

Appendix: Time Chart

A comprehensive time chart of the social and political history of Ireland and Northern Ireland is beyond the scope of this book. This select chart is intended to help readers new to Irish literature to begin to place the novels discussed in a wider context and to understand more fully the historical and political allusions in the critical discussion.

Key Novels and Concomitant Political and Cultural Events

1916

Easter Rising.

James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

1918

After its election victory Sinn Féin sets up the Dáil (Assembly) in Dublin.

1919–21

War of Independence. Britain initiates changes in the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC), the force against which much of the IRA campaign has been directed, to boost morale and to increase its effectiveness by equipping it with rockets, bombs and shotguns.

1920

British Government launches a recruitment drive to attract ex-soldiers to a new force in Ireland, nicknamed the Black and Tans because of their distinctive uniform. Generally speaking, they prove to be ill disciplined, poorly trained and ignorant of Ireland where they arouse considerable animosity. In July, a second force, the Auxiliaries, is established in 15 heavily armed, mobile divisions. Although better trained than the Black and Tans, they are unprepared for guerrilla warfare. In November, recruitment begins to the Ulster Special Constabulary intended to perform a peacekeeping role in the communities from which they were recruited. At this time there are three classes of constables: A class are full-timers; B constables are part-timers; and the C class is a reserve of, mainly, elderly men. But 1920 also sees the Government of Ireland Act, creating two governments, with limited devolved powers, one in Belfast and one in Dublin. Whilst this is acceptable to the Unionists, it is opposed by Irish nationalists who generally support the IRA campaign.

1921

On 11 July, a truce is declared in the Anglo-Irish War. Negotiations between Sinn Féin leaders, led by Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith, and the British Government, led by Prime Minister Lloyd George, begins in October. Eventually the Anglo-Irish Treaty is agreed on 6 December.

Under the Treaty, Southern Ireland is to become the Irish Free State, a self-governing dominion with complete freedom in domestic affairs. This causes deep divisions among nationalists, some of whom reject it because it fails to deliver a republic. Others argue for it on the grounds that it should provide the freedom to achieve nationhood in the future. The Treaty causes a rift between Michael Collins and fellow Sinn Féin leader, Eamon de Valera.

1922

James Joyce, *Ulysses*.

The Irish Free State is formed. The RIC is disbanded and replaced, in February, by the Garda Síochána in the Irish Free State and, in June, by the Royal Ulster Constabulary in Northern Ireland.

1925

The Ulster Special Constabulary is reorganized, retaining only a reduced number of B Specials intended to undertake security work and support the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

1927

Fianna Fáil enters the Dáil.

1932

Fianna Fáil wins the General Election in a coalition with Labour.

1935

The Criminal Law Amendment Act (Section 17) makes it illegal to sell or import contraceptives.

1936

The Ulster Society for Historical Studies is founded.

1937

The Irish Constitution (Bunreacht na hÉireann). The Constitution stipulates: 'No law shall be enacted providing for the grant of a dissolution of marriage.' The Irish Historical Society is formed.

1938

Fianna Fáil elected with overall majority. Anglo-Irish Treaty.

1939

James Joyce, *Finnegan's Wake*.

Outbreak of World War II. IRA bombing campaign in England. Offences Against the State Act passed in June in the Free State. De Valera involved in anti-partition regulations.

1946

Health and Insurance Acts 1946–8 extend the welfare state to Northern Ireland.

1947

Butler Education Act of 1944 extended to Ulster.

1948

Republic of Ireland declared. Dr Noël Browne, a doctor with experience of working with TB, is appointed Health Minister (in February). He seeks to implement the 1946 White Paper. (See, Mary Morrissy's novel, *Mother of Pearl*, 1996.) The Health Services (Northern Ireland) Act.

1951

Dr Browne resigns as the Republic's Health Minister in April after the Government fails to support a scheme that promised to provide free medical care for mothers and children that had attracted considerable opposition from the Catholic Church hierarchy. In Northern Ireland, Ian Paisley initiates the Free Presbyterian Church. Paisley, whose Unionist political persuasions are inseparable from his religious beliefs, proves a dominant presence in Northern Ireland politics over the next half-century and more.

1953

Queen Elizabeth visits Belfast; Catholic councillors are excluded from the official lunch.

1954

Public Order Acts passed in Northern Ireland. Flags and Emblems Act gives special protection to the Unionist flag. Liam Kelly becomes leader of an IRA splinter group.

1955

Brian Moore, *Judith Hearne*.

1956

IRA Campaign of Resistance to British Occupation launched in Northern Ireland in December (1956–62). An attempt to bomb Brookeborough police barracks on New Year's eve kills Sean South and Fergal O'Hanlon from the Irish Republic.

1957

Catholic bishops condemn IRA campaign. Internment without trial is re-introduced in Northern Ireland. Death of a Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) constable in County Armagh in July creates outrage. De Valera re-introduces internment in the Republic – arrests of IRA men in the South.

1958

White paper on economic development of Ireland published in Dublin. First programme of economic expansion in Ireland. Ardmore Film Studios opened.

1959

Judith Hearne published as *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*.

