

# Kathleen Lynn Diaries

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ACC/1997/2



The personal diaries of Kathleen Lynn, doctor and activist, 1916-1955

Catalogued by Harriet Wheelock  
May 2010

**KL**  
**Kathleen Lynn Diaries**

**1916-1955**  
**Collection**

*Extent:*

2 boxes

*Creator:*

Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955

*Description:*

The personal diaries of Dr Kathleen Lynn for the period 1916 to 1955. Two of the volumes also contain family history notes on the Lynn and Wynne families.

*Arrangement:*

The material is arranged in three sections; the diaries; material removed from the diaries; and the transcripts.

*Biographical History*

Kathleen Lynn was born 28 January 1874 in county Mayo, the second child of Robert Lynn, a church of Ireland clergyman, and his wife Catherine nee Wynne.

Lynn's family upbringing was comfortable and her connections aristocratic, she was educated in Manchester, Düsseldorf and Alexander College, Dublin. In 1899 she graduated from Cecilia Street (the Catholic University medical school) and after working in the United States, became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1909.

Lynn ran a private practice from her home in Rathmines, as well as working on the staff of Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, at the Rotunda Lying-in Hospital, and from 1910 to 1916 at the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital.

Aside from her medical career, Lynn was an active suffragist, labour activist and nationalist, and was friends with many of the leading figures of the day. The influence of James Connolly, her work in the soup kitchens during the 1913 lockout, and involvement with the Irish Women Workers' Union, of which she was Honorary Vice-President in 1917, brought her into close contact with the Dublin poor. Which led to a lifelong campaign to improve the living conditions of Dublin's poorer citizens.

A member of the Irish Citizen's Army, she taught first-aid to Cumann na mBan and was the Chief Medical Officer during the 1916 rising. In the aftermath of the rising she was imprisoned in Kilmainham with her close friends Madeleine French-Mullen, Helena Molony and Constance Markievicz. Following her release Lynn was an active

member of Sinn Fein, serving as Vice-President of the Executive in 1917, as well as being a leading figure in Cumann na dTeachtaire (the league of Women delegates).

Lynn was elected TD for Dublin County on the anti-treaty side in 1923 but did not take her seat, which she failed to retain in the 1927 election. From this point her role in national politics faded, although she remained an active member of the Rathmines Urban District Council between 1920 and 1930.

Lynn's medical career is defined by her work in Saint Ultan's Hospital, which she established in 1919 with a group of female activists to provide medical and educational facilities for impoverished mothers and infants.

In response to Lynn's earlier difficulties in getting a staff position at a hospital because of her gender, Saint Ultan's was managed entirely by female doctors although males were employed as specialists. The hospital provided much needed opportunities for female doctors, and many of the most prominent Irish female doctors of the period worked there with Lynn. On opening in 1919 the hospital had only two cots, but rapidly grew and developed.

In 1937 Dr Dorothy Stopford-Price introduced the BCG vaccination for TB. The hospital became the headquarters for the National BCG Committee. The success of the hospital owed much to the hard work and commitment of Lynn and its founders, and the donations and fundraising of its supporters.

From 1903 to her death in 1955 Lynn lived at 9 Belgrave Road, Rathmines, a home she shared with her friend and confidante Madeline French-Mullen, until Madeline's death in 1944. Lynn died on 13 September 1955, and was buried in the family plot in Deans Grange Cemetery with full military honours.

*Acquisition:*

The diaries were presented to the Royal College of Physicians by the family of Kathleen Lynn in the 1990s, who felt that they should be kept with the Saint Ultan's Hospital Papers.

*Custodial History:*

Following the donation of the diaries to the College, Margaret Connolly was employed to create a full transcript of the diaries. During this work she removed loose items held within the diaries and classified them, this material can be found in part two of the collection list.

*Access:*

Access subject to the conditions laid out in the Heritage Centre Access Guidelines. Given the difficulty in reading the original script of the diaries a transcript is issued to readers. The family history notes and loose extracts which are not fully transcribed can be issued on request.

