

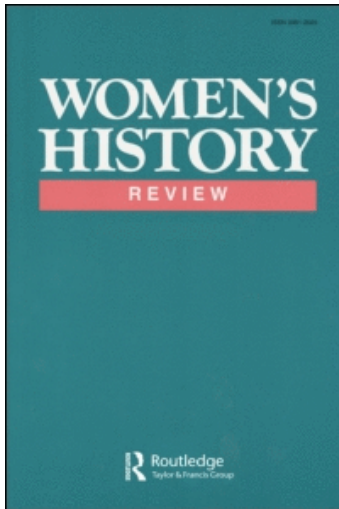
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'A Populous Solitude': the life and art of Sophia Rosamond Praeger, 1867–1954

Joseph McBrinn

Although the Titanic is regularly discussed as a pinnacle of Northern Irish workmanship, much of the skilled craft that surrounded the Belfast shipyards, in which the Titanic was made in 1912, is by and large forgotten. Perhaps the most important artist whose work captures this era is Sophia 'Rosamond' Praeger. Although at the time of her death in 1954 Rosamond Praeger was considered one of the most important Irish artists of her time, she is today a forgotten and marginalised figure. Like so many women artists of her generation she has been allowed to fall very quickly from visibility in history books, museum collections and the public imagination. Trained in London and Paris in the age of the 'New Woman', she returned to live in the north of Ireland in the 1890s and completed numerous (often monumental) sculptures for every conceivable public and private space. Committed to female emancipation from an early age, she was a constant advocate of women in the arts, championing modern women artists, and she recognised, and championed, before anyone, the powerfully brooding genius of her younger contemporary, the stained glass and graphic artist Wilhelmina M. Geddes. Unlike many of her contemporaries, such as Sarah Purser and Beatrice Elvery, as well as Ellen Rope, Mary Watts and Phoebe Traquair, Rosamond Praeger's life and work are long overdue for reconsideration, and as we come closer to celebrating the centenary of the Titanic her memory sadly sinks further and further into eclipse.

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In 1941, distinguished Irish botanist Robert Lloyd Praeger published *A Populous Solitude*, his great synthesis of Irish botany, geography, cultural history, literature, science and autobiography.¹ The title of the book was taken from Byron's 1812 poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and the dedication reads, 'To my sister, Rosamond Praeger', on whose poetry, which she wrote profusely but rarely published, Robert also often drew inspiration.² *A Populous Solitude* records Robert Praeger's formative childhood nature studies, in the form of boisterous rambles in the countryside with his brothers, which sowed the foundations of his later work as an eminent botanist, but he recalls the 'most adventurous of these' were in fact made in the company of his sister.³ For the most part, however, Rosamond respected convention and confined herself to suitably ladylike accomplishments.⁴ But her love of nature was as profound as her brother's and in 1883 when Robert joined the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club (hereafter BNFC), which functioned as the epicentre of Belfast's Victorian cultural society, she quickly followed.⁵ If Robert used these trips to forge a career as a scientist, she too used them to sketch and explore themes that would later re-emerge in her own professional practice as an artist, and subsequently they collaborated on at least two books.⁶ On one BNFC excursion to Slieve Glah in Co. Cavan, in June 1896, Rosamond was photographed by her, and Robert's, close friend R. J. Welch standing alone in a sea of wild ox-eyes, purple loosestrife, wild angelica, field-, sow- and marsh-thistle—an enigmatic figure of a young artist in an aesthetic dress and Tam O'Shanter hat, lost in thought, dreaming before nature (Figure 1).⁷

Later Robert recalled this image of his sister 'waist-deep in flowers' in:



Figure 1 Photograph of S. R. Praeger taken by Robert J. Welch at Slieve Glah in Co. Cavan, Ireland, in June 1896. (Private Collection.)

A little patch of damp, peaty meadow-land, shut in by natural corpses of Willow and Birch, watered by the drainage of the neighbouring bog, sheltered by the tall, dark pine-wood ... What a blaze of colour! The long spikes of Purple Loosestrife gives a rich rose-red tint to the whole scene; and everywhere these are set-off by the creamy, cloudy, flower masses of the Meadow-sweet ... The hot afternoon air is laden with the rich fragrance of the Meadow-sweet and with the droning of a myriad of bees. White and brown butterflies flutter from blossom to blossom ... and Dragon-flies, blue, and red, and brown, flash here and there ... Over them the Swallows swoop and twitter; in the bushes finches and warblers rustle and chirp; and the peaceful cooing of the Wood-quests come softly from the pine-trees. It is high summer, and all the country has donned its richest garb.⁸

This Romantic picture of Rosamond Praeger has in many ways been forgotten and replaced by that recorded in BNFC minutes, which note that in 1893, along with a group of 'young ladies and wives' including Mrs Vinycomb, Mrs St Clair Boyd, Mrs Stelfox, 'Miss Praeger' was a 'teamaker'.⁹ If at the time of her death in 1954, after almost seven decades of production as an artist and designer, Rosamond Praeger's close friend and colleague, Morris Harding, would comment, 'I always considered her the finest craftsman in the North of Ireland', why is she today such a forgotten and marginalised figure in Irish art and design history?¹⁰ Records and reviews of her work remain buried in period newspapers and journals and there are only a few known instances where her own words are actually recorded. In 1938, in one of the last times she opened her studio to the local press, she told her interviewer that 'journalists are most dangerous people'.¹¹ With the major themes in her work drawn from her happy childhood Praeger has earned the label of a 'child-artist'.¹² However, she often pictured the aged, the destitute and the disaffected and was conscious of her reputation as a 'child-artist'. Praeger's approach to children was not always as sentimental as it is portrayed and she once wrote to her friend F. J. Bigger to complain that a 'yelling party picnicking' of children did not show sufficient deference to the large Celtic slab he had placed over St Patrick's grave beside Downpatrick Cathedral, Co. Down, in 1900.¹³

Praeger's conformable middle-class background, and cultured family, facilitated a career in the arts. She was born Sophia 'Rosamond' Praeger on Monday, 15 April 1867 at The Crescent in Holywood, Co. Down, an affluent town, east of Belfast, situated on a slope of gentle hills which roll down to the lough where many of the city's wealthy Victorian industrialists built mansions.¹⁴ She was the only daughter and the third of the six children of Willem Emilius Praeger, a linen merchant who had immigrated to Belfast from The Hague in Holland, and Maria Patterson, the eldest daughter of a prominent Belfast family.¹⁵ Willem Praeger came from a distinguished Dutch family, originally of German and Jewish descent, which was well known in the nineteenth century for their musical accomplishments.¹⁶ Belfast, like The Hague, was both industrious and propitious for the middle classes. Rosamond was educated privately at home and following her father's sudden death, in April 1881, at Sullivan School in Holywood.¹⁷ In 1885 she entered Belfast Government School of Art and in 1886 she enlisted as one of the first women members of the Rambler's Sketching Club, which had evolved from art classes organised by John Vinycomb and Thomas Crane (the brother of Walter Crane) at Marcus Ward's publishing firm.¹⁸ In 1888, she enrolled at

the Slade School of Art where she won several prizes and a scholarship. Under the influence of her friend and mentor, the English artist Ellen Rope, and her principal teacher at the Slade, the French artist Alphonse Legros, she became one of the leading Irish contributors to the New Sculpture movement, which evolved in the late nineteenth century as an antidote to the stale academic classicism then prevalent in British sculpture.¹⁹ New Sculpture as a ‘modernising movement’ was particularly influenced by developments in contemporary France, especially the tactile fluidity, experimental methods and increasingly Symbolist subject-matter of artists such as Auguste Rodin, Edouard Lantéri, Jules Dalou and Alphonse Legros.²⁰ In 1893, with Rope’s and Legros’s encouragement, Praeger went to study in Paris.

