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## ***Woman's Life* magazine and women's lives in Ireland in the 1950s**

**Caitriona Clear**

The 1950s in Ireland was undeniably an era of massive emigration, chronic unemployment, material deprivation and widespread institutionalization. These years, however, also saw slow but permanent change for those Irish women who did not emigrate. There were 31,474 more women working in factories, offices, schools, hospitals and shops in 1961 than there had been in 1946, and the numbers of girls in full-time secondary education rose year after year throughout the 1950s.<sup>1</sup> Women – mostly single – were inhabiting the public sphere as never before and the more-than-doubling in the number of female hairdressers between 1946 and 1961 suggests not only rising female income but a heightened obligation to public presentability on women's part.<sup>2</sup> 'An unattractive girl simply should not exist today', Helene Griffin, hairdresser and lecturer in deportment, declared in 1951, while Dublin modelling agent Patricia Barry stated with equal authority in 1952 that the vast range of fabrics available in the shops meant that 'no Irish woman can have any excuse for being badly-dressed.'<sup>3</sup> Standard advice in all women's magazines, this may have had particular resonance for Irish women in the 1950s. There was no shortage of magazines to advise them. Two Irish-produced women's magazines had emerged in the 1930s and lasted until the late 1950s, *Woman's Life* and *Woman's Mirror*. *The Irish Tatler and Sketch*, subtitled 'Ireland's Social and Sporting Monthly' also appeared throughout this decade. Though it contained articles on fashion and beauty in the 1950s, it was not aimed exclusively at women, with extensive, regular articles on motoring, rugger (sic), the turf, and the arts.<sup>4</sup> British women's magazines – *Woman's Own*, *Woman*, *Woman's Weekly* – sold so well in Ireland, that it was worthwhile for *Woman*, at least, to bring out a censored 'Eire' edition occasionally in the 1950s.<sup>5</sup> *Woman's Life*, the focus of this article, was competitively priced at 4d up until its final issue in 1959. It appeared fortnightly, and retained a commitment to showcasing the ordinary and extraordinary achievements of Irish women and girls. *Woman's Mirror* appeared monthly, and while it contained a rather short diary page, consisted mainly of syndicated film news and advertising copy posing as beauty advice, with fiction and service articles.<sup>6</sup> It ceased publication in 1956.

The state of research on women's magazines has come a long way in the past forty years, with developments in cultural studies putting an end forever to reductive arguments that these publications oppress, dupe and circumscribe women. Cynthia White, Janice Winship, Ros Ballaster & Margaret Beetham, Jennifer Scanlan, Nancy Walker, Valerie Korinek and Joke Hermes all argue that women read and understood magazines in a number of ways and for a number of purposes – information, advice, escapism and fantasy, reassurance and challenge.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps *Woman's Life* in the 1950s fulfilled many of these functions for its readers. It certainly solicited news items and 'press releases' from its readers, encouraged participation in competitions, and ran a buy-and-sell Service Club.

### **Readership of *Woman's Life***

*'Three quiet young ladies require accommodation for fortnight in Youghal in July. Three share one room if necessary, near sea and dancehall. Wexford.'*

Woman's Life Service Club, *Woman's Life*, 1953<sup>8</sup>

It cost a shilling to become a member of the Woman's Life Service Club. To place an advertisement one had to be a member, and the advertisement itself cost 1/6 for up to 24 words. This outlay of half a crown – or one eighth of a pound – by these young women suggests their certainty that a woman in Youghal with room to spare would read the magazine. Indeed, all the advertisements placed in this section must have had this confidence. Clothes, shoes, prams, machinery (sewing and knitting machines, poultry incubators, overlockers), plants and poultry were just some of the items offered for sale.

The lack of a readers' letters page in *Woman's Life* means that, in contrast to *Woman's Way* in the following decade, there is no rough guide to where readers – opinionated and articulate ones at least – lived.<sup>9</sup> However, clues about *Woman's Life* readers' geographical distribution can be found in competition entries and 'press releases' sent in to the diary from around the country, and in the Service Club. In one issue in 1952 which carried 73 classified ads, 44 (60 per cent) came from Leinster (11 from Dublin, but 10 from Offaly and 8 from Kildare), 12 (16.4 per cent) each from Munster (6 from Kerry, 3 each from Cork and Waterford) and Connacht (6 from Sligo, 3 each from Galway and Mayo), and 5 (6.8 per cent) from Ulster (all Cavan). Of 40 classified advertisements in October 1955, fifteen, or 37.5 per cent, came from Leinster (3 from Dublin), 13 (32.5 per cent) from Munster (4 each from Cork, Tipperary and Waterford, one from Limerick), and 6 (15 per cent) from Connacht (Roscommon 3, Mayo, 2, and Galway 1) and 6 also from Ulster (evenly divided between Cavan, Donegal and Tyrone).<sup>10</sup>