*Reproductions:*

Copying of archive material is subject to the conditions laid out in the Heritage Centre Copying Guidelines

*Related Collections:*

Saint Ultan's Hospital Papers (SU)

*References:*

Margaret Ó hÓgartaigh, Kathleen Lynn. *Irishwoman, Patriot, Doctor* (Irish Academic Press, 2006)

Margaret Ó hÓgartaigh, Margaret, 'Kathleen Lynn' in *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge University Press, 2010)

**KL/1  
Diaries**

**Series  
1916-1955**

*Extent:*  
4 volumes

*Creator:*  
Lynn, Kathleen, 1847-1955

*Description:*  
The sections contains the diaries of Kathleen Lynn kept between 1916 and her death in 1955, covering both her political and medical careers.

The diaries are kept in an unusual form. Lynn uses a folio of the diary for each day of the year and then each line on the page is used for a different year. Thus in the first volume the first folio contains all the entries for 1 January for the years 1916 to 1937, one under the other. As well as this unusually format Lynn wrote in a very small cramped hand and squeezed up to three line of writing into each line of the notebook, creating a very compact blocks of almost illegible text.

*Arrangement:*  
The diaries are arrange chronologically

*Access:*  
A transcript of the diaries is issued to readers

**KL/1/1    Volume 1**

**1 January  
1916 - 30  
June 1937**

*Extent:*  
486 pages

*Creator:*  
Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955

*Description:*  
The first volumes of the Lynn diaries covering the dates 1 January to 30 June, for the years 1919 to 1937, the diary entries cover the first 183 folios.

Some of the remaining pages of the volume have been used to record various notes, mainly on Wynne family history;

- Pages 276-378 contain "Florence Wynne's account of her ancestors as far as she knew. Written by request, Newtons Smith, Dec. 1922."
- Pages 385-405 contain a series of notes on Wynne family history, and a family tree.
- Pages 414-415 contains a manuscript copy of an extract from a Bohemian Newspaper on Eduard Taaffe, 11<sup>th</sup> Viscount Taaffe, 1833-1895

*Access:*

A transcript of the diary is issued to readers, those wishing to consult the family history notes must use the original

**KL/1/2**

**Volume 2**

**1 July 1916 -  
31 December  
1937**

*Extent:*

478 pages

*Creator:*

Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955

*Description:*

The second volume of the Lynn diaries covers the dates 1 July to 31 December for the years 1916 to 1937, the diary entries cover the first 184 folios.

Some of the remaining pages have been used to record various notes;

Pages 378, 457-459 contain pressed flowers and feathers

Pages 463 a poem "Kathleen Mavourneen (with apologies)" signed P.O.P

Pages 464-465 contain Lynn family trees.

*Access:*

A transcript of the diary is issued to readers, those wishing to consult the family history and other notes must use the original

**KL/1/3    Volume 3**

**1 January  
1938 - 21  
August 1955**

*Extent:*  
233 folios

*Creator:*  
Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955

*Description:*  
The third volume of the Lynn diaries covers the dates 1  
January to 21 August for the years 1938 to 1955

*Access:*  
A transcript of the diary is issued to readers

**KL/1/4    Volume 4**

**22 August  
1938 - 31  
December  
1954**

*Extent:*  
133 folios

*Creator:*  
Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955

*Description:*  
The fourth volume of the diary covers the dates 22  
August to 31 December for the years 1938 to 1954

*Access:*  
A transcript of the diary is issued to readers

**KL/2**  
**Material removed from diaries**

**Section**  
**1916-1955**

*Extent:*

18 files

*Creator:*

Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955

*Description:*

This section contains loose material, mainly notes for the diaries, newspaper cuttings, blotting paper and some letters removed from the Lynn diaries. The first 15 files correspond to the 15 extracts detailed by Margaret Connolly at the end of her transcript of the diary (see KL/3/6) this has been done for ease of reference between the originals and transcript. The final 3 files contain addition material removed from the diaries and not listed by Margaret Connolly.

*Arrangement:*

The first fifteen files contain the material as arranged and described in the diary transcripts. The three addition files have been placed at the end, the material has been divided by record type and arranged chronologically.