Seán Lemass (Fianna Fáil) succeeds Eamon de Valera as Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland. De Valera has been Taoiseach 1932–48, 1951–4, 1957–9. This is seen by some as the end of one era and the beginning of another. De Valera is linked to a rural petit bourgeoisie and a vision imposed upon Ireland that privileged an isolationist, traditionally moral and rural-based society.

1960

Brian Moore, *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*; Edna O'Brien, *The Country Girls*. The Irish government sets up the Irish Film Finance Corporation to help induce foreign filmmakers to Ireland.

1961

Ireland applies for membership of the European Economic Community (EEC). Votes in Ireland appear to reject political extremism with Fine Gael

and the Labour Party increasing their seats in the Dáil. New Year's Eve, the newly established Irish television station, Radio Telefís Éireann, comes on air. President de Valera feeds the ambivalence with which the mass media is regarded by conservative forces in Ireland, acknowledging that it might serve to build the nation's character but may lead to decadence and dissolution. The new generation, exemplified by Seán Lemass, thinks of it as opening up Ireland to the wider world. (See, Patrick McCabe's novel, *The Dead School*, 1995.)

1962

Edna O'Brien, *The Lonely Girl*.

Radio Telefís Éireann established in Ireland. IRA calls off campaign in Northern Ireland. Cuban missile crisis brings the United States and Russia to the brink of war. (See, Patrick McCabe's novel, *The Butcher Boy*, 1992.)

1963

John McGahern, *The Barracks*.

Second programme of economic expansion in Ireland (1963–4). The Beatles play the Adelphi cinema in Dublin. Show band craze in Ireland with over 400 new-style ballrooms. American President John F. Kennedy visits Ireland in June. America thinks of Ireland in transition because of its younger generation of politicians and the growing awareness that Ireland's destiny lay within a wider European context. Kennedy's visit underlines the view of many at the time that the 1960s is a watershed for modern Ireland because of his support of social reform and free enterprise. On 22 November, Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas. These events preoccupy a number of Irish writers in the late 1980s and early 1990s who grew up in this period. See, for example, Roddy Doyle's novel, *The Commitments* (1989), Patrick McCabe's *Carn* (1989) and *The Butcher Boy* (1992). In Northern Ireland, Ian Paisley leads a protest march against the lowering of the Union flag at Belfast City Hall to mark the death of the Pope.

1964

Edna O'Brien, *Girls in their Married Bliss*; William Trevor, *The Old Boys*.

Liberalization of film censorship. In Ireland, the number of television licences has risen from 201 095 the year before to 258 988 while the number of radio licences has decreased from 336 939 to 292 899. The television presenter becomes a new cultural icon in Ireland, especially those fronting 'chat shows' such as Gay Byrne. This cultural development is one of the subjects of Patrick McCabe's novel, *The Dead School* (1995).

1965

John McGahern, *The Dark*; Edna O'Brien, *August is a Wicked Month*.

Seán Lemass discusses economics matters with the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Terence O'Neill, at Stormont. McGahern's new novel, *The Dark*, about adolescence, which includes a reference to masturbation, is seized by Customs Officers. In October, he is sacked from his job as a primary school teacher in Dublin. In the United States, Malcolm X is assassinated and Martin Luther King leads a civil rights march in Montgomery. The widespread publicity that civil rights movements are

acquiring in America invigorates the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland.

1966

The fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising. Lemass, after years of industrial unrest and critical, independent reporting of Ireland's economic policies, argues that the national television station has a responsibility to the government. He retires and Jack Lynch (Fianna Fáil) becomes Taoiseach. De Valera secures a further term as President. The Anglo-Irish Free Trade Area Agreement comes into being furthering Ireland's participation in international economic competition. St Patrick's College, Maynooth, opens the door to lay students. The Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), formed in 1912, is reconstituted as an anti-Catholic organization and declares war on the IRA, planting a bomb in County Down. In Ireland, an explosion marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Easter Rising, destroying the upper part of Nelson's Pillar in Dublin that had been erected to commemorate the Battle of Trafalgar (foundation stone laid in 1808). The head, recovered from the rubble, is now in the Dublin Museum. On the arts front, the rebuilt Abbey Theatre opens in Dublin.

1967

The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) is formed to demand removal of anomalies that discriminate against Catholics. The Association argues for one person one vote in local elections to replace the property/company vote, the disbanding of the B Specials, a reform of the system by which public housing is allocated and the repeal of the Special Powers Act. The founding of the Association is indicative of the political context but also of the voice that a new generation, benefiting from the 1940s Education Acts, is acquiring. Ireland's second application to enter the EEC is unsuccessful. On the Arts front, the Cork opera house is opened. New legislation provides for the unbanning of books after 12 years. In Tralee, following protests led by the parish priest, a public appearance by Jayne Mansfield is cancelled.

1968

In Northern Ireland, on 5 October, a civil rights march is held in Derry, organized by the Derry Housing Action Committee. On 9 October, a student march in Belfast, in protest at police brutality, is blocked by a counter demonstration organized by Ian Paisley. Formation of Derry Citizen's Action Committee. On 16 October, a People's Democracy march is held in Belfast. On 17 November, the Nationalist Party adopts a policy of civil disobedience. Attacks on Catholic homes 1968-9 recalls the IRA into existence. On November 22, Terence O'Neill, Northern Ireland Prime Minister, announces a package of reforms which include the allocation of houses by local authorities on the basis of need and a proposal that the powers of the Londonderry Corporation be taken over by a Development Commission.