All the 'bonnie babies' featured in March 1951 came from urban addresses – Hawkins St and Charlemont St, Dublin; Derry; Cavehill Rd, Belfast; Bridge St, Clonmel; Connolly St, Athlone. Participation in this competition suggests not only that the women concerned read the magazine, but that they expected neighbours, relatives and acquaintances to do so too, otherwise there would have been no point in showing off their babies or grandchildren. Of twelve crossword competition winners in the same issue, all but two were from street addresses in Killybegs, Co. Donegal; Abbeyleix, Co. Laois; Galway city; Listowel, Co. Kerry; Durrow Co. Laois; Castlereagh, Co. Roscommon; Crinkle, Co. Offaly; Clonakilty, Co. Cork; and Bray, Co. Wicklow. The two rural entrants were from Finnan, Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny and Holycross, Co. Tipperary.<sup>11</sup>

Cork 'Personality Girl' finalists in 1954 had addresses in Ballydesmond, Mitchelstown, Newmarket, Bandon and Charleville, though it is impossible to tell whether they came from rural addresses in or near these towns and villages, or from the towns.<sup>12</sup> Winners of the Limerick contest were all from the city, from the lower-middle class/skilled working-class neighbourhoods of Fairgreen and Janesboro, the socially-mixed Rosbrien and the very wealthy O'Connell Avenue.<sup>13</sup> The Galway winners were, except one from Loughrea, from the city itself and they were National teachers, shop assistants, students and 'business girls'.<sup>14</sup> There was a growing number, throughout the decade, of 'bonnie babies' with English addresses whose grandmothers or aunts in Ireland sent in their pictures: in one issue in 1957, only 5 out of 13 infants featured had addresses in Ireland.<sup>15</sup>

Organizations from all over the country sent in 'press releases'. Local branches of the Irish Countrywomen's Association, Muintir na Tire and Macra na Feirme (organizations where women enjoyed equal standing with men) kept the magazine informed of their activities,<sup>16</sup> while more Dublin-based bodies like the Irish Housewives Association, the Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers and the Women's National Health Association sent in an occasional news item, as did the Irish Red Cross and the Social Study Conference.<sup>17</sup> Other, strictly local organizations sought national publicity – the South Mayo Drama Festival, the Carlow Arts Council, Carlow Fashion Week, the Colleen Bawn Cork Nurses' Social Club, the Elizabethan Society of Trinity College, Dublin and the Glasnevin Lawn Tennis Club, are only a few of those mentioned.<sup>18</sup> It is impossible to determine the circulation figures of any Irish magazines before the 1980s, so we cannot know how many copies of *Woman's Life* were sold throughout the country. Commercial

advertisers certainly used the magazine and the magazine was represented at a minimum of two Irish advertising conferences in the 1950s.<sup>19</sup>

*Woman's Life* readers, it can be hazarded, were mostly town-based women all over the country, and/or women who were organized in some way, with rural readers most likely to be situated in the more prosperous and modernising farm regions of the midlands, south and south-east, but occasionally in the west, as well. Were the readers single or married, young or old? The 'bonnie babies' feature implies that some young mothers (and grandmothers) read the magazine, and advertisements for products to cover greying hair featured regularly, but the kind of products advertised and many of the beauty articles were aimed at women with some disposable income, and in 1950s Ireland that meant single women.<sup>20</sup> A clue to the readership can also be found in the *Woman's Life* Service Club advertisement at the head of this section. Three young women from Wexford wanted to go on holidays. The word allotment for the advertisement was limited, but they were careful to stipulate proximity to both day and evening entertainment; the omission of any mention of food requirements (e.g. partial or full board) establishes their priorities clearly. These young women cannot have been farmers' assisting relatives, because even in a tillage county like Wexford there was enough pasture farming to demand all hands on deck for the hay-saving month of July. They were probably not farmers' daughters working off the farm either, or they would have been expected to spend their holidays helping out with the hay and other summertime agricultural tasks. Wealthy young ladies of leisure would have holidayed in one of the many hotels for which Youghal was famous. These three therefore, were waged or salaried workers – perhaps secretaries, shop assistants, factory workers or even teachers. Sharing one bedroom posed no problem; they were probably used to sharing not only bedrooms, but beds, at home. Whoever they were, they were determined to have a good time, and confident that a magazine would help them to do so.