Trained in London and Paris in the age of the ‘New Woman’, Praeger’s evolving Arts and Crafts ideology in sculpture and graphic design synthesised diverse influences from antiquity, botany, folklore and literature. After returning to Belfast in 1893 she completed numerous sculptural schemes for churches, schools, hospitals, banks and libraries; memorials to local figures as well as several war memorials. Her own family background in the linen industry and burgeoning Belfast bourgeoisie earned her commissions from several local mercantile families. She also produced commercial designs for companies such as Harold Rathbone’s Della Robbia Pottery in Birkenhead. Her work as a sculptor can be divided into four categories; architectural decoration; memorials including First World War Memorials and funerary sculpture; portraiture; and small-scale domestic sculpture in either statuette or bas-relief form, often brightly painted. She also made medals, toys, fountains and garden sculpture. She worked in terracotta, Portland stone, Caen stone, sandstone, Connemara marble, silver and bronze—excelling at both carving, often on a monumental scale and *in situ*, as well as modelling. Praeger seems to have been, from the outset, more concerned with the idea of craft process rather than fine art practice.²¹ This was a common feature of New Sculpture, which created closer links between sculpture and decorative arts or crafts, such as ceramics, in private as well as public spaces.²² However, Praeger’s individual style fluctuated from smooth modelling, with delicate surfaces in bas-reliefs in plaster and marble, to roughly and expressively hewn patterned surfaces elucidating the inherent beauty of stone, often reminiscent of medieval stone-carving. Graphic design, aside from sculpture, became her favourite means of expression and it was in London that Praeger first produced drawings for commercial publication. This diversified from the writing and illustration of poetry and children’s books, to the design of posters for the Temperance Alliance to illustrations in Sir Horace Plunkett’s Celtic Revival journal, *The Irish Homestead*, and designs for Gaelic League pageants.

Rosamond Praeger played a significant role in the late Victorian and early-twentieth-century Irish art world. Her presence for a woman was unprecedented. She was committed to female emancipation from an early age and later designed cards and posters for the suffrage groups in England and Ireland; she was a constant advocate of women in the arts and she recognised before anyone, the powerfully brooding ‘genius’ of Wilhelmina M. Geddes, who she considered ‘one of the most original and talented artists Ireland has yet produced’.²³ As a professional woman artist in the north of Ireland the diversity and longevity of Praeger’s career remains unequalled and the sheer

scope of her achievement remains uncatalogued or chronicled. She exhibited at the Belfast Ramblers' Sketching Club, then the Belfast Art Society, serving as a committee member in 1901 and acting as Vice-President in 1902, 1903 and 1906. From 1900, she was a member of the council of the Belfast Industrial Development Association, which promoted local and national craftwork. She showed at the Royal Academy in London, the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool and the Paris Salon. She was one of the founder members of the Ulster Academy of Arts, and was awarded status of Royal Hibernian Academy Honorary Academician in 1927, one year after women were admitted as Academicians. Other conferred honours included an MA from Queen's University in 1938 and an MBE in 1939. She contributed to the exhibition of Irish Art held at the Whitechapel Gallery, London, in 1913, as well as Hugh Lane's Dublin and Belfast exhibitions. In 1930 she represented Ireland at the Exposition d'Art Irlandais at Brussels.²⁴ She represented Northern Ireland at the Wembley Empire Exhibition in 1924 and again at the 1938 Glasgow Empire Exhibition.²⁵ She was a founder member of the Guild of Irish Art Workers; she showed with the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland in Dublin as well as the northern-based Irish Decorative Art Association and at the Society of Arts and Crafts in Belfast after Partition in 1921. Between 1941 and 1943, she was President of the Ulster Academy of Arts and in 1943 she was appointed an advisor to the Council for Entertainment, Music and the Arts (forerunner of the Arts Council). Like several women artists and designers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Arts and Crafts movement, Praeger had philanthropic interests. She completed work for Belfast Central Mission as well as her local Working Men's Club, and she was a lifelong benefactor of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the Ulster Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (USPCA) and the National Trust.

Clearly one could not argue that Praeger was invisible in Victorian and early-twentieth-century institutional and social hierarchies but rather her obscurity rests more with how Irish art and design history has been written throughout the twentieth century, which has placed no, or little, value on her architecturally decorative or domestically-orientated work as well as the 'spaces of femininity' in which she operated.²⁶ Unlike many of her Irish, English and Scottish contemporaries such as Sarah Purser, Beatrice Elvery, Ellen Rope, Elinor Hallé, Mary Watts and Phoebe Traquair, Praeger's work has yet to be rediscovered, reconsidered and recognised by the public, by academic research, by museum and gallery exhibitions, and by the auction and salesroom. Today, even though Praeger's work forms a tangible element in the material fabric of cities such as Belfast, an abeyance of archival material, records, documents and knowledge has further contributed to obscurity. In contrast in Praeger's hometown of Hollywood, where she was born and lived most of her life, there is an almost hagiographical approach to her life and work but, in historiographical terms, there has been little attempt to document and synthesise all the aspects of her career. Nearly all discussions or studies of her work have focused exclusively on either sculpture or illustration.²⁷ Her work as a portraitist and memorialist, her commercial and political graphic designs, her poetry as well as her position and influence, have been entirely neglected. Little or no attempt has been made to reconsider her in her original context, and in order to reclaim her history it seems worthwhile, in this article, to map out her

career and highlight some of the issues that a proper and just reconsideration requires.²⁸ Essentially, what I would like to suggest is that Rosamond Praeger's life was 'a populous solitude', but unlike her brother's, which was immersed in the patriarchal and hierarchical systems of Victorian bourgeoisie society, that she operated as part of a circle of dynamic, and at times revolutionary, female artists, writers, poets and social activists, in a trajectory stretching from Belfast to London to Dublin, and although today her art may seem conservative and *recherché*, it was in its own way subtly subversive and completely engaged with the debates of its day.

