This is a short guide to sources and approaches that could be used when researching biographical information on past and present Members of the Oireachtas. It is not intended to be an authoritative or definitive guide to all resources. It is updated on an annual basis.

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Past and Present Members’ Guide

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1. Introduction

From time to time the Oireachtas Library & Research Service gets requests for bibliographical information on past and present Members of the Oireachtas. This short guide outlines the sources and approaches that we use when researching these requests.

This guide is not intended to be definitive, but it is hoped that it will be a useful starting point for anyone doing such research.

There are many published autobiographies and biographies of individual past and present Members of the Oireachtas. These are not listed in this guide. Please check in your local library or in the National Library, Kildare Street, Dublin 2, to see if a biography or autobiography has been published on the Member you are researching. The guides, directories etc. listed below can also be accessed in your local library or in the National Library.

2. Specialised guides, directories in hardcopy

Note: Individual guides are listed because title and/or publication details may have changed with different editions.

Flynn’s Directories

Flynn’s Directories were published between the years 1928 and 1945 and include biographical information on Members of both houses for that period. Unfortunately the 1928 edition only provides biographical details on Members elected in 1927 and does not cover the earlier elections. The directories also include information on elections, cabinets formed, committees, and Government departments.

1. The Oireachtas companion and Saorstát guide for 1928: Oireachtas Éireann 1922-1927 (Dáil and Seanad) /by William J. Flynn. Dublin: Hely’s, [1928]

2. The Oireachtas companion and Saorstát guide for 1929 /by William J. Flynn. Dublin: Hely's, [1929]

3. The Oireachtas companion and Saorstát guide for 1930 /by William J. Flynn. Dublin: Hely's, [1930]


**Nealon's Guides**

Nealon’s Guides have been published from 1973 to date and provide a good factual account of the political career of all Members elected to the Dáil and Seanad. The introductory chapters give an account of the election campaign. The guides also contain a lot of useful statistical analysis and details on the professions of Members elected, Members who lost their seat, new Members, women elected etc.

The Magill Guides were published between 1981 and 1983 and provide an alternative to the Nealon’s Guides for that period. The biographies of Members include critical comment as well as the factual content contained in Nealon’s. The original guide published in 1981 also provides information on all elections going back to 1923. It contains biographies of many of the Members elected between 1923 and 1981 and is a particularly good source of information on many Members elected between 1945 (last Flynn Guide) and 1973 (first Nealon’s Guide).

1. The Magill book of Irish politics: the personalities, the parties, the elections, the photographs of sixty years, incorporating election ’81 / Vincent Browne with Michael Farrell. Dublin: Magill Publications, 1981


Sean Donnelly’s guides contains a wealth of detailed statistics, analysis and background information on the general and local elections for the years covered and include some biographical information on Members.


Tallyman’s Guides

2. The tallyman’s campaign handbook to election 2002 / Noel Whelan. Dublin: Limelight Communications, 2002

Other Guides, Directories and books,

Political Who’s Who


Dáil stars: from Croke Park to Leinster House / Conor McMorrow. Dublin: Mentor Books, 2010


Who’s who in the Seanad Election 1925. Cumann na nGaedhail, 1925?


Chairman or Chief? : The role of Taoiseach in Irish Government / Brian Farrell. Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, c1971


Hindsights: ten meetings of minds / Liam P. O Murchú. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2000
Memorial to founders of the Irish state: President Arthur Griffith, General Michael Collins, Vice-President Kevin O'Higgins: unveiling of portraits at Dáil Éireann on 21st January 1944. Dublin: Printed at the Sign of the Three Candles, Ltd., 1944


Local and Regional


A political directory of County Tipperary 1918-2010: parliamentary election results, deputies and senators / William Corbett County. Tipperary Joint Libraries Committee, 2010


Brennan's key to local authorities /Séamus Brennan and Eric Murphy. Dublin: Landscape Press, 1986

From Malin Head to Mizen Head: the definitive guide to local government in Ireland /Kevin Rafter and Noel Whelan. Dublin: Blackwater Press, 1995


The Members of Parliament for Laois and Offaly (Queen's and King's Counties), 1801-1918 /Patrick F. Meehan. Portlaoise: Leinster Express, 1983

President

The lives and times of the Presidents of Ireland / Kevin Kenna. Dublin: Liffey press, 2010


A presentation of Uachtaráin na hÉireann (Presidents of Ireland): Áras an Uachtaráin (House of the President), Páirc an Fhionnuisce (Phoenix Park) /Tom Keating. Dublin: T.J.Keating, 1992