### **The Diary Pages: 'Gossip With Finola'/'Talking Things Over With Maxwell Sweeney'**

The first two or three 'diary' pages of *Woman's Life* were known, until April 1955, as 'Gossip With Finola.' Then Radio Éireann broadcaster Maxwell Sweeney took over for a little over a year, and perhaps because a man could not be expected to gossip, the column was entitled 'Talking Things Over With Maxwell Sweeney' – though of course Sweeney himself (like Finola) did all the talking. When he bowed out in August 1956, citing other commitments, Finola took over again.<sup>21</sup> Both titles are participatory, suggesting the reassuring women's magazine 'intimate world of shared concerns.'<sup>22</sup> Readers were invited to participate by sending in news items, as seen above, but the diarists seem to have actively looked out for items about women, too. As in all such diary pages, wedding photographs featured regularly, but with simple captions of names and places; in contrast to the *Tatler*, there were no detailed descriptions of outfits, attendants, celebrants and guests. Other social events featured rarely; a children's party and a 'coming of age' stood out because they were unusual.<sup>23</sup>

Women's achievements, therefore, were the focus of these pages. Typical was the column devoted to Claddagh woman Kathleen Curran, along with a photograph in 1953; the first female harbourmaster of Galway, she was the only serving female harbourmaster in the country.<sup>24</sup> Many of the women featured in the diary pages were prominent in the arts, and on stage and screen, or in business. Irish international film actresses Constance Smith, Maureen O'Sullivan ('Hollywood's happiest mother'), and Valerie Hobson featured alongside Siobhán McKenna, Annie Dalton, Maureen Potter, Kathleen Ryan and Maureen Cusack – the latter sometimes pictured with her husband Cyril and little girls Jane and Sally.<sup>25</sup> Theatrical costumiers and wardrobe mistresses Mrs Caffrey, Eileen Long, Joan Burke and Áine Lynch were interviewed, as were those behind the scenes in Galway's Taibhdhearc Theatre.<sup>26</sup> Directors/theatre founders Leila Doolin, Pan Collins, Joan Denise Moriarty and Carolyn Swift featured.<sup>27</sup> Musicians and singers Mary O'Hara, Kathleen Watkins, Doreen Ledwith, Geraldine O'Grady and Máire Ní Scolai were highlighted.<sup>28</sup> Popular singers Carmel

Quinn and Ruby Murray were also mentioned.<sup>29</sup> The diary often mentioned at various times a variety of women writers (banned and unbanned, religious and secular, for children and for adults); Kate O'Brien, Bridget Boland, Una Troy, Patricia Lynch, Maura Laverty, Sinéad de Valera and Mary Purcell.<sup>30</sup> Sixteen female painters were profiled in 1955 alone, and a young Pauline Bewick was interviewed in 1958.<sup>31</sup> The Thomas Davis lectures delivered by Nora Chadwick, of Girton College, Cambridge and Máirín O'Daly ('wife of the Attorney-General Cearbhall O Dálaigh'), were mentioned in 1955.<sup>32</sup> The Shannon College of Hotel Management featured more than once.<sup>33</sup>

Irish businesswomen were also a staple of the diary. High-profile dress designers Sybil Connolly, Irene Gilbert and Neili Mulcahy featured very often,<sup>34</sup> but the magazine also drew attention to lesser-known designers Madeleine Keenan, Ann Carroll, Gertrude Brady (of Nymph Clothing) Peta Swift ('former games mistress now Ireland's leading milliner') Cloda Phillips and 'Elizabeth James' designer Sheila Mullally.<sup>35</sup> The Irish cosmetics industry – Dorene make-up, Melina cosmetics (21 years old in 1957) and others testify to a strong area of Irish industrial endeavour.<sup>36</sup> Modelling schools run by Miriam Woodbyrne, Betty Whelan, Peggy Carty, and Jill Fisher were mentioned.<sup>37</sup> Featured hairdressers Helene Griffin, Mabel Ross and Sarita Hickey were the tip of a countrywide iceberg.<sup>38</sup> But not all working women were dedicated to apparel and appearance and a mention of seven women – Eithne O'Brien, Maureen O'Sullivan, Mamie Dignam, Elizabeth Somers, Maura Fox, Dana McWhirter and Winifred Stacey – at the Advertising Club Ladies' Night in March 1956 testifies to their contribution to that industry.<sup>39</sup> Female delegates to the ITGWU conference in Galway in the same year were also mentioned – Sheila Williams, Eileen Flynn, Molly O'Neill, Una O'Sullivan, Frances Peppard.<sup>40</sup> Sheila Williams' election to the ITGWU National Council was warmly applauded the year before; she was the first woman ever to be elected onto this council.<sup>41</sup>

