

Ulster-Scots who shape

The Ulster Covenant campaign was one of the most ambitious political campaigns ever conceived. It united Ulstermen of Scottish denomination or political party. The success of the campaign rested on many factors, not the least of which was the brilliant

Sir Edward Carson (1854-1935)

Although he came from Dublin and was an Irish Unionist MP for most of his career, Carson had strong Scottish roots. His grandfather, William Carson, moved to Dublin from Dumfries in 1815 to set up in business.

After studying Law at Trinity College, Dublin, he enjoyed a stellar career as a barrister in both Ireland and England. He served as

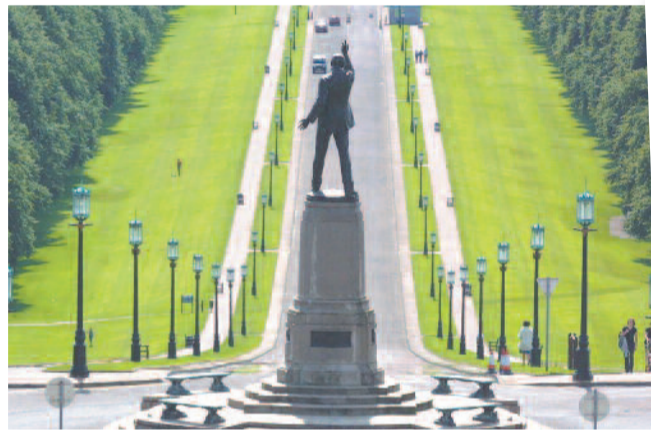
Solicitor General for both Ireland and England and was made Attorney General for England in 1915.

Carson was a brilliant orator both in court and in Parliament, where he was MP for Trinity College. It was this skill which led the Ulster Unionists to invite him to lead them in 1910, even though he wasn't from Ulster.

During the Home Rule Crisis, Carson's tough, no-nonsense approach earned him huge

admiration in Ulster, where he played the kind of iconic leadership role that would make his pro-Home Rule opponent Winston Churchill famous in later years.

In the 1918 General Election, Carson was elected as MP for Duncairn, in North Belfast; and he took the name of his adopted constituency when he was appointed as a Law Lord in 1921. He was buried in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, following a state funeral in 1935.



Sir Edward Carson's statue at Stormont, Belfast



Sir James Craig, Carson's indispensable deputy during the Home Rule Crisis

Sir James Craig (1871-1940)

Craig was born at Sydenham in East Belfast in 1871, the sixth son of a wealthy Ulster-Scots family. His father, also James, made a fortune as a distiller of Dunville's Irish Whiskey and James junior was sent to be educated at Merchiston Castle School in Edinburgh. After a short-lived career as a stockbroker, he joined the Royal Irish Rifles and served with

distinction in the Boer War, where he began to exhibit the organisational skills which would become essential later in his career. He was elected to Parliament as MP for East Down in 1906.

During the Home Rule Crisis, Craig was Carson's indispensable deputy. He was a perfect foil for Carson. While one was a great leader and orator, the other was a brilliant organiser, able to give effect to Carson's ideas. It was Craig who

took charge of organising the monster anti-Home Rule rallies, some of which took place at his own home, Craigavon House in East Belfast; and Ulster Day itself, which was a huge feat of logistics. Carson himself once joked that he got all the glory while Craig did all the work.

Following the partition of Ireland in 1921, James Craig became the first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, a post which he held until his death in 1940.

Rt. Hon. Thomas Sinclair (1838-1914)

Thomas Sinclair was born into an Ulster-Scots family in Belfast in 1838. He was educated at RBAI and Queen's (both Ulster-Scots institutions). He had a glittering academic career but instead of continuing in the world of academia he entered the family business, J & T Sinclair, who were provender merchants in Belfast. On the death of his father in 1867 he became head of the firm and he held that position until his own

death in 1914.

Not only was he a successful businessman, Sinclair was active in both church and politics. He was the leading layman in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, responsible for establishing the Sustentation Fund which supports Presbyterian Ministers and playing a key role in the affairs of the General Assembly. In politics he was one of the leaders of Ulster Liberalism and a founder of the Ulster Reform Club in Belfast. However like most Liberals he was a committed unionist and when the Liberals divided over Home

Rule he became the first president of the Ulster Liberal Unionist Association.

At the height of the Home Rule Crisis, it was Sinclair who was given the job of drafting Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant, a task made easier by his strong Presbyterian, Ulster-Scots heritage. Just as important, Sinclair played a key role in maintaining unity between Presbyterians and Anglicans in the Unionist movement, as well as connecting strongly with the Belfast business community.



Sir Edward Carson signs the Ulster Covenant against the imposition of Home Rule. Image courtesy of PRONI and the Deputy Keeper of the records (INF/7A/2/48)

BWD Montgomery (1853 - 1917)

Another Ulster-Scot prominent in the Ulster Covenant story is BWD Montgomery. Boughey William Dolling Montgomery was born in 1853 at Ballykeel House, Dromore. His father was Rev Thomas Hassard Montgomery of Dromore and his mother Emily was daughter of Rev Boughey William Dolling of Magheralin (memorial windows to his parents and the Dolling family can be seen in Magheralin Parish Church). After a period in the army, where he reached the rank of captain, BWD resigned his

commission and went into business and became a partner in the firm of BWD and Company, a member of the Freemasons, and a prominent Freemason, and 'Mount Lyons' on the Ballykeel estate in Belfast. In his commercial career he was granted Patents for a new type of boiler in July 1902.

During the Home Rule Crisis BWD was a prominent person who came up with the Ulster Covenant in the first place. In the records, "While the matter was being talked about by a few intin-

Major Fred Crawford (1861-1952)

Although a Methodist, his family were strong Ulster-Scots, having been descended from a long line of Presbyterian ministers, the earliest of whom, Rev. Thomas Crawford, came from Kilbirnie in Scotland and was ordained as a minister at Donegore in 1655. In his book, Guns for Ulster, Crawford quotes Lord Rosebery's 1910 description of the

Ulster-Scots as, "...without doubt the toughest, the most dominant race that exists in this moment," and enthused that he and his family belong to this race and class. Crawford was educated at Queen's University Belfast. After a distinguished career in the family chemical business, he joined the family chemical business in Belfast. A keen observer of politics, he had been convinced for years