Political Parties

Labour Party elected Members 1922-2004 /Aidan McNamara, Ita McAuliffe and Marie Whelan. Dublin: Labour Party, 2005


The Cosgrave party: a history of Cumann na nGaedheal, 1923-33 / Ciara Meehan. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2010


The lost revolution: the story of the official IRA and the Worker's Party / Brian Hanley and Scott Millar. Dublin: Penguin Ireland, 2009


Fianna Fáil: A biography of the party /Noel Whelan. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan 2011

Breaking the mould: how the PDs changed Irish politics /Stephen Collins. Dublin : Gill and Macmillan, 2005


Women


General Who's who


3. Online Sources

Political parties & individual Members' websites

Biographical information on current Members is available on party websites and is also available on their individual websites.

Fine Gael http://www.finegael.ie/
Labour Party http://www.labour.ie/
Fianna Fail http://www.fiannafail.ie/
Sinn Fein http://www.sinnfein.ie/

The Socialist Party [http://www.socialistparty.net](http://www.socialistparty.net)

People Before Profit – The United left Alliance [http://www.peoplebeforeprofit.ie/](http://www.peoplebeforeprofit.ie/)

All current Members and some former Members have individual websites, blogs etc.

**Sean Donnelly website**

This website has concise electoral history for each Member including their share of the first preference vote at each election, seat filled, count elected and their share of the vote. It also has a useful link to biographical details relatives of Members who were ever elected.


**KildareStreet.com**

KildareStreet.com is a searchable archive of everything that's been said in the Dáil and all written parliamentary questions since January 2004, and everything said in the Seanad since September 2002. The site has information on all current Members including their voting record, debate contributions and the text of their entry in the Register of Members Interests. An alert can be set up to follow the Dáil or Seanad contributions by a Member.


**Dáilwatch**

Dailwatch describes itself as a non-profit, politically neutral platform for citizens and their representatives to engage in direct, respectful communication with each other. Dailwatch.ie allows you to:

- Find the politicians that represent your constituency in the Dáil
- Question your representatives in a public environment
- Access each politician’s previous speeches and committee membership
- View how each TD’s voting records

Dáilwatch - [http://www.dailwatch.ie](http://www.dailwatch.ie)

**Irish Elections: Geography, Facts and Analyses**

Blog of Dr. Adrian Kavanagh who is a Lecturer in Department of Geography, NUI Maynooth. His blog includes information on election candidates, former and current politicians.
The blog is available at: http://adriankavanagh-elections.org/

Media sources

National and local newspapers are worth searching for biographies, profiles etc. of Members and former Members. Obituaries are a particularly useful source. The date of death of a former Member is usually available on the Houses of the Oireachtas Member’s Database page on the Oireachtas website (see below).

4. Parliamentary and Oireachtas sources

Houses of the Oireachtas Members’ database

Includes details on party Membership, electoral history, cabinet positions held, dates of birth/death, profession etc. This is a good starting point in all searches, especially when information available at the outset is imprecise, because it provides exact dates when Members served in either house.

Houses of the Oireachtas member’s database is available at: http://www.oireachtas.ie/Members-hist/

Dáil and Seanad Debates

Expressions of sympathy in the Dáil and Seanad following the death of a Member or former Member are a good source of biographical information on the career of the Member. Although expressions of sympathy are not taken in all cases, they are in most cases, and especially on the death of a high profile Member or one who held high office.

http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/oireachtasbusiness/parliamentarydebates/

Former Members’ Association

The Former Members’ Association secretariat can be contacted at (01) 618 3582 (Tuesday and Thursday mornings only) and formerMembers@oireachtas.ie

They are worth contacting for biographical information when time permits, although some of their records may be confidential.
5. Other Libraries/Archives

National Library of Ireland and the National Archives

The collections of the National Library of Ireland and the National Archives should also be checked. The National Library of Ireland collection includes all books published in Ireland, so it is a good place to get biographies and autobiographies of current and former Members. Papers belonging to some past Members may have been lodged in these collections.

National Archives catalogue: http://www.nationalarchives.ie/search-the-archives/

UCD Archives

UCD Archives has specialised in the acquisition of private paper collections associated with the history and development of the modern Irish state. It now preserves the papers of a great many Irish public figures, including Members of government and the judiciary, presidents and European Union Commissioners.

UCD Archives also acquires the records of significant organisations such as political parties, trades unions, professional and cultural associations.


Local libraries

Local libraries should also be checked for biographical information in local papers, local studies/journals/newsletters.