There was also a particular effort in these pages, especially up to 1957, to feature 'ordinary' working girls and women. The entire workforce of the lingerie factory which designed for Cassidys of South Great George's St was profiled in 1953. Designer Kathleen Byrne from Harold's Cross (33) had been apprenticed at 14, and designed slips, nightdresses, pyjamas, pantees (sic) and housecoats. Maureen Kennedy from Ballybough was a No.1 cutter; Kathleen McArdle from the North Strand made up the garments, Eva Kenny from Donnybrook overlocked the seams, Lily Brereton from Parnell St did the embroidery. Lily's mother was bedridden for 4 years and Lily was supporting her younger brothers and sisters. Marie Walsh from Inchicore attached the lace, Rita Murphy from Cabra was a presser, while Anne Kearney from the South Circular Road 'with snow-white hair and pink complexion' dispatched the garments. She had started work in Cassidys' 18 years before.<sup>42</sup> Miss White, supervisor with Reckitts Factory in Dublin, commented the following year that many women had been employed there for 20 to 30 years.<sup>43</sup> A similar continuity was noted in a report on the Greenmount and Boyne Linen Company in Drogheda in 1956; according to Mrs Margaret Gough the welfare supervisor 'a number of girls drift from the mills to work in England, but that the majority of them return to Drogheda to work at the Greenmount.'<sup>44</sup> The Stork margarine factory in Drogheda, mentioned in 1953 and again in 1954, was praised for its hygienic atmosphere, absence of an oily smell, and the fact that the 'white-overalled girls' had the on-site services of a nurse and doctor. The Sunbeam Wolsey factory in Cork was described more briefly in 1958.<sup>45</sup> Enthusiasm about conditions in Irish factories and attention paid to workers' welfare was part of an anti-emigration discourse, but the magazine obviously believed it important to feature unknown working women alongside film stars and musicians. The 'girls on 45687', those who answered the phone 364 days a year at the CIE information bureau, had a slightly different social and geographical profile to the factory workers. Eileen Cullen the supervisor, originally from Tipperary, had travelled all over Europe on her holidays. Eileen Toal a 19-year-old from Monkstown, Co Dublin, was a good amateur soprano, but would probably not be following her sister Maureen onto the stage. Rita Power (23) from Mount St., Dublin, modelled for the Betty Whelan agency in her spare time, and Hazel

Yeomans (18) was an amateur actress. Maureen McGinnes, like Eileen Toal was from Monkstown and had been 6 years in the job, and Frances Byrne, from Templeogue, was 19, a fluent Irish speaker and a member of Cumann Gaelach in her spare time. *Woman's Life* seemed fond of these workers because it returned to report on them in July 1955, and reported in 1958 on the later career of Hazel Yeomans, by then Hazel Byrne and an actress.<sup>46</sup> Other wage-earners featured included the five Kelly sisters from Fairview, Dublin featured in 1952, all of whom worked in Dublin drapery shops, three in a 'fashionable Grafton St store', two in O'Connell St. They were all going on pilgrimage to Lourdes later in the year.<sup>47</sup> Miss Margaret Monks, Nurse of the Year in 1955, from St Michael's hospital in Dun Laoghaire, is one of the oddly-few nurses mentioned.<sup>48</sup> The jobs of Pamela Bannim, the Lady Housekeeper of the Rotunda hospital, and Patricia McCrann, Dublin Corporation Public Health Official, were described in detail in 1958 and 1956 respectively; Eileen O'Flynn, manageress of the Metropole Cinema in Dublin was interviewed briefly by Finola in 1955.<sup>49</sup> Every so often an apparently random young working woman would be featured; typical was twenty-year-old Margaret Cullen of Rathcoole, Co. Dublin, a civil servant in the Department of Social Welfare in 1951, and youngest of a family of six, who loved dancing and South American tunes. Marie O'Casey, an archaeologist and former Aer Lingus travel clerk, married to an advertising executive, was briefly profiled in 1958.<sup>50</sup> There were working women who hardly featured at all in the magazine. The Medical Missionaries of Mary had a full page devoted to them in 1952 and their 21st birthday was noted in 1958, but apart from this, the biggest single group of professional women in the country, women religious, was absent. This is hardly surprising, as the glamour inseparable from magazines would have been inimical to the religious life. What is more surprising is that teachers – National or secondary – were, like nurses, rarely mentioned. As far as *Woman's Life* was concerned, working women were in offices, factories (as owners, designers and workers), shops, the stage or screen, and, of course, on aeroplanes.<sup>51</sup>