In Ireland, the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* is published in newspapers on 30 July, reaffirming past papal condemnations of every artificial method of birth control. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) is established to co-ordinate the planning and finance of higher education. Civil Rights demonstration in Dublin.

1969

Northern Ireland: the year opens with the start on 1 January of the four-day People's Democracy March from Belfast to Derry. It proves to be a magnet for sectarian violence. Terence O'Neill resigns in April after six years as Premier of Northern Ireland, faced with escalating violence and civil unrest. Major James Chichester-Clark replaces him. In the summer, tensions between the Catholic community in Londonderry and the RUC are running high following the death of Sammy Devenney in his own home at the hands of the RUC. What came to be known as the Battle of the Bogside, Londonderry, begins on 13 August. On the 14 August, the Prince of Wales Own Regiment relieves the police. The Report of the Cameron Commission, September, finds that claims of discrimination made against Catholics are substantiated. It is critical of Stormont and the police in its assessment of sectarian conflict. The Hume report, October, recommends that the RUC becomes an unarmed force and that the B Specials are disbanded. A few days after the publication of the Hume Report, James Callaghan, Home Secretary, makes a two-day visit to Northern Ireland, agreeing proposals for reforms to the RUC and the central housing authority. Also in 1969, Bernadette Devlin is elected to the Westminster Parliament and in her maiden speech warns of the violence with which British troops entering Northern Ireland will be met. Third programme of economic expansion in Ireland. Also in Ireland, Charles Haughey's budget frees writers, composers, painters and sculptors from income tax from earnings from works judged to be of cultural merit. Samuel Beckett is awarded the Nobel prize.

1970

Edna O'Brien, *A Pagan Place*.

Provisional Sinn Féin is formed. Ian Paisley, an opponent of reforming unionism, is elected to Stormont and Westminster. The Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) is formed, incorporating nationalist and Labour Party groups. The leader is Gerry Fitt, and John Hume the Deputy Leader. The SDLP proves to be the nationalist voice until Sinn Féin begins to contest elections in the 1980s. The first open battle between nationalists and British troops occurs in the Ballymurphy area of Belfast. The army uses tear gas and a curfew is imposed. Following the recommendations of the Hunt Report, the multi-sectarian Ulster Defence Regiment replaces the B Specials. However, disillusionment of Catholics with the new force develops quickly as it is realized that the commanders and many of its members are former B Specials. In Ireland, the ban on Catholic students attending Trinity College, Dublin, is lifted.

1971

John Banville, *Nightspawn*.

1971 is a significant year in the Troubles, not least because internment without trial is reintroduced in Northern Ireland, and 1500 people are interned before the year is out. The introduction of internment sparks off numerous protests. Apart from street protests, the SDLP announces from 15 August a campaign of civil disobedience in which an estimated 16 000 householders withhold their rents and rates for their council homes. On the 19 October, five MPs, including John Hume and Bernadette Devlin,

begin a 48-hour hunger strike. The Ulster Defence Association, an umbrella organization for loyalist groups, is formed. Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party is founded. Dedicated to terrorist acts against Catholics, the UVF, re-formed in 1966, kills 15 people in a bomb explosion at McGuirk's bar on North Queen Street. Although the UVF claims responsibility, the Loyalist News blames the atrocity on the IRA. Ruairi O Bradaigh is elected President of Sinn Féin. The Women's Liberation Movement holds its first public meeting in Dublin. Faced with the prospect of increased terrorist activity, the Dáil bans the holding or purchase of arms for use outside the Republic. Radio Telefís Éireann bans patriotic ballads.

1972

Jennifer Johnston, *The Captain and the King*.

Bloody Sunday, 30 January, in Derry, on which 13 Civil Rights marchers are shot dead by British Army paratroopers and as many are injured. What exactly happened on the day is hotly contested. The report of a British enquiry, led by Lord Widgery, does not condemn the soldiers but does accuse them of behaviour that 'bordered on the reckless'. The city coroner, Hubert O'Neill, describes what happened as 'unadulterated murder'. The IRA is accused of pursuing its ends through indiscriminate murder. Subsequently, the army moves into the Bogside area of Derry that has become a no-go area. Bloody Friday, 21 July, on which IRA bombs kill nine people and maim 130 in Belfast, the majority of whom are shoppers at the targeted bus station and in the city centre. The Unionist controlled Parliament refuses to agree to Prime Minister Edward Heath's demands that Westminster take over control for security. Stormont is suspended and direct rule imposed on 28 March. The same month, two women are killed and 136 people injured in a bomb explosion at the Abercorn restaurant, Belfast. The Heath Government proposes an Irish Assembly elected by proportional representation as a solution to the Northern Ireland problem. There are bomb explosions in Dublin and the Northern Ireland conflict clearly enters domestic politics in Ireland. The Kevin Street office of Provisional Sinn Féin is closed down. The Special Criminal Court, which allowed for juryless courts and army officers to act as judges, is reintroduced. The special constitutional position of the Catholic Church in Ireland is removed. Ireland signs a treaty joining the EEC, but in the 1970s it faces increased domestic terrorism and a high rate of inflation. The Dáil requires the surrender of all firearms. Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act bans representatives of the northern republican movement or their apologists from broadcasting. 1972 also sees the publication of *The Future of Northern Ireland: A Paper for Discussion* produced by the Darlington Conference in October, attended only by the unionists, the Alliance party of Northern Ireland and the Labour Party.