After showing prodigious talent at drawing whilst still a child, it was suggested that Praeger should attend the local School of Art where her uncle William Hugh Patterson was a Board member and where his two daughters, Nellie and Amy, with whom Praeger had an especially close relationship, were already students. Apart from being a talented amateur, William H. Patterson had an interest in art and design and had visited, with much enthusiasm, the Great Exhibitions in London of 1851 and 1862, and took an interest in the work of leading artists, designers and architects, particularly Christopher Dresser and William Butterfield. He was also a collector, amassing a selection of local art, and he was one of the first Irish collectors of Japanese prints. As a central figure in Ulster's Celtic Revival, he inherited a fascination with culture and science from his father Robert Patterson, who had been especially influenced by Charles Darwin, whom he met in 1854.²⁹ The Patterson family ran successful hardware, and linen, businesses and were part of the northern liberal Non-Subscribing community of Presbyterians. W. H. Patterson's younger brother, Robert Lloyd Patterson, who became the legal guardian of the Praeger children when their father died, was also a significant art collector in Victorian Belfast.³⁰

In 1885, in order to develop her 'exceptional facility in drawing', Rosamond Praeger was enrolled at Belfast Government School of Art.³¹ The original Government School of Design, of 1849, had been re-established in 1870 by local philanthropists such as the Pattersons, and during the 1880s it was under the headmastership of the English painter George Trobridge.³² Trobridge, an adherent of John Ruskin's teachings, urged students to study directly from Nature, and Praeger was especially influenced by his pedagogical ideas.³³ At the School of Art Praeger won several prizes for drawing free-hand, as well as after the antique, and also in the national competitions.³⁴ Probably at Trobridge's suggestion Praeger enrolled at the Slade School of Art in 1888, although it may have been earlier as she had spent periods with her cousin Amy Patterson, who had moved to London, from 1884. The Slade from the outset was an important place for women to receive professional training and several leading women artists of the late nineteenth century passed through its studios.³⁵ Here, Praeger first encountered a new network of female artists and designers; the most influential were Sarah Cecilia Harrison, who was also from Holywood, and Ellen Rope, who had trained under Octavia Hill, a disciple of Ruskin. On her first day, 4 October 1888, Praeger was keen and early—her name is the first signature in the book.³⁶ In these years she became immersed in Rope's Gower Street set, which included members of the Garrett family.³⁷ Under Rope's guidance and Legros's tutelage Praeger became more and more interested in sculpture, although she had already been modelling from an early

age in Ireland. At the Slade she won prizes for drawing, painting and composition, as well as sculpture, in 1889.

However, Legros may have encouraged her to continue studying in France, and Rope had already travelled widely in France and Italy. In late 1892, Praeger went to Paris, where many British and Irish artists flocked, especially to the École des Beaux Arts or the private ateliers such as Julian's or Colorassi's.³⁸ Praeger spent the end of 1892 and the early part of 1893 in Paris and here she more than likely saw the large Mary Cassatt exhibition as well as other work by the Post-Impressionists.³⁹ Cassatt was of course causing much of a stir in 1893 with her 'Modern Woman' murals, which decorated the 'Women's Pavilion' at the World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago, which also included work by Praeger's friends Ellen Rope and Cecilia Harrison.⁴⁰ The modernity of Cassatt's art, as well as her interest in the themes of childhood and maternity, clearly influenced Praeger's subsequent development.

In 1893, with three sons having left Ireland, Praeger's mother, a widow with two younger teenage boys, clearly needed help. Dutifully Rosamond returned home but with the resolve to set up her own studio in Belfast. Although the rise of the number of female sculptors in the late nineteenth century was considered phenomenal, there was still much opposition to young women as practitioners and they were often referred to as a 'bevy of fair sculptresses'.⁴¹ Indeed, *The Studio* commented that although contemporary sculpture was 'a most perfect instance of fine art inextricably allied with fine craft', it demanded 'strenuous labour so that you may regard it as being safe from invasion from the new women'.⁴² Like many of her fellow students from the Slade, and other schools, who became professional sculptors, such as Rope, Elinor Hallé, Margaret Giles, Ruby Levick, Esther Moore and Gwendolen Williams, Praeger was in many ways constrained into a production/consumption model of craft-orientated work with feminine-centred themes.⁴³ Like many female contemporaries, much of her output in the 1890s consisted of medallions, reliefs, portrait busts and domestic statuettes. In 1894, Praeger rented a studio in Donegall Square, central Belfast, moving a year later to Waring Street. The size of her commissions clearly grew as she then moved her studio outside Belfast to Ballinderry, to a large one-storey building, which was a former Plymouth Brethren Hall. She then moved her studio to Holywood, where she lived with her mother, first to High Street and then finally in 1914 to Hibernia Street.

In Ireland, Praeger continued working for a variety of English publishers such as George Allen, Macmillan, Blackie, Partridge, Longmans, Nelson and Thompson, providing illustrations for a range of children's magazines, books as well as annuals. She also began working for Irish publishers, attracting new commissions from Hodges & Figgis in Dublin and William Mullan in Belfast, and her work began to reflect her local surroundings and the Celtic Revival's fascination with the world of the child.⁴⁴ Her imagination gave rise to some fantastical images and stories, full of dragons, serpents and a multitude of other invented creatures and adventures.⁴⁵ In 1896, she was employed by the Belfast firm Marcus Ward's, who were one of the largest and most successful Victorian publishers, employing both Kate Greenaway and Walter Crane in the 1880s. Her first single-authored, and illustrated, book, *A Visit to Babyland*, was published in 1896 and began a series of very successful children's books, including *The*

Adventures of the Three Bold Babes, where we first see her fascination with dragons, and the *Tiny Tots* series, with the stories derived from her childhood adventures with her brother Robert. In 1897, she also illustrated the story of ‘The Conversion of Thady Daly: a tale of a County Clare creamery’ for *The Irish Homestead* and in 1898 her designs for the Gaelic League’s 1798 Centennial Pageant brought her into contact with the Nationalist Alice Milligan, sister of the folk-song collector Charlotte Milligan-Fox, and into the orbit of Milligan’s revolutionary and proto-feminist Belfast magazine, *The Shan Van Vocht*.⁴⁶

Just after 1900 Praeger’s attempts to gain a municipal commission in the decoration of the new City Hall were rejected in favour of work by established male sculptors from London such as Hamo Thornycroft, Frederick Pomeroy and Thomas Brock. By this time she had also become deeply concerned with the increasing levels of poverty in Belfast’s inner city, and sculptures such as the marble *Fairy Fountain* of 1901, which shows a little girl asleep, were inspired by the children she saw at Belfast’s Central Mission and perhaps by the contemporary studies of infant mortality by local paediatrician Robert Campbell, of the Ulster Medical Society. In 1905, she illustrated a book, *Little Red Riding Hood*, for the educationalist Maurice Hime, and in 1910 she completed a memorial to the founders of the Belfast Central Mission. About this time Praeger became fascinated with the theme of the childhood of Irish saints. She sculpted St Patrick and St Brigid and made several versions of St Fiachra. She completed several variations of St Francis, and even a small statue for the garden of F. J. Bigger’s famous north Belfast house ‘Ard Righ’. At this point Praeger’s exhibition pieces encompassed a diversity of sources. *The Islandman* of 1910 captures a Belfast working youth, on the brink of manhood, from the local shipyards, while *Looking West* depicts a peasant mother with creel, who she may have encountered on BNFC trips to Donegal and Galway.

In these years Praeger also began collaborating with several Belfast architects, most notably the firm Young and Mackenzie for whom she completed several decorative sculptures for their new maternity building at the Royal Victoria Hospital on Belfast’s Falls Road. In 1916, Young and Mackenzie gave Praeger’s young friend Wilhelmina Geddes one of her first major Belfast commissions for a stained glass window in the new Presbyterian Assembly Halls.⁴⁷ As well as large carved pieces for exteriors of buildings, Praeger also completed smaller, more intimate bas-relief panels as interior decoration. From 1910, Praeger was to work on a series of monumental commissions for some of the leading figures and families in Edwardian Belfast, such as Thomas Andrews and Walter Henry Wilson, who were two of the founders of the world-famous Harland and Wolff shipyard. In 1914, Praeger was commissioned to work on the decoration of the Thomas Andrews Memorial Hall in Comber, Co. Down, built after Andrews had died on board the *Titanic* in April 1912 (Figure 2).