Air hostess was the most celebrated job of all. In March 1954 the magazine congratulated Joan Cammon of Termonfeckin Co. Louth, a Trinity College graduate who had been working as a doctor's receptionist, for being accepted for hostess training with Aer Lingus.<sup>52</sup> In July 1952 Elizabeth Cassidy, Dorothy Moran, Margaret Bergin, Angela McCarthy, Sally Fitzsimons, and Kathleen Walsh began training at Aer Lingus, the magazine reported. A one-week lecture course on the constitution of the company, would be followed by a six-week training course. Qualities expected of trainees were intelligence, 'a good manner', an attractive speaking voice, and a high standard of health, tact and friendliness.<sup>53</sup> The diary, whether written by Maxwell Sweeney or by Finola, often mentioned air hostesses or former air hostesses.<sup>54</sup>

Throughout his short tenure as the diarist Sweeney was far more vociferous than 'Finola', about women's rights. Seán O'Sullivan, the founding editor of *Woman's Way* in 1963-65, would pursue the same theme of women's rights frequently over the two years of his editorship.<sup>55</sup> (Makins believes that such bracing exhortations were peculiar to male editors, contrasting James Drawbell at *Woman's Own* with *Woman's* Mary Grieve.<sup>56</sup>) Sweeney's tone was more exasperated than bracing. Why did Irish women have so little interest in politics? Why did they only make up one-third of the Dáil public gallery on one recent occasion when he had visited the Dáil? Why, 'given the large number of Irish women working in factories', was there only one woman (Helen Chenevix) on the Factory Advisory Council? Why weren't women consulted about house design? Why were there no female police? Why, as Mary Kettle of the Joint Committee of Women's Societies and Social Workers pointed out, were there no women district justices or Peace Commissioners? Why were there no women in senior positions in banks? Why, when women controlled the family budget, was there only one woman on the Minister for Finance's Committee to encourage voluntary savings (Muriel Gahan of the ICA)? And why, 'when women are found in so many occupations today', was no Irish woman delegate sent to the United Nations Council for the Status of Women in Geneva? <sup>57</sup>

Women's magazines throughout the world had an urban bias – the urban electrified house and evening-home-coming spouse were envisaged as the norm in the service articles.<sup>58</sup> *Woman's Life* diarists did try, however, to feature women on farms. It talked to women at the National Ploughing Championships in 1955, and warmly welcomed Macra na Feirme press releases. In the same year it interviewed a farm woman Mrs Michael Noone (sic) a mother of 9 on a modern, serviced Leinster farm.<sup>59</sup> In 1956 the magazine heard how Mrs Sean Healy (sic) wife of the General Secretary of the Irish Farming Association, met her husband – and this shows the importance of rural organizations in bringing men and women together - : 'If I hadn't got the Macra [na Feirme] badge he wouldn't have noticed me at all.'<sup>60</sup> The magazine gave as much space as it could to the Irish Countrywomen's Association. Although the ICA was more active and vigorous in big-farming Munster and Leinster than it was in Connacht or on small farms anywhere, this organization (with 14,000 members in 1958) was far more representative of farm women than the small, Dublin-based Irish Housewives Association was of housewives in general.<sup>61</sup> Did the rural/agricultural magazine readership rise as farms modernized and the magazine content became more 'relevant'? It is impossible to establish this but, as Hermes and others remind us, women do not necessarily read magazines because of their 'relevance', and do not always want to see their lives reflected back at them. In any cases there is no reason to suppose that Irish farm women, the younger ones by the 1950s having most likely worked for some years off the farm, would have been any less interested than their non-farming counterparts in fashion, fiction, cookery, beauty, and knitting. Infrequent visits to town, poor transport and little surplus cash on small farms, could account for the magazine's apparently low penetration in the remoter rural western areas of the country.

### Conclusion.

Four times as many 'girls' as 'boys' were getting work in junior grades in the civil service, the magazine noted happily in 1956,<sup>62</sup> and it continued to encourage women in work and achievement right up until its final issue. In August 1958 it got a smart new cover design, and there were a number of editorial changes also. 'Gossip with Finola' was now entitled 'What's Going On by Finola', though the content remained unchanged, there was a new record review section called 'Going Round In Circles', and an occasional Topical Teen Page.<sup>63</sup> The Service Club had 33 classified notices in an October issue – not a disastrous number by any means, though significantly, the cost of 25 words had been reduced from 1/6 to a shilling.<sup>64</sup> The number of commercial advertisements was falling; there were 45 advertisements in one issue in 1956, exactly two years later this had fallen to 33, and a low point of 20 was reached some weeks after that. The bumper Christmas Number in December 1958 carried 86 advertisements, it is true, but nearly half of these had a seasonal theme, or were for gift items like Christmas chocolates, cosmetics or jewellery, or for specialized gift and toy shops.<sup>65</sup>

