

**Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann
National Library of Ireland**

Collection List No. 159

Máirín Cregan Papers

(MS 46,791 – MS 46,799)

(Accession No. 6122)

Literary papers of the children's author Máirín Cregan, comprising typescripts and manuscripts of both published and unpublished books, radio scripts and plays. The collection also contains editorial correspondence, contracts and royalty statements, 1933 – 2003

Compiled by Karen de Lacey, 2009

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INTRODUCTION

Biography

Máirín Cregan, a writer of children's books, radio scripts, newspaper articles and plays, was born in Killorglin, Co. Kerry in 1891. She gained considerable success with her first book, *Old John*, which was first published in New York in 1936 and was to remain in print for many decades. It was also translated into several languages. Interestingly, the Irish language edition of 1938, *Sean Eoin*, was illustrated by Jack B. Yeats.

Cregan's second book for children, *Rathina*, was also published in both New York and London and was serialised on radio by the BBC as well as in a number of other countries. Correspondence in the collection (**MS 46,791 / 3**) shows that Cregan was in discussion with a film company about the possibility of making *Rathina* into a cinematic release although this never materialised. The book was also presented with an award from an American national book club for Catholic children in 1943 although the correspondence (**MS 46,792**) shows that Cregan was worried her work would subsequently be categorised as religious in nature. She claims that she had complaints from Loreto nuns who wished for her to make it more obvious that the family in *Rathina* were Catholic, although Cregan writes that she had no intentions of making any changes.

There are a number of typescripts of unpublished children's works in the collection, including one particularly complete story entitled *I am a Cake*, which was rejected by both her previous publishers Macmillan and Allen & Unwin. It was, however, used by the BBC for their 'Children's Hour'.

Although she is perhaps best known for her children's work, her dramatic work for adults, *Hunger Strike* (1933) and *Curlew's Call* (1940), are keenly focussed on the political and social history of Ireland. This interest is not surprising as she had been a member of Cumann na mBan and received a service medal for her work during the War of Independence. Her political links were further strengthened through her marriage to Dr. James Ryan who was Minister for Agriculture during de Valera's tenure. Her journalistic work for both *The Irish Press* and *The Sunday Press* was principally on political and historical matters, with a particular emphasis on the 1916 Rising. There are, however, some more light hearted articles about fashion and culture. Máirín Cregan died in 1975.

The Collection

The Máirín Cregan Papers were donated to the National Library of Ireland in 2004 by Dr. Jim Ryan, her grandson. The collection is comprised of manuscripts and typescripts of her books, radio scripts and plays. There is also editorial correspondence, contracts and royalty statements. The collection is in extremely good condition and contained within five archival boxes.

I. CORRESPONDENCE

This section contains correspondence between Máirín Cregan and her editors at both Allen & Unwin, London and Macmillan, New York. There is also correspondence related to the broadcasting of her work on film and radio, in addition to some general letters regarding her writing.

I.i. Professional Correspondence

- MS 46,791 / 1** 1934 -1969
Correspondence with Macmillan, New York, largely with children's book editor Doris Patee, regarding *Old John* and *Rathina*. Included are royalty statements and some promotional material; 138pp
- MS 46,791 / 2** 1936 – 1966
Correspondence with Allen & Unwin, London, the British publishers of *Old John* and *Rathina*, including a number of royalty statements; 169pp
- MS 46,791 / 3** 1936 – 1970
Correspondence regarding the broadcasting of Cregan's work on radio and on the possibility of a film production of *Rathina*, mainly with the BBC's 'Children's Hour' department and Children's Entertainment Films. Included are a number of royalty statements; 82pp

I.ii. General Correspondence

Miscellaneous correspondence about Cregan's writing and The Downey Award.

- MS 46,792** 1934 - 2003
Correspondence comprising letters from magazines, book groups, fans and small publishers; 94pp

II. MANUSCRIPTS AND TYPESCRIPTS

This section lists the large number of manuscripts and typescripts by Cregan in the collection. There are excerpts and chapters of *Old John*, *Sean Eoin*, *Rathina* and *Hunger Strike* amongst other unpublished works. Typescripts are incomplete unless otherwise stated.

- MS 46,793 / 1** [c.1933]
Complete typescript of *Hunger Strike*, a play for adults set in Co. Kerry in 1923 and published by M. H. Gill, Dublin, in 1933; 72pp
- MS 46,793 / 2-3** [c. 1936]
Typescript drafts of *Old John*, published by Macmillan, New York in 1936, by George Allen, London in 1937 and by Browne & Nolan, Dublin in 1938, with corrections; 138pp (2 folders)
- MS 46,793 / 4** [c. 1938]
Complete typescript of *Sean Eoin*, the Irish language edition of *Old John*, published in 1938 by Oifig an tSolatair. Annotated with illustrations by Jack B. Yeats and also includes a galley proof; 222pp
- MS 46,793 / 5** [c.1938]
Typescript drafts of an article variously entitled *Christmas in Other Lands* or *Christmas in the Gaedealtacht*, accepted for publication by *The Miraculous Medal Magazine*, based in Philadelphia, in 1939, includes corrections; 11pp
- MS 46,794 / 1** [c.1939]
Complete typescript of *Curlew's Call*, a play for adults published in the *Capuchin Annual* in 1940, includes corrections; 52pp
- MS 46,794 / 2-3** [c.1939-1940]
Manuscript drafts of *Rathina*, in 18 school copy books including corrections, also a galley proof of Chapters 1 -5; c.560pp (2 folders)
- MS 46,794 / 4-6** [c.1945]
Annotated typescript drafts of the unpublished work *I am a Cake*, rejected by both Macmillan and Allen & Unwin. Includes chapters of the story and variations on the folk tale; 328pp (3 folders)
- MS 46,794 / 7** [c.1947]
Annotated typescript and manuscript drafts of a work entitled *Cherry Ripe*, unpublished, which Cregan had