Praeger decorated the exterior of this impressive Hiberno-Romanesque building, by Young and Mackenzie, with cherubic angels. Inside she completed a monumental portrait plaque in bronze of Andrews, and a second portrait memorial to him, this time showing the Harland and Wolff shipyard in the background, was commissioned for the stairwell of the Ulster Reform Club in Belfast. Earlier she had been commissioned to



Figure 2 S. R. Praeger at work on the façade decorations of the Thomas Andrews Memorial Hall in Comber, Co. Down, Ireland, 1914 (National Museums of Northern Ireland).

complete a memorial to Walter Henry Wilson at Newtownbreda in south Belfast, which depicted one of her favourite motifs—a girl dreaming amidst nature.⁴⁸

Praeger's network of local female contacts increased in 1894 with the founding of the Irish Decorative Art Association in Belfast.⁴⁹ Praeger showed her work at their annual exhibitions up to the 1920s and also sold her work through their Belfast shop in Wellington Place. At their exhibitions, held in the coastal town of Portrush, Praeger seems to have made contact with the MacNaghten family, who in 1913 commissioned her to design a sculpture for the entrance of a village hall and school built as a memorial to Lord MacNaghten, just outside Bushmills, Co. Antrim, which had been designed by English Arts and Crafts architect Clough Williams-Ellis. She chose the mythological tale of 'The Fate of the Children of Lir' as the school overlooked the Giant's Causeway, and the Sea of Moyle featured in the story. The trope of transformation so central to western imagination finds no more beautiful interpretation than in this Irish folk tale,

familiar to Praeger since her childhood holidays in Co. Antrim. Praeger saw a social role for art and as being especially beneficial to children, suggesting that 'one way of using sculpture ... would be to have small things in the parks which might cultivate among children a feeling of form', and her 'Children of Lir' was placed in the porch of the school, which was open to the elements.⁵⁰ As well as the MacNaghtens Praeger also worked for several prominent local families. The Richardsons and Inglises, prominent mercantile families, commissioned her to design memorials for children in their families who had died young, and the Ewart family commissioned her to complete a memorial for their son James Ewart for Belfast Cathedral. When Praeger's younger brother Egmont, who had served in the First World War, died in 1919 Praeger completed a war memorial to him and other local men in her local church in Holywood. She completed more than ten other First World War memorials, in town squares such as in Omagh, Co. Tyrone, in schools such as Campbell College and Royal Belfast Academy, in hospitals such as the Templemore Avenue Women and Children's Hospital, and in several Presbyterian churches including the Rosemary Street church and Alls Souls Church (all in Belfast) as well as Anglican churches such as Dunluce Church in Bushmills, Co. Antrim.⁵¹ Her most significant First World War memorial, however, was that at Belfast's Workman and Clark's shipyard.

Throughout the 1920s Praeger continued to exhibit, often small-scale domestic statuary, at the Society of Arts and Crafts exhibitions in Belfast, and during these years she took part in one of the most prestigious commissions of the period, the decoration of the interior of St Anne's Cathedral; also known as Belfast Cathedral. St Anne's had been a parish church up until 1894 when it was decided to build a cathedral to serve the city of Belfast. Thomas Drew, the original architect, completed most of the building work before his death in 1910. In the 1920s Sir Charles Nicholson, a pupil of J. D. Sedding, who worked on a number of English cathedral alterations, was employed to oversee the building of a new side chapel, baptistery and decoration of the nave. Nicholson offered the bulk of the interior work to English sculptor Morris Harding, who was a nephew of the New Sculptor Harry Bates. Praeger, as the only local sculptor working on a monumental scale, was commissioned to complete work in the baptistery and nave. When Harding arrived from London Praeger offered him space in her studio and rented his family some lodgings, and although Harding was given the larger part of the commission it was Praeger's work that attracted comment, especially her 'bold and vigorous' carving.⁵² Their friendship outlasted the commission and when it was completed Harding and his family remained in Northern Ireland. In 1938 Praeger was asked to complete the Edward Carson Memorial in St Anne's Cathedral, commissioned by the Ulster Women's Unionist Council.⁵³

Praeger had earlier been linked to the suffrage movement in Ireland and England. In the early 1900s she began attending suffragette meetings in Belfast and subsequently made several designs for Irish and English suffrage organisations. Praeger made her earliest designs for the Suffrage Atelier, which had been founded in London in 1909 by a group of professionally trained artists which included some of Praeger's contemporaries at the Slade, such as Mary Lowndes. The Suffrage Atelier has been described as an 'Arts and Crafts Society in the service of women's emancipation'.⁵⁴ For the Atelier

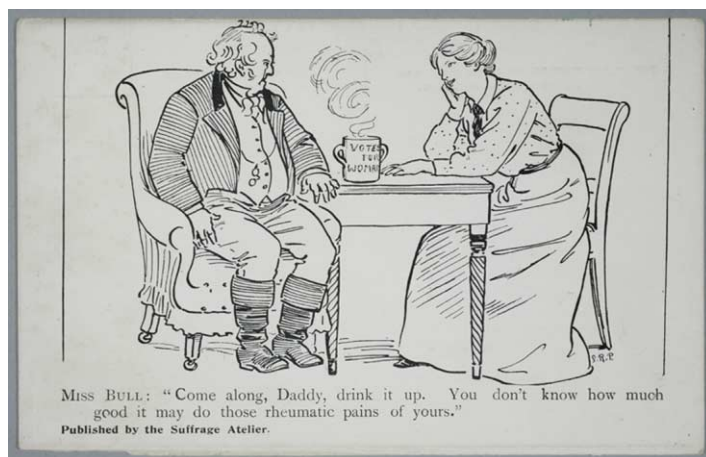


Figure 3 S. R. Praeger, *Votes for Women*. ‘Miss Bull: “Come along, Daddy, drink it up”’. Postcard designed for the Suffrage Atelier, London, 6 × 4 cm, c.1912 (The Women’s Library, London Metropolitan University).

Praeger made poster and postcard designs of a gentle, yet subversive humour, evident in her ‘Miss Bull: “Come along, Daddy, drink it up”’ (Figure 3).

Praeger also made designs for the Irishwomen’s Suffrage Federation, which had been founded by Louie Bennet in 1911 as an umbrella organisation for all the regional suffrage groups in Ireland.⁵⁵ An Irishwomen’s Suffrage Federation Christmas card designed by Praeger (Figure 4) shows the same type of gentle, yet biting, humour that she used in her designs for the Suffrage Atelier, and indeed was so characteristic of her illustrated children’s books. In addition to her graphic design work, in 1915, Praeger, after hearing Sylvia Pankhurst discuss the setting up of a craft workshop to help women in the East End of London in a Belfast lecture, set up a toy-making workshop in Hollywood to raise funds for the Irishwomen’s Suffrage Federation.