When the magazine ceased publication, however, it was on an optimistic note: 'We have great news for you'. The magazine would henceforth be known as 'Woman's Realm and Woman's Life', and readers were given a list of the *Woman's Realm* editorial staff – those who dealt with beauty, health, fashion, home decoration and so on. The final chapters of the serial 'Meet Me In Istanbul' would be available in the new publication the following week.<sup>66</sup> It is not clear if loyal readers ever found out what ultimately happened at the Bosphorus, however, as this magazine title cannot be found in the catalogues of either the National Library of Ireland or the British Library. There was no mention of it in *Woman's Realm* in February 1959 or at any other time before or after.<sup>67</sup> It is possible that the very popular *Realm* might have planned to bring out a special Irish edition, but if it ever materialized, it must only have survived a short while.<sup>68</sup> However, the very fact that the best-selling British magazine of its time had been prepared to buy (or actually bought) an Irish title, shows that there was a substantial Irish readership they hoped to capture.

*Woman's Life* provides a unique historical insight into that most forgotten group of Irish people

in labour history, women who remained in Ireland to earn their livings in the 1950s. Only a taste of its content has been given here. The hugely successful *Woman's Way*, the following decade, however, evolved according to the winning formula of the British market-leaders. The diary page was replaced by a readers' letters page. A reader who urged the new magazine (in verse): 'To make our Irish magazine completely satisfactory/Please please DO remember the girl in the factory,'<sup>69</sup> was probably expecting something like *Woman's Life's* attention to workers. Perhaps because of greater confidence about women in the workplace, *Woman's Way* did not provide this attention. But it was not at any time, as one historian dismisses it, 'a popular weekly full of articles on fashion, make-up, romance and sex'<sup>70</sup> (It was not even a weekly until autumn 1966). Well-written service articles, and opinion pieces by media personalities and politicians (Charles Mitchell, Frances Condell) were accompanied by full-length articles addressing newsworthy aspects of Irish life and controversial social issues.<sup>71</sup> *Woman's Way*, like its predecessor, is a unique resource for the historian, but in a very different and far more complicated way than *Woman's Life*.<sup>72</sup>

### Notes

- 1 For exact references, Caitriona Clear, 'The Minimum Rights of Every Woman: Irish women's changing appearance 1946-66', *Irish Economic and Social History*, vol. xxxv (2008), pp 68-80 and *Women of the House: women's household work in Ireland 1922-1961* (Dublin, 2000), pp 14-15.
- 2 Clear, 'Minimum.' pp 68-80.
- 3 Helene Griffin, *Woman's Life* (hereafter *WL*) 14 July 1951; Barry *WL* 5 April 1952.
- 4 Thanks to Norah Casey for alerting me to *Irish Tatler & Sketch*. All titles are in the National Library of Ireland. The *Irish Tatler & Sketch* cost 1/6, making each issue over four times more expensive than one issue of *Woman's Life*. It was printed on much better paper, with lavish photographs and a heavy concentration on the social lives of the rich and powerful of all denominations (cardinals, earls) and all nationalities (British, Irish).
- 5 Peggy Makins, *The Evelyn Home Story* (London, 1975) p. 142.
- 6 The film news in *Woman's Mirror* was so obviously syndicated that there was no mention whatsoever, in 1952-53, of the major Hollywood film being shot in Galway/Mayo, *The Quiet Man*. The magazine did not have a letters or even a problem page, although it answered beauty queries.
- 7 Cynthia White, *Women's Magazines 1693-1968* (London, 1969), pp123-303; Janice Winship, *Inside Women's Magazines* (London, 1987); R. Ballaster, M. Beetham, E. Frazer and S. Hebron, *Women's Worlds. ideology, femininity and the woman's magazine* (London, 1991); Jennifer Scanlan, *Inarticulate Longings: the Ladies' Home Journal, gender and the promises of consumer culture* (London, 1995); Joke Hermes, *Reading women's magazines: an analysis of everyday media use* (Oxford, 1995); Nancy Walker, *Shaping our Mothers' World: American women's magazines* (Mississippi, 2000); Linda Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: reading Chatelaine magazine in the 50s and 60s* (Toronto, 2000). For classic, if simplistic, earlier analyses. see Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York, London, 1963), Chapter 2, and Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch*, (London, 1970), pp171-89.
- 8 *WL* 2 May 1953
- 9 There was a problem page, however, which is the subject of a more detailed ongoing study by this author.
- 10 *WL* 19 April 1952; 15 October 1955.
- 11 *WL* 24 March 1951.
- 12 *WL* 17 April 1954.
- 13 *WL* 12 June 1954.
- 14 *WL* 10 July 1954.
- 15 *WL* 6 July 1957.
- 16 Just a sample is given here: ICA summer school, *WL* 8 August 1953; Muintir na Tire, Carlow, 9 January 1954; ICA Letterkenny, 9 January 1954; ICA Dunfanaghy, 6 February 1954; Portlaoise Macra na Feirme, 20 February 1954; ICA Gort, 11 June 1955; ICA Termonfeckin, 22 June 1957.
- 17 Again, just a sample: WNHA, *WL* 17 May 1953; SSC, 16 June 1953; IHA, 25 June 1955; 7 July 1956, 23 November 1957, 6 December 1958; JCWSSW, 30 April 1955; Red Cross, 3 September 1955.
- 18 Carlow Arts, *WL* 8 August 1953; Carlow Fashion, 3 April 1954; South Mayo, 28 April 1956; Colleen Bawn, 29 December 1951; Elizabethan, 7 January 1956.