1973

John Banville, *Birchwood*; Jennifer Johnston, *The Gates*.

Ireland enters the EEC (1 January). Liam Cosgrave (Fine Gael) is elected Taoiseach on a narrow majority in a coalition of Fine Gael and Labour

parties, after Lynch calls elections in February hoping to strengthen his position. In this year, too, in Ireland, the Council for the Status of Women is established. The Misuse of Drugs Bill is passed reflecting public anxiety about the increasing use of heroin and cocaine among young people, especially in Dublin. In Northern Ireland, 1973 sees the creation of the Northern Ireland Assembly and a power-sharing executive is agreed. But Ian Paisley vehemently opposes the Sunningdale Agreement, named after the conference centre in Buckinghamshire where the Treaty was signed on 9 December, which brings the Assembly into being. He proves to be a key player in the Ulster Workers' Strike that is largely responsible for the collapse of this short-lived assembly (see next). One person is killed and 250 injured in the IRA London bomb explosion (March). Gerry Adams, former Provisional Commander in Anderstown, becomes Provisional IRA Chief of Staff.

1974

Jennifer Johnston, *How many Miles to Babylon?* John McGahern, *Leavetaking*.

In April, the Secretary State for Northern Ireland, announces he will remove the illegal status of the UVF and Sinn Féin. As expected from Paisley's opposition, the Ulster Unionist Council rejects the Sunningdale Agreement and the power-sharing executive. The Ulster Workers' Strike of 14–28 May 1974 brings Northern Ireland to a standstill. Brian Faulkner, the Chief Executive, resigns after the Secretary of State for Ireland, Merlyn Rees, refuses to meet with representatives of the Ulster Workers' Council. Faulkner's Unionist colleagues also resign which brings the Northern Ireland Executive to an end. Thus, direct rule from Westminster is reimposed in the same month. In Ireland, the Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act is passed, giving women doing a similar job as men with the same or associated employer the right to equal pay. Guildford and Birmingham pub bombings (November and December). Ireland's status as a nation is enhanced when it takes over the Presidency of the EEC.

1975

Edna O'Brien, *Mother Ireland*.

The so-called 'Birmingham Six' are jailed for life at Lancaster Crown Court for their part in the Birmingham bombings. The 'Guildford Four' are tried for the pub bombings in Guildford and Woolwich. Internment without trial is suspended in December in Northern Ireland. De Valera dies at the age of 92 and is honoured with a State Funeral.

1976

John Banville, *Doctor Copernicus*; William Trevor, *The Children of Dymmouth*.

In February, IRA prisoner Frank Stagg dies in Wakefield Prison, England, after 61 days on hunger strike. The Northern Ireland convention, convened the previous year, collapses. Merlyn Rees, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, announces, in March, that paramilitary prisoners convicted of terrorist offences will no longer be entitled to special category status which enables prisoners to enjoy free association, to do no prison

work and allows them not to wear prison uniforms. Paramilitary prisoners argue that they are entitled to special category status as 'prisoners of war'. The 'blanket protest' begins in September in the new 'H-blocks' of the Maze Prison where IRA prisoners refuse to wear the prison uniform. The New Women's Peace Movement is started in Northern Ireland. In 1976, also, the British ambassador in Dublin is killed.

1977

Jennifer Johnston, *Shadows on Our Skin*.

In Ireland, Jack Lynch (Fianna Fáil) becomes Taoiseach. The Employment Equality Act is passed and the Employment Equality Agency is established. The first McDonalds fast food outlet opens in Dublin marking the cultural change which has occurred in Dublin in the 1970s and which is reflected, for example, in the Barrytown novels of Roddy Doyle and the work of Dermot Bolger. Northern Ireland's peace women – Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams – are awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

1978

The Family Planning Act is passed in Ireland legally entitling married women in the Republic to fertility control available through chemist shops on prescription. With reference to Northern Ireland, the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg finds that the interrogation techniques used on internees in 1971 were 'inhuman and degrading'. The Amnesty International Report on the alleged ill-treatment of people by the RUC at the Castlereagh Interrogation Centre is published. The Standing Committee of Bishops condemns the violence in Northern Ireland. The Maze prisoners, in the face of no favourable response from the British Government on their political status, begin what came to be known as the 'Dirty Protests' (1978–80) in which the paramilitary prisoners refuse to clean their cells and smear excrement over the walls.

1979

Jennifer Johnston, *The Old Jest*; John McGahern, *The Pornographer*; Brian Moore, *The Mangan Inheritance*.