*Access:*

Where a transcript is available this will be issued, for untranscribed material readers will be issued with the originals

**KL/2/1    Extract No. 1 - Notes for diary**

**24 April - 17  
May 1916, 7  
August 1916**

*Extent:*

11 pages

*Creator:*

Kathleen, Lynn, 1874-1955

*Description:*

Notes for diary, later fully or partially copied into diary.  
Also a letter from Kathleen Lynn, 6 Duke St., Bath to  
Miss Yeats dated 7 August 1916

*Access:*

A partial transcript is available



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|---------------|---|---|
| <b>KL/2/2</b> | <b>Extract No. 2 - Notes for diary</b>  | <b>13 August<br/>1919 - 27<br/>August 1919,<br/>13 November<br/>1919 - 20<br/>November<br/>1919</b> |
|               | <i>Extent:</i><br>11 pages  |   |
|               | <i>Creator:</i><br>Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955                                      |   |
|               | <i>Description:</i><br>Notes for diary later fully copied into diary              |   |
| <b>KL/2/3</b> | <b>Extract No. 3 - Notes for diary</b>  | <b>27 October<br/>1923</b>  |
|               | <i>Extent:</i><br>1 page  |   |
|               | <i>Creator:</i><br>Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955                                      |   |
|               | <i>Description:</i><br>Notes for diary different from entry in diary              |   |
| <b>KL/2/4</b> | <b>Extract No. 4 - Notes for diary</b>  | <b>4 March 1925<br/>- 10 March<br/>1925</b>   |
|               | <i>Extent:</i><br>3 pages   |   |
|               | <i>Creator:</i><br>Lynn, Kathleen, 1974-1955                                      |   |
|               | <i>Description:</i><br>Notes for diary, with some varations from entries in diary |   |
| <b>KL/2/5</b> | <b>Extract No. 5 - Notes for diary</b>  | <b>17 April 1925<br/>- 14<br/>November<br/>1925</b>   |
|               | <i>Extent:</i><br>9 pages   |   |
|               | <i>Creator:</i><br>Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955                                      |   |
|               | <i>Description:</i>   |   |

Notes for diary for periods 17 - 29 April, 18 May - 3 June and 27 October - 14 November 1925, mostly the same, or similar, to those in diaries

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|---------------|--|---|
| <b>KL/2/6</b> | <b>Extract No. 6 - Notes for diary</b>   | <b>21 February<br/>1926 - 22<br/>February<br/>1926</b>                          |
|               | <i>Extent:</i><br>1 page   |   |
|               | <i>Creator:</i><br>Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955   |   |
|               | <i>Description:</i><br>Notes for diary never copied into diary   |   |
| <b>KL/2/7</b> | <b>Extract No. 7 - Notes for diary</b>   | <b>17 August<br/>1928 - 22<br/>August 1928</b>                                  |
|               | <i>Extent:</i><br>4 pages  |   |
|               | <i>Creator:</i><br>Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955   |   |
|               | <i>Description:</i><br>Notes for diary almost the same as those in diary   |   |
| <b>KL/2/8</b> | <b>Extract No. 8 - Notes for diary</b>   | <b>29 september<br/>1931 - 10<br/>March 1932,<br/>23<br/>September<br/>1932</b> |
|               | <i>Extent:</i><br>32 pages   |   |
|               | <i>Creator:</i><br>Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955   |   |
|               | <i>Description:</i><br>Notes for diary, similar to final diary entries, for the periods 29 September 1931 - 19 January 1832 and 25 February 1932 - 10 March 1932, with a long entry recording a visit to county Kerry on 23 September 1932 |   |

- KL/2/9**      **Extract No. 9 - Notes for diary**      **30 December  
1932 - 1  
October 1932**
- Extent:*  
6 pages
- Creator:*  
Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955
- Description:*  
Notes of diary, similar to final entries, for the periods  
30 December 1932 - 6 January 1933 and 26 September  
1933 - 1 October 1933. Also notes for diary for 27 May  
1933 to 29 May 1933, never copied into diary.
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- KL/2/10**      **Extract No. 10 - Notes for diary**      **11 April 1936  
- 24 April  
1936, 17  
October 1936**
- Extent:*  
7 pages
- Creator:*  
Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955
- Description:*  
Notes for diary for 11 April 1936 to 24 April 1936 and  
for 17 October 1936
- 
- KL/2/11**      **Extract No. 11 - Copy of A B Wynne's letter on Richard  
Beavor Brown**      **16 June 1899**
- Extent:*  
3 pages
- Creator:*  
Wynne, A B
- Description:*  
Letter from A B Wynne to Dr [J] about [their] great  
grandfather Richard Beavor Brown, with an envelope  
inscribed '*copy of A B Wynne's card [from] Veytaux  
[Switzerland] 16 June 1899 about our great  
grandfather Col Richard Beavor Brown & his wife Hon  
Catherine Brown*'