- 19 Hugh Oram *The Advertising Book* (Dublin, 1986), p. 164, shows Mrs Lily Murray, the owner/editor (the magazine did not have a mast-head and the editor was never identified in it). Oram also identifies a Hilda Carron, at a conference in 1957, as belonging to *Woman's Way* (photograph, p. 184). *Woman's Way* did not begin until 1963, *Woman's Mirror* had ceased publication in 1956, so he must have meant *Woman's Life*.
- 20 E.g. *WL* 21 July 1956, Shadeine, Orlex Compound, and Shadeine again, 27 September 1958.
- 21 *WL* 2 April 1955 to 4 August 1956.
- 22 Ballaster & Beetham, *Women's Worlds*, pp 146-47.
- 23 E.g. Weddings, *WL* 7 August 1954, 21 January 1956, 9 June 1956, 5 January 1957, 7 December 1957 and passim. Children's party, 19 February 1955; coming of age, 20 March 1954. Contrast with *IT & S*, January 1952 - December 1960, any issue.
- 24 *WL* 10 January 1953.
- 25 Smith *WL* 10 March 1951, 19 May 1951 (see also obituary *Sunday Independent* 12 May 2013); O'Sullivan, 10 January 1953; Hobson, 10 March 1951, 18 October 1952; D'Alton, 4 September 1954; McKenna, 10 March 1951, 26 May 1956, 25 May 1957; Ryan, 3 March 1956; Cusacks, 24 February 1951; 1 March 1958, 11 October 1958; Potter, 3 August 1957.
- 26 Caffrey, 13 January 1951, 14 November 1951; Bourke, 14 July 1951; Long, 12 May 1956; Lynch, 1 March 1958. Taibhdhearc, 10 January 1953.
- 27 Doolin, *WL* 15 September 1956; Collins, 12 May 1956; JDM, 17 April 1954, 7 July 1956; Swift, 5 January 1957.
- 28 O'Hara, *WL* 1 October 1955; Watkins, 17 March 1956; Ledwith, 27 December 1952; O'Grady, 31 March 1956; Ni Scolai, 2 March 1957.
- 29 *WL* 14 April 1956.
- 30 O'Brien, *WL* 19 March 1955, 14 May 1955, 11 June 1955; Laverty, 25 October 1955; Boland, 25 June 1955; Troy, 7 June 1955; Purcell, 14 May 1955; Lynch & de Valera, 21 July 1956.
- 31 16 women artists, *WL* 26 May 1955; Bewick, 26 October 1957.
- 32 *WL* 12 November 1955.
- 33 *WL* 7 January 1956; 14 September 1957.
- 34 Connolly and Gilbert featured so often that only a sample is given here: *WL* 6 March 1954, 18 September 1954, 10 September 1954, 19 February 1955, 21 January 1956, 16 February 1957, 17 August 1957, 2 August 1958; Mulcahy, 4 February 1956.
- 35 Keenan, 24 May 1951, 20 October 1951; Carroll, 19 May 1951; Brady, 3 April 1954; Swift, 26 April 1958; Phillips, 10 November 1956; James, 6 March 1954, 18 September 1954. For a history of Irish designers, see Robert O'Byrne, *After a Fashion: a history of the Irish fashion industry* (Dublin, 2000).
- 36 Dorene, *WL* 27 September 1958; Melina, 23 April 1957.
- 37 Woodbyrne, *WL* 25 May 1957; Whelan, 20 July 1957; Carty, 8 December 1956; Fisher, 13 September 1954.
- 38 Griffin, 14 July 1951; Ross, 10 January 1953; Hickey, 4 January 1958.
- 39 *WL* 31 March 1956; Hugh Oram, *Advertising*, confirms that these women were working in advertising in their own right in Ireland and not spouses of 'ad men'.
- 40 *WL* 21 July 1956.
- 41 *WL* 23 July 1955; see also Marianne Heron, *Sheila Conroy: Fighting Spirit* (Dublin, 1993). Conroy was Williams' married name.
- 42 *WL* 25 July 1953.
- 43 *WL* 11 December 1954.
- 44 *WL* 14 April 1956.
- 45 Stork, *WL* 21 March 1953, 17 April 1954; Sunbeam, 21 June 1958.
- 46 *WL* 12 December 1953, 23 July 1955, 24 May 1958.
- 47 *WL* 4 October 1952.
- 48 *WL* 3 September 1955, 12 November 1955.
- 49 Bannim, *WL* 11 May 1957; McGrann, 18 February 1956; O'Flynn, 3 September 1955.
- 50 Cullen, *WL* 7 April 1951; O'Casey, 15 February 1958.
- 51 MMM, *WL* 13 December 1952, 22 November 1958; teachers and nurses, Eileen Grogan, General Secretary INTO, 3 September 1955.
- 52 *WL* 20 March 1954.
- 53 *WL* 26 July 1952.
- 54 *WL* 26 January 1952; 31 October 1953; 18 May 1955, 20 August 1955; 19 October 1955, 21 January 1956.
- 55 *Woman's Way* (hereafter *WW*), 15 May 1963, 31 January 1964.
- 56 Makins, *Evelyn Home.*, p. 174.
- 57 Politics, *WL* 26 November 1955; factories, 29 October 1955; designers, 14 May 1955; police, 30 April 1956; Geneva, 14 April 1956; banks, 28 April 1956; peace comm., 21 January 1956.
- 58 E.g. Korinek's study of the Canadian *Chatelaine*, almost half of whose readership was rural-agricultural in the 1950s and 60s. *Roughing It*, pp 182-84, 363-65.