The People's Peace Movement collapses after running out of funds. Margaret Thatcher becomes Britain's first woman prime minister and promises to pursue a tough security policy in Northern Ireland. Airey Neave, the Conservative spokesman on Northern Ireland, is killed by a car bomb planted by the Irish National Liberation association. Lord Mountbatten and three relatives are killed in a bomb explosion on his boat off Co. Sligo. Thatcher is involved with Dublin in talks about greater cross-border co-operation. Ian Paisley is elected to the European Parliament. In Ireland, Charles Haughey (Fianna Fáil) becomes Taoiseach. Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, Minister for the Gaeltacht, is the first woman to hold ministerial office since the formation of the Republic. The first elections to the European Parliament are held in Ireland. Pope John Paul II visits Ireland, warning against violence and reaffirming traditional family values. The first popular radio channel in Ireland is introduced as a result of pressure from pirate radio stations.

1980

Bernard MacLaverty, *Lamb*.

In April, it is announced that paramilitary prisoners will not be entitled to special category status, regardless of the offences that they have committed. In May, Charles Haughey and Margaret Thatcher pledge greater co-operation between their governments. The Anglo-Irish summit at Dublin Castle results in acknowledgement that the economic and political interests of the people of Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Ireland are linked and pledges of developing the relationship between the two countries. In October, in protest at the ending of special category status, IRA prisoners in 'H-block' in the Maze Prison begin a hunger strike campaign that lasts until the 18 December. Internment in Northern Ireland is abolished. In Ireland, the first female High Court judge is appointed.

1981

John Banville, *Kepler*, Jennifer Johnston, *The Christmas Tree*.

Amid high inflation and rising unemployment in Ireland, Garret Fitzgerald (Fine Gael) becomes Taoiseach. Eileen Desmond becomes Minister for Health and Social Welfare, the first woman to hold a senior government post in Ireland. Forty-eight young people are killed and 128 injured in a fire at the Stardust ballroom in north Dublin. A special day of mourning is declared and the Dáil is closed as a mark of respect. This serves to focus public attention on the Dublin youth, especially the Northsiders featured later in Doyle's Barrytown trilogy. In Northern Ireland, in January, prisoners agree to clean their cells. The strike is resumed when prison authorities refuse to pass on clean clothes from the prisoners' relatives. In March, the imprisoned leader of the IRA army, Bobby Sands, begins a new hunger strike on the fifth anniversary of the removal of special category status from paramilitary prisoners. He dies 66 days later. Haughey tries to persuade the British Government to find a way of ending the hunger strikes. The hunger strike is finally called off on 3 October 1981. Anglo-Irish relations are deteriorating.

1982

John Banville, *The Newton Letter*.

In Ireland, Charles Haughey (Fianna Fáil) succeeds Fitzgerald as Taoiseach, but Fitzgerald regains power the same year. In July, the IRA London Park bombs kill 11 soldiers. In the same month in Ireland, a young nurse, Bridie Gargan, is brutally murdered in Phoenix Park, Dublin, by Malcolm Macarthur, son of a well-connected family. His association with the Irish Attorney-General creates a scandal for the Haughey Government. In October, the American entrepreneur John De Lorean, who had received grants from the British Government to relocate his car factory to Northern Ireland, is arrested for his part in a plan to smuggle cocaine into the United States.

1983

Nuala Archer (ed.), *Woman's Part: An Anthology of Short Fiction by and about Irish Women 1890–1960*; Bernard MacLaverty, *Cal*; Brian Moore, *Cold Heaven*; William Trevor, *Fools of Fortune*.

New Ireland, or All Ireland Forum, results from meetings between Garret Fitzgerald's government and the SDLP and the Alliance Party. Fitzgerald fails to consult the Unionists who reject the idea, as does Margaret Thatcher. The Forum argues that there are three solutions to the Northern Ireland problem: a united Ireland, a federal settlement or a joint Irish-British administration. Although it comes to nothing, the Forum signals the need to address Northern Ireland within a wider constitutional context, involving Ireland. Gerry Adams is elected President of Sinn Féin and MP for West Belfast. On 17 December, five people are killed and 91 injured by an IRA bomb in Harrods in London during the Christmas shopping rush. In Ireland, in the Kerry Babies case, a single mother, who buried her dead baby on her farm, finds herself accused of the murder of a baby whose body is washed up on White Strand Beach, Cahirciveen. Fianna Fáil is pushed by pro-life pressure groups to call an anti-abortion referendum. (Abortion is prohibited in Ireland under the 1861 Offences Against the Persons Act.)

1984

Linda Anderson, *To Stay Alive*; Jennifer Johnston, *The Railway Station Man*; Neil MacCafferty, *A Woman to Blame* [an account of the Kerry Babies case]; Ruth Hooley (ed.), *The Female Line* [a collection of writings by Northern Irish women].

President Reagan visits Ireland. British citizens living in Ireland are allowed to vote in general elections in Ireland. An IRA bomb explodes at the Grand Hotel, Brighton, during the Conservative Party conference on 12 October. Five people are killed and 30 injured. The bomb is probably intended to assassinate Margaret Thatcher.