Although Praeger’s work is linked to other Irish artists and writers who worked for the English Suffrage groups, such as Pamela Coleman Smith, who also designed postcards for the Suffrage Atelier, and Patricia Lynch, who worked on Sylvia Pankhurst’s *Worker’s Dreadnought*, her Arts and Crafts and modern style is also directly comparable to the work produced by Irish artists and writers, such as Evelyn Gleeson, Maud Gonne and Constance Markievicz, for radical Irish political groups including Cumman na mBan, Inghidhe na hÉireann, and the Irish Women Workers’ Union.⁵⁶ Praeger’s gently subversive imagery, in the mainstream of suffragette agitprop, was also linked to the imagery in her large sculpture commissions. In 1908, her large façade decoration for the Carnegie Library, by the local Arts and Crafts architectural firm Watts and Tulloch, on the Falls Road depicted ‘Art, Literature and Science’ as three winged female figures.⁵⁷ Praeger also designed two door panels of oxidised silver, which are now destroyed. The central façade figure of ‘Literature’ shows a graceful classical figure in a late Pre-Raphaelite idiom, so characteristic of New Sculpture

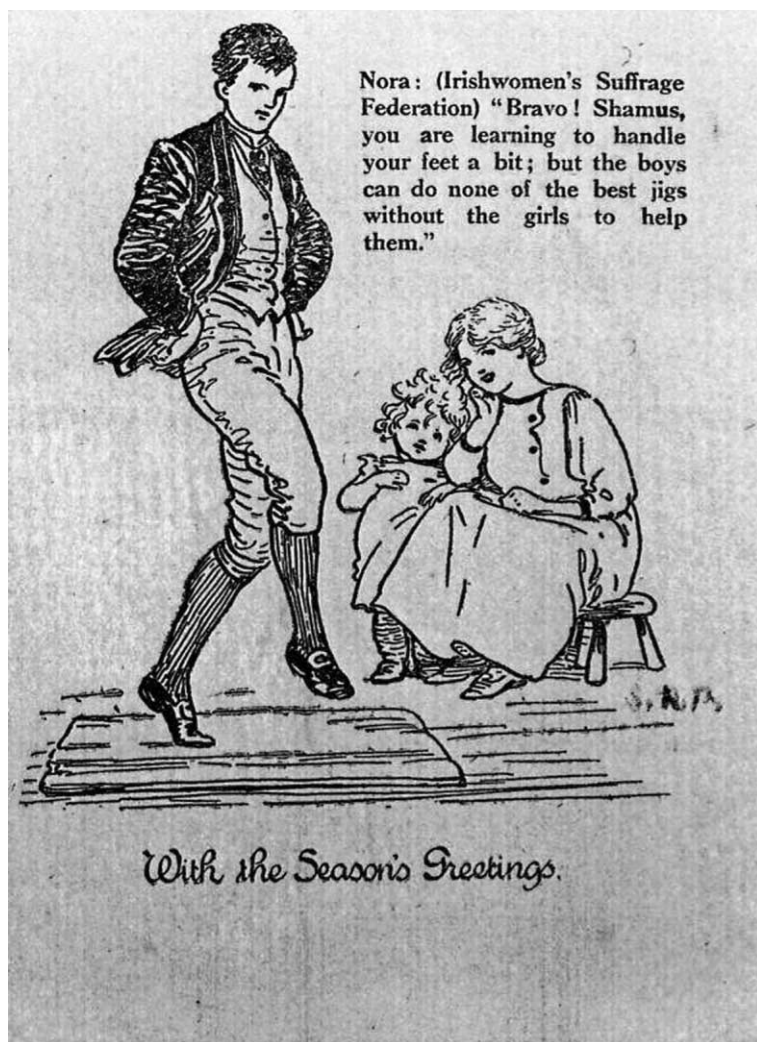


Figure 4 S. R. Praeger, 'With the Season's Greetings'. Postcard designed for the Irishwomen's Suffrage Federation, Belfast, 6 × 4 cm c.1912 (Public Records of Northern Ireland).

(Figure 5). However, Praeger was clearly looking to the 'Faith, Hope, Charity, Heavenly Wisdom' spandrels that Ellen Rope completed for the Women's Building at the 1893 Columbian World's Fair in Chicago, and the imagery also anticipates, to some extent, Sylvia Pankhurst's monumental female figures which decorated the Prince's Skating Rink Exhibition in 1909.⁵⁸

It was during this period that Praeger became a crucial voice for women in the arts in Ireland. She promoted Mary Swanzy, the Symbolist and abstract painter, urging the Belfast Museum and Gallery (now the Ulster Museum) curator, Arthur Deane, to purchase some of her work for public display. In 1929, Praeger also began to lobby



Figure 5 S. R. Praeger, figure of *Literature*, façade decoration on the Falls Road Carnegie Library, Belfast, 1908. By permission of the Belfast Education and Library Board.

Deane to purchase, or commission, a piece of work from Wilhelmina Geddes. Praeger had met Geddes whilst she was still a young student at Methodist College and may have advised her family to allow her to attend classes at Belfast School of Art.⁵⁹ Although Cecilia Harrison declared that Geddes's powerfully Expressionist-like drawings were 'too modern', Praeger saw in them Geddes's exceptional gifts.⁶⁰ In 1910, Praeger encouraged Geddes to exhibit at the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland's annual exhibition in Dublin. Here she was introduced to Sarah Purser. In 1911, after commissioning the 'St Colman MacDuagh' stained glass triptych from Geddes, Purser invited her to join her Dublin-based Arts and Crafts stained glass workshop, An Túr Gloine (The Tower of Glass). Geddes worked between Belfast and Dublin until 1925 when she moved to London and took a studio at Lowndes and Drury's Glass House in Fulham, where Praeger introduced her to Margaret Rope, Ellen Rope's niece, who had worked from the Glass House since 1911.⁶¹ Before Geddes's departure from Belfast, Praeger and Geddes held a joint exhibition. Praeger showed examples of her sculpture in bas-relief and statuette form and Geddes showed examples of her stained glass, embroidery and graphic designs, including her portrait drawing of Praeger, which she later made into a print (Figure 6).⁶²

In 1930, Praeger managed to convince the Belfast Museum to commission a stained glass window. Geddes completed the large 'Children of Lir' window in 1931 to Praeger's original idea 'of small pictures—a style well fitted to Miss Geddes' genius'.⁶³ She further convinced the Museum to purchase a 'St Rhoda' panel by Geddes on the argument that 'Belfast might never again have a stained glass artist of such distinction'.⁶⁴ John Hewitt, the poet and curator at the Ulster Museum, later recalled Praeger's support of Geddes:

To the end there was a fire in her, for she wrote me in 1951 a graceful, but sharp, note pointing out that in a recently published survey of Ulster Art I had made no reference to her friend Wilhelmina Geddes, the stained glass worker—the greatest artist she claimed to have come out of Ulster.⁶⁵

In the 1930s and 1940s Praeger continued working steadily, completing commissions for schools, churches and private houses. In 1952, aged eighty-five years old, Praeger completed her last major public sculptures, 'Johnny the Jig', a figure from Elizabeth Shane's folk poem, for a children's park in Holywood and a 'St Brigid' for a Dublin hospital. Although in 1947 she published a collection of her poetry, *Old Fashioned Verses and Sketches*, she continued to work on sculpture commissions and was accepting work right up to the point of her self-imposed retirement in December 1952, which she called retiring from 'active service'.⁶⁶ That year her brother Robert moved back from Dublin, following the death of his wife, and moved in with her at Rock Cottage, Craigavad, Cultra. Rosamond Praeger died on 17 April 1954 just a few days after her eighty-seventh birthday.⁶⁷ Her funeral took place on 19 April and she was buried in the family plot whose elegant headstone showing 'Hope' and 'Memory' she had earlier designed for her father. The funeral was a small affair; Morris Harding attended and the only other local artist present was the painter Frank McKelvey. Praeger had never married and had no children. Two of her five brothers died young,



Figure 6 Wilhelmina M. Geddes, *Portrait of Sophia Rosamond Praeger*, linocut print, 21.25 × 16 cm, 1929 (Private Collection).

two emigrated to America, and the remaining, Robert Praeger, died in 1953 childless. Wilhelmina Geddes would die the following year in 1955.