- KL/2/12**    **Extract No. 12 - Letter from Passport Department, Dublin Castle**    **10 September 1919**
- Extent:*  
1 page
- Creator:*  
Passport Department, Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle
- Description:*  
Typescript letter to Dr Kathleen F Lynn, 9 Belgrave Road, Dublin informing her that the Lord Lieutenant is 'unable to recommend your application to the Foreign Office', Dr Lynn has requested a passport to travel to Belgium.
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- KL/2/13**    **Extract No. 13 - Blue Stars by M Barry O'Delany**    **21, May 1916, 23 May 1930**
- Extent:*  
3 pages
- Creator:*  
O'Delany, M Barry
- Description:*  
Typed verse by M Barry O'Delany entitled 'Blue Stars' dedicated to Dr Kathleen Lynn, with a handwritten note on a separate sheet '*please keep for me still - K.L.*', and a older envelope (21 May 1916) addressed to '*Dr K Lynn, c/o the Governor. With Many Thanks*'
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- KL/2/14**    **Extract No. 14 - Memorabilia**    **c.1916-1955**
- Extent:*  
15 items
- Creator:*  
Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955
- Description:*  
Items removed from the Lynn diaries including;
- card for Miss Alicia Day, Practical and Consulting Gardener;
  - itinerary for trip to Holland;



*Description:*

Sheets of blotting paper removed from the diaries

**KL/2/18 Addition notes for diary**

**25 August  
1928 - 22 July  
1946**

*Extent:*

65 pages

*Creator:*

Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955

*Description:*

Addition notes for dairy. Entries are for the periods 25 August - 30 August 1928, 15 April - 16 April 1932, 28 May - 1 June 1937 and 27 June - 22 July 1946.

The notes from 1946 are in a small green notebook with a Telegram addressed to Lynn at Parkstone, Dorset, informing her when an aircraft is available to take her to Dublin and the cost, dated 7 [July] 1946.

**KL/3  
Transcripts**

**Series  
1998**

*Extent:*  
6 volumes

*Creators:*  
Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955  
Connolly, Margaret

*Description:*  
Transcripts of the Kathleen Lynn diaries made by Margaret Connolly for the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland.

The transcripts retain the spellings and abbreviations of the originals, but not the original layout. In the transcript the diary entries are given chronologically.

*Arrangement:*  
Volumes are arranged chronologically.

**KL/3/1    Volume 1: 1916-1925    1998**

*Extent:*  
413 pages

*Creators:*  
Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955  
Connolly, Margaret

*Description:*  
Volume one of the diary transcript covering the period  
2 March 1916 to 31 December 1925

**KL/3/2    Volume 2: 1926-1931    1998**

*Extent:*  
358 pages

*Creators:*  
Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955  
Connolly, Margaret

*Description:*

Volume two of the diary transcript covering the period  
1 January 1926 to 31 December 1931

**KL/3/3      Volume 3: 1932-1937      1998**

*Extent:*

359 pages

*Creators:*

Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955  
Connolly, Margaret

*Description:*

Volume three of the diary transcript covering the  
period 1 January 1932 to 31 December 1937

**KL/3/4      Volume 4: 1938-1943      1998**

*Extent:*

377 pages

*Creators:*

Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955  
Connolly, Margaret

*Description:*

Volume four of the diary transcript covering the period  
1 January 1938 to 31 December 1943

**KL/3/5      Volume 5: 1944-1948      1998**

*Extent:*

320 pages

*Creators:*

Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955  
Connolly, Margaret

*Description:*

Volume five of the diary transcript covering the period  
1 January 1944 to 31 December 1948



**KL/3/6 Volume 6: 1949-1955**

**1998**

*Extent:*

376 pages

*Creators:*

Lynn, Kathleen, 1874-1955

Connolly, Margaret

*Description:*

Volume six of the diary transcript covering the period 1 January 1949 to 25 April 1955, also transcripts of 15 folders of material extracted from the diaries (KL/2/1 - KL/2/15).