1985

Dermot Bolger, *Night-Shift*; Mary Leland, *The Killeen*.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement, also known as the Hillsborough Agreement, which attempts to involve the Dublin government in a solution to Northern Ireland, is signed on 15 November and provokes outrage among Unionists. In Ireland, the Family Planning Bill is passed. It sets the age for buying contraceptives at 18, removes the need for a prescription and drops the bona fide family planning stipulation. Contraceptives will be available from chemist shops, doctors' surgeries, health centres and family planning clinics. The Interim Radio Commission is established to advise on the future control of broadcasting. The National Newspapers of Ireland pressure group is established.

1986

John Banville, *Mefisto*; Deirdre Madden, *Hidden Symptoms*; Patrick McCabe, *Music on Clinton Street*.

An attempt to remove constitutional prohibition on divorce in the Republic is defeated. The first purpose built refuge for battered wives is opened in Dublin. (The subject of domestic violence against women is explored in Roddy Doyle's *The Woman Who Walked Into Doors*, 1996, discussed in Chapter 8.) At the Old Bailey in London, Patrick Magee is given eight life sentences for his part in the Brighton bombing in 1984.

1987

Mary Beckett, *Give Them Stones*; Maude Casey, *Over the Water*; Jennifer Johnston, *Fool's Sanctuary*.

In Ireland, Charles Haughey (Fianna Fáil) becomes Taoiseach. In the Hamilton Judgement the High Court places injunctions on the Well Women Centre and on Open-Line Counselling prohibiting the operation of non-directive counselling services. In Northern Ireland, 11 people are killed in the Enniskillen bombing.

1988

Linda Anderson, *Cuckoo*; John Banville, *The Book of Evidence*; Roddy Doyle, *The Commitments*; Patrick McCabe, *Carn*; Edna O'Brien, *The High Road*; Glenn Patterson, *Burning Your Own*; Elizabeth Shannon, *I am of Ireland: Woman of the North Speak Out*; William Trevor, *The Silence in the Garden*.

The Independent Radio and Television Commission in Ireland is charged with establishing a network of local and regional stations and for awarding a franchise for a second, private television network. The Irish football team reaches the quarter-finals in the European Championships.

1989

John Banville, *The Book of Evidence*; Dermot Bolger (ed.), *Invisible Cities: the New Dubliners: a Journey Through Unofficial Dublin*; Louise DeSalvo, Kathleen Walsh D'Arcy and Katherine Hogan (eds), *Territories of the Voice: Contemporary Stories by Irish Women Writers*; Patrick McCabe, *Carn*; Robert McLiam Wilson, *Ripley Bogle*.

The Guildford Four are declared innocent of the crimes for which they have served 14 years in prison. The national alternative to RTE radio, Century Radio, is established. The alternative to RTE television, TV3, is awarded a franchise although it is not to come on air until 1998. The Minister of Communications in the republic is forced to back down over proposals to reorganize broadcasting which mean, among other things, that Century Radio will cease to be a privatized service. The first local radio station, in Dublin, is established. The Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child wins an injunction prohibiting students at Trinity College, Dublin, disseminating information about abortion to first-year students resulting in four students who continue to do so being charged with contempt of court. Mary Robinson, who is to be elected President the following year, represents them.

1990

Dermot Bolger, *The Journey Home*; Roddy Doyle, *The Snapper*; John McGahern, *Amongst Women*; Brian Moore, *Lies of Silence*; Joseph O'Connor, *Cowboys and Indians*; *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* (introduction, Seamus Deane); Joseph O'Connor, *True Believers*.

Mary Robinson (born 1944) is elected President of the Republic (1990–7). She is a feminist lawyer, educated at Dublin University, Trinity College Dublin, and Harvard University. On taking up her post, she talks of women having been 'outside of history' in Ireland – a phrase borrowed from the poet Eavan Boland – and of women now being written back into it. This provides a useful framework within which to consider many contemporary novels. Other significant events in women's history include

the prosecution of the Irish Family Planning Association for selling condoms in a Virgin megastore and the formation of the Dublin Abortion Information Campaign in November. The country's morale is boosted when the Irish football team reaches the quarter-finals in the World Cup.

1991

Roddy Doyle, *The Van*; Jennifer Johnston, *The Invisible Worm*.

This is not a year that dispels public disillusionment with politicians and the judiciary. ITV's exposure in 'World in Action' of the Goodman Meat Empire confirms public disillusionment with corruption and favour in Irish politics. (On attitudes towards politicians, especially among the young people of Ireland, see Dermot Bolger, *The Journey Home*, 1990.) On a positive note, Roddy Doyle's *The Van* is shortlisted for the Booker Prize.

1992

An important event in Ireland highlighting the progress that still had to be made in equal opportunities for young girls and women in Ireland is what came to be known as the 'X' case. This case in which her friend's father allegedly raped a 14-year-old girl, receives widespread publicity not least because she is prevented from travelling to England for an abortion. The Dublin Abortion group distributes information, defying the law that made even providing the phone numbers of British clinics to pregnant women illegal. The X case mobilizes liberal public opinion, resulting in the Government dropping its ban on gay sex and introducing an age of equal consent. Subsequent reforms to the Constitution guarantee a right to travel and to information. The Government's opposition to court judgements that, effectively, makes abortion legal in cases where there is a threat to the health or life of the mother, is withdrawn. However, legislation in favour of abortion in these cases is not forthcoming.