Praeger's work was subject to a small retrospective exhibition, held exactly thirty years ago in 1975, in Holywood and she was included in the *Irish Women Artists since the Eighteenth Century to the Present Day* at the National Gallery of Ireland in 1987.⁶⁸ In the interim there has been very little interest in her sculpture and several pieces of her work in Belfast are slowly being obliterated through neglect or vandalism, although her illustrated books are increasingly commanding higher prices. Although considered to have had no discernible influence on Irish sculpture, or indeed culture, more recently Brian Fallon has highlighted a folk-style correspondence (as well as a tradition of religious figurative sculpture and monumental architectural decoration) which links Praeger to the work and practices of Imogen Stuart,

and there are other more general parallels to the themes and materials in the public practice of late twentieth-century Irish artists such as Deborah Brown.⁶⁹ Although so much remains unknown—the private life hidden behind the public art of Rosamond Praeger—her life and work continue to intrigue, especially her often autobiographical but little-known poetry.⁷⁰ Perceived as a highly traditional and conservative artist, Rosamond Praeger's diverse and multifarious achievements as well as her circle of female artists/craftworkers, and aspects of her work such as her suffragette graphic designs, certainly locate her at the nexus of Victorian and Edwardian feminist ideology, and as one of the few truly remarkable artistic figures to emerge from the north of Ireland in the last century and a half. The life and art of Rosamond Praeger clearly deserve to be better understood, appreciated, preserved and at least documented.

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Notes

- [1] See Robert Lloyd Praeger (1941) *A Populous Solitude* (Dublin: Hodges & Figges). This in fact follows on from an earlier book of cultural, topographical, and autobiographical writing, Robert Lloyd Praeger (1937) *The Way That I Went* (Dublin: Hodges & Figges).
- [2] See Lord Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, 1812; A populous solitude of bees and birds/And fairy-formed and many coloured things/Who worship him with notes more sweet than words,/And innocently open their glad wings/Fearless and full of life: the gush of springs/And fall of lofty fountains, and the bend/Of stirring branches, and the bud which brings/The sweetest thought of beauty, here extend,/Mingling, and made by Love, unto one mighty end (v. cii, canto iii). For an example of a poem by Rosamond Praeger, see Robert Lloyd Praeger, *A Populous Solitude*, pp. 158–159.
- [3] Robert Lloyd Praeger, *A Populous Solitude*, pp. 46–47.
- [4] This is no biography of Rosamond Praeger even though, apart from R. L. Praeger's own autobiographical writings, there are two excellent biographies of him; see Timothy Collins (1985) *Floreat Hibernia: a bio-bibliography of Robert Lloyd Praeger, 1865–1953* (Dublin: Royal Dublin Society), and Seán Lysaght (1998) *Robert Lloyd Praeger: the life of a naturalist* (Dublin: Four Courts Press); also see Seán Lysaght (2004) Robert Lloyd Praeger (1865–1953), in H. C. G. Matthew & Brian Harrison (Eds) *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 45 (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 205–207.
- [5] Although first listed as a formal member in 1893, Rosamond Praeger was certainly attending BNFC meetings and excursions throughout the 1880s. See list of members, *Report and Proceedings of the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club, 1893–94*, p. 43 (BNFC Archive, Ulster Museum).
- [6] See Robert Lloyd Praeger (1897) *Open-Air Studies in Botany: sketches of British wild-flowers in their homes* (London: Charles Griffin & Co.), and Robert Lloyd Praeger (1913) *Weeds: simple*

- lessons for children* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). Both these books are illustrated with botanical drawings by Rosamond Praeger.
- [7] See Field Club Union Conference: Cavan and Lough Oughter, in *Report and Proceedings of the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club, 1896–97*, pp. 344–348 (BNFC Archive, Ulster Museum). Welch's photograph was used as the frontispiece of Robert Lloyd Praeger, *Weeds*.
 - [8] Robert Lloyd Praeger, *Open-Air Studies in Botany*, pp. 155–156.
 - [9] Minutes of the inaugural meeting of the BNFC's thirty-first session in *Report and Proceedings of the Belfast Naturalists' Field Club, 1893–94*, p. 43 (BNFC Archive, Ulster Museum).
 - [10] Quoted in Morris Harding, Death of Miss Rosamond Praeger, *The Belfast Telegraph* (17 April 1954), p. 1.
 - [11] L. Ross Irvine, Ulster Women at Work and Play. Pen Picture of an Ulster Artist. S. Rosamond Praeger, *The Belfast Telegraph* (11 June 1938), p. 7.
 - [12] Ceann-Maor (Joseph Campbell), Art in Belfast, *The Nationist* (2 November 1905), p. 111.
 - [13] Letter from S. R. Praeger to F. J. Bigger, n.d., F. J. Bigger collection, Belfast Central Library, Belfast Education and Library Board (BCL), PR4[2].
 - [14] Births, *Belfast News-Letter* (16 April 1867), p. 1.
 - [15] For the Patterson family see, J. R. R. Adams (1993) From 'Green Gravel' to 'The Way That I Went': folklife, literature and the Patterson family of Holywood, *The Linen Hall Review*, 10(3), pp. 4–7.
 - [16] I am indebted to Marty Bax and Harmen Snel, in Amsterdam, for so generously sharing their research on the genealogy of the Praeger family in the Netherlands with me.
 - [17] See Deaths, *Belfast News-Letter* (26 April 1881), p. 1, and *Belfast Evening Telegraph* (26 April 1881), p. 3.
 - [18] Belfast Art Society Minutes Book, List of Members 1886, Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), D/3422/AA1. The Ramblers Sketching Club became the Belfast Art Society in 1890.
 - [19] For the New Sculpture movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century see Ben Read (1983) *Victorian Sculpture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press); Susan Beattie (1983) *The New Sculpture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press); and David J. Getsy (2004) *Body Doubles: sculpture in Britain, 1877–1905* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press).
 - [20] David J. Getsy (Ed.) (2004) *Sculpture and the Pursuit of a Modern Ideal in Britain, c.1880–1930* (Aldershot: Ashgate), p. 2.
 - [21] For this context, Martina Droth (2004) The Ethics of Making: craft and English sculptural aesthetics c.1851–1900, *Journal of Design History*, 17(3), pp. 221–236.
 - [22] For this see David Getsy (2003) The Identity of the Sculptor: 1900–25, and Jonathon Blackwood & Matthew Withey (2003) Aesthetics: forms and meanings: 1900–25, in Penelope Curtis (Ed.) *Sculpture in 20th-Century Britain*. Vol. I: *Identity, Infrastructures, Aesthetics, Display, Reception* (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute), pp. 9–20 and 33–42.
 - [23] Letter from S. R. Praeger to Arthur Deane, 26 May 1929, Fine and Applied Art Department Archives, Ulster Museum.
 - [24] See Miss Rosamund [sic] Praeger, H.R.H.A., no. 274 and 275 in *Exposition d'Art Irlandais*, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels.
 - [25] See copies of correspondence from Northern Ireland Government to S. R. Praeger, October 1938, with reference to their borrowing her 'Statuette of Islandman' for display in the Ulster Pavilion, PRONI, COM/16/1.
 - [26] Rozsika Parker & Griselda Pollock (1981) *Old Mistresses: women, art and ideology* (London: Pandora), p. 169. Praeger's output has been invariably seen as the antithesis of modernism in Ireland and her work has been prescribed 'sentimental', 'hackneyed' and 'of no consequence'; see S. B. Kennedy (1991) *Irish Art and Modernism, 1880–1950* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, Queens University), p. 192, and she isn't even mentioned in Dorothy Walker (1997) *Modern Art in Ireland* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press).