rejected by Children's Entertainment Films in 1947;129pp

- MS 46,795 / 1** [c.1948]
Typescript of an article entitled *The Bog Fairy tells about Star-People*, published in *Dublin Magazine* Vol. 32, No. 4, October – December 1948 and also in *The Capuchin Annual* of 1975; 14pp
- MS 46,795 / 2-5** [c.1958-1959]
Typescript drafts of *Le Petit Bonhomme*, a dramatisation Cregan produced of Jules Verne's little-known 1893 novel *The Extraordinary Adventures of Foundling Mick*. It was written for RTÉ who broadcast it in 1959 under the name *A Lad of Grit*; c.400pp (4 folders)
- MS 46,795 / 6** Undated
Typescript of a work entitled *Eoin Rua O' Suilleabhain*, unpublished, includes corrections and a suggestion for music; 25pp
- MS 46,795 / 7** Undated
Typescript of a radio play written by Cregan entitled *Seamus and the Robber*, includes corrections and a suggestion for music; 12pp
- MS 46,795 / 8** Undated
Typescripts of a work entitled *Tomeen* and another chapter of an unknown work, both include corrections; 12pp

III. NEWSPAPER CUTTINGS

The majority of the newspaper cuttings concern reviews of *Old John* or *Sean Eoin* while others relate to Cregan's work generally and her winning 'The Downey Award'.

- MS 46,796 / 1** 1936 – 1983
Newspaper cuttings on *Old John* and *Sean Eoin*; 119 items
- MS 46,796 / 2** 1943 – 1945
Newspaper cuttings and typed reviews from various international media on Cregan's work, mainly *Rathina*; 43 items
- MS 46,796 / 3** 1943 - 1946
Newspaper cuttings relating to Cregan winning 'The Downey Award' in December 1943, which was presented by

the Pro Parvulis Book Club for Catholic Children; 17 items

IV. PUBLISHED WORKS

This section lists the books and magazines in the collection featuring Cregan's published work.

- MS 46,797 / 1** 1933
Hunger Strike, a play for adults set in Co. Kerry in 1923 and published by M. H Gill, Dublin, in 1933. The inside pages are pasted with reviews of the play; 48pp (with 15 newspaper cuttings)
- MS 46,797 / 2** 1935
Father Mathew Record Volume 28, dated 1935, containing three stories entitled 'The Turncoat', 'The Visit' and 'The Cave Man', the latter of which was written by Cregan pseudonymously; 626pp
- MS 46,797 / 3** 1936
Prototype hardback copy of *Old John* containing two dust jackets, title and contents pages and first two pages of the story; 11pp
- MS 46,797 / 4** 1937
American Junior Red Cross News dated January 1937, contains a story entitled 'The Cold Engine'; 32pp [Cover and some inner pages detached]
- MS 46,797 / 5** 1939
Bonaventura magazine, Volume 3, Number 1, Summer 1939, containing an article by Cregan on the subject of writing for children in which she advises that Irish folktales must be loaves which are served with, "lots of jam and honey and marmalade so that little eyes may be attracted."; 230pp
- MS 46,798 / 1** 1944
Girls Today, Volume 3, Number 2, dated February 1944, with a front page story by Cregan entitled 'Liberty'; 8pp
- MS 46,798 / 2** 1944
Iris na Nodlag, The Irish Junior Red Cross, 1944, contains an extract from the American edition of *Rathina* entitled 'Glenshee'; 95pp
- MS 46,798 / 3** 1975

The Capuchin Annual, dated 1975, contains the story 'The Bog Fairy tells about Star-People', which had also been published in *The Dublin Magazine* in 1948; 420pp

- MS 46,798 / 4** 1933 - 1955
Newspaper cuttings of articles by Cregan on various subjects, mainly history and politics but also fashion, theatre and women's issues, almost entirely in the *The Irish Press* or *The Sunday Press*; 13 items

V. MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

- MS 46,799 / 1** 1936 - 1944
Promotional material from Macmillan, New York. Includes a catalogue entitled *Macmillan Books for Boys and Girls* which contains a two page article about *Old John* and a photograph of Cregan, an order form for *Old John*, a pamphlet entitled *New Books* which contains a feature on *Old John*, a proof for an advert for *Rathina* to be placed in *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, a pamphlet entitled *One Hundred Years of Macmillan History*, a full page advert for *Old John* and an edition of *The Title Page*, a newsletter published by the Juvenile Department of Macmillan, dated January 1944 which discusses Cregan winning The Downey Award for *Rathina*; 7 items
- MS 46,799 / 2** 1943
An invitation and leaflet from the Pro Parvulis Book Club about the presentation of The Downey Award in New York on 8 December 1943; 2 items
- MS 46,799 / 3** 1944
A page from *Stationary Trade Review for Books* of October 1944 with an article about *Rathina*; 1 item
- MS 46,799 / 4** 1983 / 1989
A pamphlet about a theatrical production of *Sean Eoin* by Pádraig Ó Siochrú held in Amharclann Gheantraí, Dublin in 1983. Also included is a children's face mask; 2 items