Charles Haughey resigns following allegations that in 1982 he knew that the telephones of two journalists were being tapped. Not universally welcomed, Albert Reynolds, finance minister and former dance hall owner, takes over as Taoiseach. Irish voters ratify a treaty strengthening monetary and political integration within the European Community. Repeal of the Eighth Amendment Campaign (REAC) is formed in early March, and primarily based in Dublin and the large towns. Fianna Fáil loosens ties with the 'pro-life' campaign in order to win liberal ground associated with the Labour Parties and Fine Gael. Formerly relying upon rural support, it is now more dependent on support from the urban areas. Patrick McCabe's, *The Butcher Boy* is shortlisted for the Booker Prize.

In Northern Ireland, the Ulster Defence Association, formed in the 1970s, is banned for terrorist activities.

1993

John Banville, *Ghosts*; Emma Donoghue, *Passions Between Women: British Lesbian Culture 1668-1801*; Roddy Doyle, *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*; Brian Moore, *No Other Life*; Mary Morrissy, *A Lazy Eye* (short stories).

In March, an IRA bomb in Warrington, near Liverpool, kills two children. First IRA cease-fire. The McKittrick Report on segregation in Northern Ireland is published (50 per cent of its residents live in areas which are

90 per cent one religion). The Report of the Opsahl Commission finds evidence of self-imposed segregation in working-class areas and communal pressure deterring people from selling property to those of another religion. In October, a bomb in a Shankill Road shop kills 10 people. John Hume, leader of the Socialist Democratic Labour Party, tries to revive with Gerry Adams, the Irish Peace Initiative. This leads to the Downing Street Declaration by John Major and Albert Reynolds (15 December), and the Joint Framework initiative. The British Government declares that it has no 'selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland' and will 'encourage' a political settlement in Northern Ireland based on the people of Northern Ireland and Ireland to 'exercise the right of self-determination on the basis of consent'. The Declaration is welcomed by the SDLP but Sinn Féin is disappointed that it does not draw more effectively on the Adams/Hume agreement. Ian Paisley denounces the Declaration as a betrayal of Ulster. In Ireland, President Mary Robinson and Queen Elizabeth II become the first Irish and British heads of state to meet for 71 years.

1994

Emma Donoghue, *Stir-fry*; Kathleen Ferguson, *The Maid's Tale*; Joseph O'Connor, *Desperadoes*; William Trevor, *Felicia's Journey*.

The IRA announces 'a complete cessation of military operations' on 31 August. The spirit if not the letter of the move is generally welcomed. Shortly afterwards, in October, Loyalist paramilitaries, too, declare a cease-fire. Ulster Volunteer Force leader, Gusty Spence, talks of their 'abject and true remorse' for the suffering that their violence has caused. 36 per cent of the workforce in Ireland is now made up of women, the majority married. In the early days of the Republic this was discouraged and legislated against. However, many of the women are in low-paid jobs. Ireland has a new Taoiseach, John Bruton (Fine Gael), Albert Reynolds having been embarrassed and forced to resign when it was revealed that the Attorney General had appointed a President of the High Court who had mishandled the extradition of a Roman Catholic paedophile priest. The optimism of the year is checked when the Court of Criminal Appeal reduces the sentence of the man convicted of raping the 14-year-old-girl in the X case (see 1991).

1995

John Banville, *Athena*; Seamus Deane, *Reading in the Dark*; Emma Donoghue, *Hood*; Jennifer Johnston, *The Illusionist*; Patrick McCabe, *The Dead School*; Brian Moore, *The Statement*; Mary Morrissy, *Mother of Pearl*; Kate O'Riordan, *Involved*; Glenn Patterson, *Black Night on Black Thunder Mountain*.

Disillusionment with many aspects of public life in Ireland in the late 1980s and 1990s, especially concerns over corruption and the increasing power and influence of large companies, is reflected in the establishment of the Commission on the Newspaper Industry. Specifically, it is brought about by widespread concern over the large share that The Independent Group has acquired in the newspapers in Ireland. But continuing cynicism about public life in Ireland is not alone in driving the public agenda

in the mid-1990s. The wider political future is also kept to the front of the public mind. Interest in the future of Ireland and Northern Ireland as one island is reflected in *The Idea of the Union* in which contributors to debates about cementing Ireland and Northern Ireland argue rationally and, largely on economic grounds, for the Union. Disillusionment with public institutions in Ireland is dispelled temporarily by the results of the Divorce Referendum. The vote to change the provisions of the 1937 Constitution on marriage is carried by 50.3 per cent of the votes cast. The result reflects the changing social attitudes and demography of Ireland with considerable support from the working-class areas of Dublin and the twenty–thirty age group.

1996

Roddy Doyle, *The Woman Who Walked into Doors*; Deirdre Madden, *One by One in the Darkness*; Frank McCourt, *Angela's Ashes*; Robert McLiam Wilson, *Eureka Street* Edna O'Brien, *Down By the River*.