- [27] These have either focused on sculpture or illustration; for sculpture see Catherine Gaynor (1996) *The Life and Work of Sophia Rosamond Praeger (1867–1954)* RHA, MA, MBE (MA dissertation, University College Dublin), and Catherine Gaynor (2000) An Ulster Sculptor: Sophia Rosamond Praeger (1867–1954), *Irish Arts Review Yearbook*, 16, pp. 34–43; and for the illustrated books see Diane Egerton (1997) An Unappreciated Art: the book illustration of Rosamond Praeger of County Down, *The Devil's Advocate: A Journal of the Printing Arts*, pp. 11–29; Pat Donlon (1997) Artful Books: illustrations in Irish children's books, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 21, pp. 402–414, Pat Donlon (2002) Drawing a Fine Line: Irish women artists as illustrators, *Irish Arts Review Yearbook*, 18, pp. 80–92, and Pat Donlon (2005) Sophia Rosamond Praeger (1867–1954): a women of many talents, in Charles Benson & Siobhan Fitzpatrick (Eds) *That Woman! Studies in Irish Bibliography: a Festschrift for Mary 'Paul' Pollard* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press), pp. 239–257; and see Catherine Gaynor and Pat Donlan's joint entries on Praeger as a sculptor/illustrator in Brian Lalor (General Ed.) (2003) *The Encyclopaedia of Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan), p. 891.
- [28] For a beginning of this see Joseph McBrinn (2001) Folklore, *Feiseanna* and Vernacular Revivalism: Sophia Rosamond Praeger's *Finola* in context, *Ulster Folklife*, 47, pp. 1–17; Joseph McBrinn (2002) The Peasant and Folk Art Revival in Ireland, 1890–1920: with special reference to Ulster, *Ulster Folklife*, 48, pp. 14–62; Joseph McBrinn (2002) Sophia Rosamond Praeger and the Memorial to Samuel Alexander Stewart (1826–1910), *Belfast Naturalists' Field Club, Annual Report and Proceedings*, 3rd series, 11(2), pp. 75–78; Joseph McBrinn (2005) The Crafts in Twentieth Century Ulster: from Partition to the Festival of Britain, 1922–1951, *Ulster Folklife*, 51, pp. 54–85; Joseph McBrinn (2009), Sophia Rosamond Praeger (1867–1954) *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Joseph McBrinn (2007) The Medals of Sophia Rosamond Praeger, *The Medal*, 51, pp. 18–22; and Joseph McBrinn (2008) Craft as Union, Craft as Demarcation: the decoration at Belfast Cathedral, in Sandra Alföldy & Janice Helland (Eds) *Craft, Space and Interior Design, 1855–2005* (Aldershot: Ashgate), pp. 75–90.
- [29] See letter from Robert Patterson to his wife quoted in Robert Patterson F.S.A., M.R.I.A., *Belfast Municipal Museum & Gallery Bulletin*, 1(1), (January 1949).
- [30] Willem Emilium Praeger will, PRONI probate MIC/15/C, no. 185.
- [31] Miss Rosamond Praeger, unidentified press cutting, PRONI: D/3038/2/7.
- [32] See William Gray (1904) *Science and Art in Belfast. Being Notes on the Origin and Development of the Agencies for the Promotion of Science and Art in Belfast* (Belfast: Northern Whig).
- [33] George Trobridge (1884) *The Principles of Perspective as Applied to Model Drawing and Sketching from Nature, with 32 plates and other illustrations* (London: Cassell & Company).
- [34] Praeger won a South Kensington award for 'Free-hand drawing' and 'Model drawing' in 1887 and a South Kensington award for 'shading from models' and 'geometry' in 1888; see *Belfast Government School of Art. Report of the Board of Managers for the Year 1887* (Belfast: Marcus Ward), pp. 29–30, and *Belfast Government School of Art. Report of the Board of Managers for the Year 1888* (Belfast: Marcus Ward), p. 22.
- [35] See Stephen Chaplin (1998) *A Slade School of Fine Art Archive Reader: a compendium of documents, 1868–1975, in University College, London, contextualised with an historical and critical commentary augmented with material from dairies and interviews* (London: n.p.); Praeger is mentioned on p. 68.
- [36] *The Fine Art Book: Book I, 1887–1891*, The Slade School of Art Records Office, University College, London.
- [37] See Elizabeth Crawford (2002) *Enterprising Women: the Garretts and their circle* (London: Francis Boutle), pp. 266–299.
- [38] See Tamar Garb (1994) *Sisters of the Brush: women's artistic culture in late nineteenth century Paris* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), and Gabriel P. Weisberg & Jane R. Becker (Eds) (1999) *Overcoming All Obstacles: the women of the Académie Julian* (New York: Rutgers University Press).

