian and Jacobite eras to set the tone of the evening.

Launching the exhibition, Deputy Mayor Gerald Mitchell, said the exhibition gave an insight into the important role that Limerick played

in the Rising.

"Limerick had a vibrant republican tradition represented by the Daly family, without whom there might never have been a Rising. Even before 1916, Limerick had some of the strongest volunteers, Cumann na mBan and Fianna Eireann organisations in the country.

"Indeed, had the German arms shipment not been lost off the coast of Kerry, Limerick would have played a central role in the fighting, according to the original plans for the Rising.

"Independent Ireland was born in the Easter Rising and the 1916 Proclamation is its birth certificate.

"My hope is that this centenary year will belong to everyone in this City and County and indeed on this island, regardless of political or family background, or personal interpretation of our modern history.

"I would encourage people to embrace that opportunity during 2016 and to come together to honour the memory of those who paid the ultimate price for the ideals they fought for and believed in," the Deputy Mayor added.

Among the other guest speakers was John Colivet, grandson of former Limerick City MP and TD, Michael Colivet, who travelled from Kildare to share his grandfather's story.

"From Windmill Street originally, my grandfather Michael shared a cell with Éamon de Valera in Lincoln Prison after he was arrested for his role in the rising. They used to send letters and postcards in the shape of the keyhole of the jail lock, which in the end actually aided De Valera's escape.

At 34 years of age, my grandfather was married with two small children,

yet he decided to take part in the rising. It's difficult to conceive why he went down that path, but it is fascinating", Mr Colivet said.

A publication supplementing the exhibit was also launched with editor Jacqui Hayes expressing the hopes that public knowledge of life in 1916 is greatly enhanced by the exhibition.

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"Limerick's involvement in 1916 is not very well known. The Daly family, for example, were the icons of nationalism. John Daly was the link to the previous rebellion, and he was this spiritual master who all the revolutionaries looked to. They all hugely respected him," Ms Hayes explained.

"Modern inventions such as the motor car, electric light, radio, the

aeroplane and the cinema had only recently appeared. Education had spread to all sections of society. Mighty industries such as bacon, clothing and flour milling made Limerick famous worldwide. Even women's hemlines were rising in tandem with their increasing participation in the workforce."

"Yet along with technological change and progress, there was great hardship. The local newspapers were full of the First World War, in which thousands of Limerick men fought and 279 were killed.

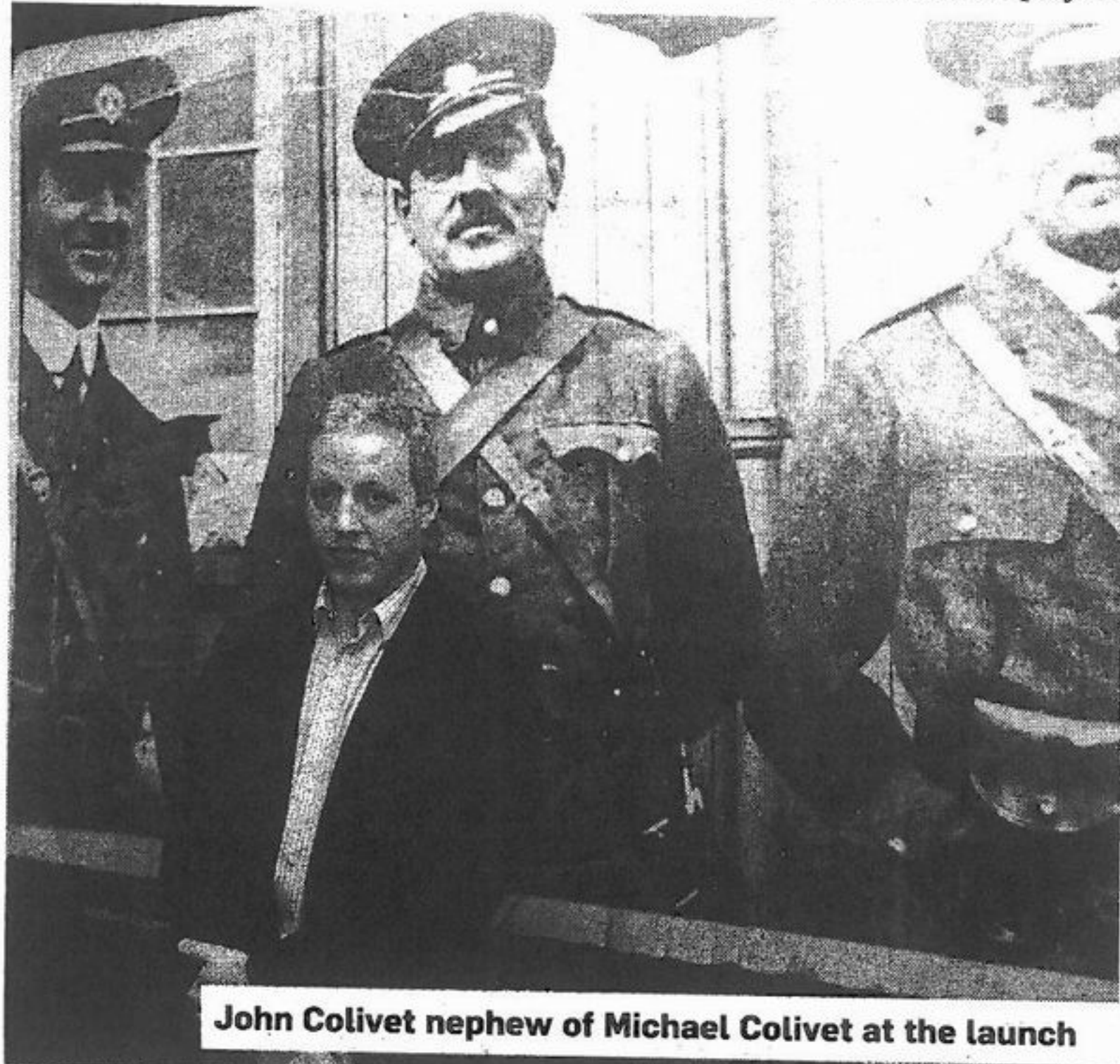
"At home, their families waited anxiously for news of their loved ones. The poor in both city and county lived in sub-standard housing and were afflicted by diseases such as typhoid and tuberculosis. Infant mortality was very high.

"The Limerick people who perished in the Rising and during the Great War, and the quiet heroism of those who manned the home front in factory, farm and schoolroom are all remembered in 'They Dreamed and are Dead', which is a highlight of Limerick 1916 Centenary programme," concluded Ms. Hayes.

Among the objects being exhibited at Limerick City Hall are Irish Volunteer uniforms, weaponry and primary source documents, as well as a flag bearing the coat of arms of Limerick, which was in Roger Casement's possession when he was arrested in Kerry while attempting to smuggle guns from Germany into Ireland.

Confiscated by the British authorities, it is now on loan from the Imperial War Museum and is on public display for the first time in the exhibition.

The exhibition will remain open to the public for the rest of the year.



John Colivet nephew of Michael Colivet at the launch