

*An Cumann
Staire Lucht
Saothar
na hÉireann*



Museum & Archives

Beggars Bush, Haddington Road, Dublin 4, Ireland.

**Irish
Labour
History
Society**

Ceantar Mhaighneann, The Kilmainham & Inchicore Heritage Group

cordially invite you to the unveiling of a plaque to mark the place where

William Partridge

lived from 1911 until his death in 1917.

The plaque will be unveiled by

Eamon Devoy, General Secretary TEEU.

at 8 Brookfield Road Kilmainham

at 4.30pm on Friday 12th July 2013.



When the Great Lockout of 1913 came, Partridge was one of the main leaders of the struggle. Partridge took a leading role in the Irish Citizen Army from its foundation in November 1913. Partridge fought in the College of Surgeons during Easter Week. After the surrender he was imprisoned in Dartmoor and Lewes prisons in England where his health deteriorated. He was released in April 1917 and he died three months after his release. Constance Markievicz delivered his funeral oration in Ballaghaderreen in which she described Partridge as "the purest-souled and noblest patriot Ireland ever had." She then fired a salute over the grave with her own pistol.

Refreshment will be served in Carrigan's, Old Kilmainham. Further Information ☎ 0864099148

WILLIAM PARTRIDGE

By Liam O'Mara

William Partridge was born in Sligo in 1874, the son of an English protestant father and an Irish catholic mother. His father had left England in the 1860s and come to Ireland to work as a train driver. When he was sixteen, Partridge followed his father into the railway and began his apprenticeship as a fitter at the railway "running shed" in Sligo.

In 1892 he transferred to the Broadstone railway workshops in Dublin. It was there he first became involved in the trade union movement. He joined the No. 2 branch of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers and was promoted to branch auditor and became a member of the ASE's Dublin central committee. In 1899, he moved to The Great Southern and Western Railway Works (later C.I.E. Works) at Inchicore.

He was employed initially as a journeyman fitter and later as an overseer. He continued to organise on behalf of the ASE. The ASE had established a Branch in Inchicore in 1894 which met in the Workman's Club on Emmet Road. Throughout his time in Inchicore Partridge was active in local affairs and was highly regarded by all sections of the community.

At that time in Inchicore Richmond Barracks was a garrison barracks for British soldiers and there was significant support for the Empire in the area. As an Irish nationalist as well as a socialist Partridge was anxious to promote Irish culture and the Irish language. Partridge was supported the opening of a Gaelic League Branch in Inchicore. He was also an accomplished poet and had many of his poems published in newspapers and periodicals of the time.

In 1904, Partridge was elected to Dublin City Council. As a public representative he fought for better housing and health facilities for the working people. He was successful in getting workers' houses built near the Oblate Church in Inchicore in an area commonly referred to as "the bungalow". Partridge sought to have Council meetings held in the evenings so that working people could play a bigger part in local government. While serving his time as a city Councillor, Partridge was still employed at Inchicore Works.

However, the railway company objected to Partridge's absences from work to attend City Hall and he was forced to resign his seat on Dublin Corpora-

tion in 1906. Partridge continued to work for the G.S. & W.R. at Inchicore until 1912. In that year he publicly attacked the policy of religious discrimination and nepotism which openly operated at the Works. He was ordered by the Railway Company to retract his accusations. When he refused to withdraw them he was dismissed after thirteen years service with the company.

In response Partridge wrote a pamphlet entitled "My Crime" in which he reiterated his accusations of sectarianism and nepotism against the company. He attacked the way in which men with less experience and lower qualifications were promoted over their Catholic fellow workers and also the disparity between Irish workers' wages and those of workers imported from Britain..

In "My Crime", Partridge denied that he had advocated the promotion of Catholics over non Catholics and declared that he was against any form of sectarianism. "Fair play demands that service and ability alone be made the only test of promotion in the factory or on the road. The religion of the candidate should in no way influence his selection. I have not the slightest objection to the promotion of men professing a religious belief different to the belief I hold, providing they otherwise merit the recognition. Workingmen have their natural duties and obligations. They must protect their health and preserve their lives in order to rear their children and educate and provide for those children. The factory should not become to such men a factory making human derelicts or the finished corpse."

Also in 1912 Partridge was again selected to run for a Corporation seat. He warned his former colleagues at Inchicore Works not to publicly show their support for him in case they would be penalised by the railway company. The election campaign proved to be a very bitter fight and Partridge lost by just 23 votes.

In 1913 Jim Larkin appointed Partridge as Manager of the Emmet Hall, Inchicore. This was the headquarters of the Inchicore Branch of the Irish Transport & General Workers Union. Partridge organised I.T.G.W.U. meetings and activities in the Hall and he worked hard to increase the membership of the trade union movement in the area. In addition to his work for the I.T.G.W.U., Partridge continued to act as Dublin District Secretary for the ASE. In 1913, he went forward again for a Council seat and this time he was successful. Once elected, he devoted his energy to highlighting issues such as public health and housing.

From 1913 onwards, Partridge travelled extensively around Ireland organising the activities of the I.T.G.W.U. During the 1913 lockout he went to Britain to gather support for the locked out workers. He was twice arrested for making speeches in support of the Dublin workers. After the failure of the General Strike in 1913, Partridge was instrumental in the setting up of the Irish Citizen Army. He was elected Vice President of that organisation.

In Holy Week of 1916, James Connolly sent him to Tralee to oversee the unloading of arms from the German arms ship, the "Aud". After the interception of the "Aud" and the arrest of Roger Casement, Partridge returned to Dublin in time for the Rising. During the Rising he fought in the College of Surgeons alongside Countess Markievicz.

After the Rising, He was arrested and sent to Lewes Prison in Britain. He was held there until April, 1917. Partridge's health deteriorated while in prison, and he died three months after his release in July, 1917 at the age of 45.

(Source; William Partridge by Hugh Geraghty Curlew Books 2003)