The mood of optimism that has generally prevailed in the previous 12 months, despite not inconsiderable scepticism in some quarters, comes to an end. The Irish Peace Process collapses in February with accusations of Unionist intransigence and Sinn Féin duplicity. There is some renewed hope when US Senator George Mitchell reports on the prospects of decommissioning paramilitary weapons. He advises that all-party talks should start so that decommissioning can begin. However, Prime Minister John Major is not in agreement with him and is insistent upon prior decommissioning. Depressingly for the optimists, the cease-fire agreement ends with two people killed in the Canary Wharf (London Docklands) bombing.

1997

John Banville, *The Untouchable*; Dermot Bolger, *Father's Music*; Emma Donoghue, *Kissing the Witch*; Bernard MacLaverty, *Grace Notes*; Brian Moore, *The Magician's Wife*.

In Britain, the Labour Party wins the General Election. As a result, the Irish Peace Process is invigorated and the cease-fire is restored. Ireland has a new Taoiseach – Bertie Ahern (Fianna Fáil) – and a new President. Professor Mary McAleese succeeds Mary Robinson. Formerly Pro Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University Belfast, she is a Northern Ireland nationalist, who attended secondary school on the Falls Road in the fiercely republican part of Belfast. Married with three children, she has personal experience of the Northern Ireland conflict – her parents lost their home and business in sectarian violence in Belfast. In the wake of McAleese's election, and the way the Presidential campaign brought to the fore debates about nationalism, the Ireland Institute is established by Declan Kiberd, among others, to address the perceived Revisionist (anti-nationalist) stance of the media. The different attitude towards Ireland displayed by the New Labour Government compared with the Major and Thatcher administrations is perhaps evident when Prime Minister Tony Blair publicly acknowledges that the British Government of the day could have done more to prevent the Irish Famine that began in 1845. This does not convince everyone and some media commentators find it gimmicky.

1998

Jennifer Johnston, *Two Moons*; Patrick McCabe, *Breakfast on Pluto*; Joseph O'Connor, *The Salesman*.

The renewed efforts of the New Labour Government results in The Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement (April) between the Dublin and London governments and the main Northern Ireland parties to share power. The agreement provides for North–South and British–Irish representative bodies. One of its suggestions is that a statement that all who live on the island share a common identity replaces the existing constitutional claim that all 32 Counties belong to the same nation. However, the new mood of optimism shared by many inside and outside Ireland is shattered by the Omagh Bomb explosion. It is carried out by the Real IRA, a splinter group, in response to the Good Friday Agreement and kills 28 people and injures 310.

1999

Roddy Doyle, *A Star Called Henry*; Patrick McCabe, *Mondo Desperado* (short stories).

To mixed media reaction, but generally welcomed, devolved government is established in Northern Ireland and ministerial powers returned to Stormont after 27 years. It is proposed that David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, will be Northern Ireland's First Minister, Seamus Mallon deputy first minister and Brid Rogers, a founding member of the SDLP, a fluent Irish speaker who has lived in Northern Ireland since 1960, minister of agriculture and rural development. Martin McGuinness, former IRA chief of staff, is to become minister of education, and Sinn Féin's Bairbre de Brun minister of health, social services and public safety. The Patten report on policing in Northern Ireland (September) recommends the setting up of a Northern Ireland Police Service. The 175 recommendations include a new badge, oath of allegiance and uniform, and a positive recruitment policy towards Catholics. The report fails to meet nationalist demands for a disbandment of the RUC and angers Unionists broadly supportive of the constabulary. The Ulster Unionist Party sees the proposed changes to the name, badge and flag as a 'gratuitous insult' to the force. 1999 also sees, in Ireland, another major scandal around the anti-abortion laws. The founder of the Adam's Pregnancy Advice Centre is alleged to have unlawfully adopted a four-day-old baby from a college student who had sought advice on her pregnancy from the agency.

2000

Emma Donoghue, *Slammerkin*; Jennifer Johnston, *The Gingerbread Woman*. Devolved government returns to Northern Ireland at midnight on Monday, 29 May, after its suspension in February following the failure of the Ulster Unionists and Sinn Féin to reach agreement over the decommissioning of IRA weapons. In May, the Ulster Unionist Council votes to support its leader David Trimble and rejoin Sinn Féin in a power-sharing executive, accepting the IRA's offer to put its arms 'beyond use'. In January, Peter Mandelson, the Northern Ireland Secretary, confirms that the government intends to dismantle the 78-year-old traditions of the

RUC. Its draft proposals include scaling the force down from 13 500 officers to about 7500, dependent upon the security situation, and recruiting from a 50–50 pool of Protestants and Catholics. The name will change to the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the cap badge, a crown, too, will change. Gerry Adams rejects the terms of the new policing bill, arguing that the original proposals of the Pattern bill had been watered down. The SDLP is also critical of the bill.

2002

Emma Donoghue, *The Woman Who Gave Birth to Rabbits* (short stories).

The IRA issues a statement in July ahead of the thirtieth anniversary of Bloody Friday. It expresses the 'sincere apologies and condolences' of the IRA to all non-combatants, killed or injured by them in their thirty-year campaign. The IRA reiterates that it is 'committed unequivocally to the search for freedom, justice and peace in Ireland' and 'to the peace process and to dealing with the challenges and difficulties which this presents'. Three hundred people march in Dublin to mark the tenth anniversary of the X case and to support a NO vote in the latest anti-abortion referendum.

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