- 59 NPC, *WL* 29 October 1955 and see note 15 for a sample of Macra entries; Mrs Noone, 26 May 1955.
- 60 *WL* 29 September 1956.
- 61 ICA membership, *WL* 21 June 1958; for histories of these two organizations, see Aileen Heverin, *ICA: The Irish Countrywomen's Association, a history 1910-2000* (Dublin, 2000); Alan Hayes (ed.) *Hilda Tweedy and the Irish Housewives Association: links in the chain* (Dublin, 2011).
- 62 Hospitals, *WL* 19 March 1955; civil servants, 28 April 1956.
- 63 The new look was in *WL* 16 August 1958; see Topical Teen Page, 25 October 1958.
- 64 *WL* 25 October 1958. The provincial breakdown was as follows: Leinster 12 (36 per cent); Munster 9 (17 per cent), Britain 7 (21 per cent), Connacht 3 (9 per cent), Ulster 1 (3 per cent).
- 65 *WL* 21 July 1956; 19 July 1958; 27 September 1958; 6 December 1958. The Christmas number always appeared in early December, for advertising purposes.
- 66 *WL* 14 February 1959.
- 67 *Woman's Realm* April 1958 - December 1960.
- 68 Makins, *Evelyn Home.*, p.142. On the extreme popularity of *Woman's Realm* see White, *Women's Magazines.*, pp170-1 and D. Kynaston, *Modernity Britain: opening the box 1957-9* (London, 2013) pp 113-14.
- 69 Letter from Miss Jean O'Hanlon, Markievicz House, Pearse St., Dublin, *WW* 31 July 1963.
- 70 Paul Ryan, *Asking Angela MacNamara: an intimate history of Irish lives* (Dublin 2011), p. 30.
- 71 The forthcoming longer work will include a detailed discussion of *WW*. Meanwhile, see, e.g. in 1966 alone, *WW* 1st fortnight March 1966 [the date designation changed from simple dates to this format for the first half of 1966 until the magazine went weekly later in the year], Mary Leland on women in prison, and the same author on a wife's legal rights, 2nd fortnight March 1966; Veronica Kelly on prostitution, 2nd fortnight May 1966, Heather Lukes on bedsitter life, February 1967; the same author on wives who go out to work 21 October 1966; Veronica Kelly on children in institutions 2nd fortnight April 1966, and at least three articles on education, by Veronica Kelly, 1st fortnight March 1966, Sheelagh Lewis, 21 October 1966, and Maeve Binchy, 7 July 1967. One of the first publications of the new Irish women's history appeared in *WW*. Máire Comerford's 'Carve Their Name in Pride: women of 1916', *WW* 1st fortnight April 1966.
- 72 'Women's Voices in Irish women's magazines in the 1950s and 60s' is the working title of this writer's current research on problems and letters in both *WL* and *WW*.