- [39] Exposition de tableaux, pastels et gravures de Mary Cassatt, Galeries Durand-Ruel (27 November to 16 December 1893).
- [40] See Jeanne Madeline Weimann (1981) *The Fair Women: the story of the women's Columbian Exposition, Chicago 1893* (Chicago: Academy).
- [41] M. H. Spielmann (1901) *British Sculpture and Sculptors of To-day* (London: Cassell & Co), p. 12.
- [42] Anon. (1896) Chats in the Studio: George Frampton, *The Studio*, January, p. 205.
- [43] For this broader context see Rozsika Parker & Griselda Pollock (1981) Crafty Women and the Hierarchy of the Arts, in Parker & Pollock, *Old Mistresses*, pp. 50–81; and Anthea Callen (1980) Sexual Division of Labour in the Arts and Crafts Movement, *Oxford Art Journal*, April, pp. 22–27.
- [44] For this see Máire West (1994) Kings, Heroes and Warriors: aspects of children's literature in Ireland in the era of emergent nationalism, *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library, Manchester*, vol. 76(3), pp. 164–184; and Janette Condon (2000) The Patriotic Children's Treat: Irish nationalism and children's culture at the twilight of the Empire, *Irish Studies Review*, 8(2), pp. 167–178.
- [45] For context see Al Schug (Ed.) (1988) *Die Bilderwelt im Kinderbuch. Kinder und Jugendbücher aus fünf Jahrhunderten* (Cologne: Josef-Haubrich Kunsthalle), as well as Luce Abélè (2000) Le livre d'enfants au tourant du siècle, in Anon. 1900 (Paris: Galeries nationales du Grand Palais), pp. 246–254.
- [46] Praeger had worked for the Gaelic League before this; see The Feis Week in Belfast. Gaelic Festival and Tableaux, *Fáinne an Lae*, 1(19) (14 May 1898), p. 5. For Milligan see Catherine Morris (2003) Becoming Irish? Alice Milligan and the Revival, *Irish University Review*, Spring/Summer, pp. 79–98, and Catherine Morris (2003) In the Enemy's Camp: Alice Milligan and *fin-de-siècle* Belfast, in Nicholas Allen & Aaron Kerry (Eds) *Cities of Belfast* (Dublin: Four Courts Press), pp. 62–73.
- [47] See Anon. (1916) An Ulster Girl Artist, *The Lady of the House*, 15 November, pp. 22–23.
- [48] For this see Gertrude Duns (1914) An Irish Lady Sculptor's Studio, *The Lady of the House*, 15 August, pp. 3 and 7.
- [49] For the founding of the Irish Decorative Art Association see my, The Peasant and Folk Art Revival in Ireland, 1890–1920, pp. 14–62.
- [50] Ulster Academy of Arts: Miss Praeger Opens Exhibition: Neglect of Sculpture, unattributed press cutting, PRONI: D3038/2/12B.
- [51] There are few references to women who produced such monumental war memorials and Praeger seems to have been especially prodigious in their production. For a general context see Richard Francis (1981) War Memorials, in Sandy Nairne & Nicholas Serota (Eds) *British Sculpture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Whitechapel Art Gallery), pp. 62–71; note that no war memorials by women are mentioned.
- [52] See Anon., At Belfast Cathedral: Fine Sculpture Work. Notable Sermons in Stone, *Belfast Telegraph* (24 March 1927), p. 10.
- [53] See Ulster Unionist Women's Council papers, PRONI: D/1098/1/3.
- [54] For the Suffrage Atelier see Lisa Tickner (1988) *The Spectacle of Women: imagery of the suffrage campaign 1907–14* (London: Chatto & Windus) pp. 21–26.
- [55] For the Irishwomen's Suffrage Federation see Diane Urquhart (2002) 'An Articulate and Definite Cry for Political Freedom': the Ulster suffrage movement, *Women's History Review*, 11(2), pp. 273–292 (pp. 275–276 for the Irishwomen's Suffrage Federation); and for general background see Rosemary Cullen Owens (1984) *Smashing Times: a history of the Irish Women's suffrage movement, 1889–1922* (Dublin: Attic Press).
- [56] For this 'modern' context see Rosemary Betterton (1998) Women Artists, Modernity and Suffrage Cultures in Britain and Germany, in Katy Deepwell (Ed.) *Women Artists and Modernism* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press).
- [57] These are currently almost destroyed by erosion and are in urgent need of protection.
- [58] See Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women*, pp. 26–42.

- [59] For Geddes see articles, exhibition catalogues and books by Nicola Gordon Bowe, especially, (1987) *Wilhelmina Geddes*, *Irish Arts Review*, 4(3), pp. 53–59; (1988) *Wilhelmina Geddes 1887–1955: her life and work—a reappraisal*, *Journal of Stained Glass*, xviii, pp. 275–301; (1994) *Wilhelmina Geddes (1887–1955): stained glass designer*, in Jill Seddon & Suzette Worden (Eds) *Women Designing: redefining design in Britain between the wars* (Brighton: University of Brighton), pp. 64–70; (1996) *Wilhelmina (Margaret) Geddes: Irish stained glass and graphic artist, 1887–1955*, in Delia Gaze (Ed) *Dictionary of Women Artists* (London and Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn), I, pp. 572–575; (1987) *Wilhelmina Geddes (1887–1955) Centenary Exhibition* (Belfast: Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Arts Council Gallery); Nicola Gordon Bowe & Elizabeth Cumming (1998) *The Arts & Crafts Movements in Dublin and Edinburgh, 1885–1925* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press), pp. 134–39; and Nicola Gordon Bowe (2004) *Wilhelmina Margaret Geddes (1887–1955)*, in H. C. G. Matthew & Brian Harrison (Eds) *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 21, pp. 706–707.
- [60] Harrison, quoted in Nicola Gordon Bowe, ‘Wilhelmina Geddes’, p. 53.
- [61] For this context see Peter Cormack (1985) *Women Stained Glass Artists of the Arts and Crafts Movement* (London: William Morris Gallery), pp. 12–14, 19–23, and 24–25.
- [62] See no. 23 in *Exhibition of Sculpture by Miss Rosamond Praeger and Prints, Drawings and Embroideries by Miss W.M. Geddes*, John Magee’s Gallery, 4 Donegall Square, Belfast, 1–15 November 1924 (exhibition catalogue, p. 3).
- [63] Letter from S. R. Praeger to Arthur Deane, 26 May 1929, Fine and Applied Art Department Archives, Ulster Museum.
- [64] Letter from S. R. Praeger to Arthur Deane, 3 December 1931, Fine and Applied Art Department Archives, Ulster Museum.
- [65] John Hewitt, Saturday Miscellany: From James Stoupe to Rosamond Praeger, *The Belfast Telegraph* (22 June 1957), p. 4. The publication Hewitt refers to is S. Hanna Bell (Ed.) (1951) *The Arts in Ulster: a symposium* (London: George G. Harrap & Co.), which includes a chapter by John Hewitt on the visual arts. The incident was further recorded in John Hewitt (1977) *Art in Ulster, 1557–1957*, vol. 1 (Belfast: The Blackstaff Press), where he comments that he still hadn’t made amends for his neglect of Geddes, p. 56, although the publication does contain a short biographical entry on Geddes by Theo Snoddy, pp. 159–160, as well as one on Praeger, p. 180.
- [66] Anon., ‘Grand Old Lady’ of Ulster Art: Miss S.R. Praeger to Retire, *County Down Spectator* (1 November 1952), p. 9.
- [67] For obituaries see Anon., Famous Sculptress Dies, *County Down Spectator* (24 April 1924), p. 2; Anon., Death of Miss Rosamond Praeger, *The Belfast Telegraph* (17 April 1954), p. 1; Anon., Miss Rosamond Praeger, *The Times* (19 April 1954), p. 8.
- [68] Organised by Holywood’s Business and Professional Women’s Association.
- [69] Brian Fallon (2002) *Imogen Stuart: sculptor* (Dublin: Four Courts Press), p. 129.
- [70] For Praeger’s poems see [James Cavan] (1891) *Selections from The Pattersonian* (London: James Cavan), and S. R. Praeger (1947) *Old Fashioned Verses and Sketches* (Dundalk: Dundalgen Press).