

## HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE



### AMANDA MCKITTRICK ROS (1860-1939) – Novelist

Amanda McKittrick was born in Drumaness, near Ballynahinch, County Down on 8 December 1861. She was educated at Drumaness School, where her father was Principal, and Marlborough Teacher Training College in Dublin. She was appointed monitor at Millbrook National School, Larne, before completing her training in Dublin. She married Andy Ross, who was stationmaster in Larne. She wrote many novels in her own inimitable, idiosyncratic fashion, among which are *Irene Iddesleigh*; *Delina Delaney* and *Helen Huddleson*, the latter completed by her biographer, Jack Loudan, after her death.

Easily offended, she referred to her critics, who were numerous, as the 'maggoty throng', 'claycrabs of corruption' and 'hogwashing hooligans'. *I write as I feel and as I don't feel. My works are expressly my own – pleasingly peculiar – not a borrowed stroke in one of them. My writings are wholly different from the common-place every-day novel...absolutely different from any known writer or organiser of prose... I am my own publisher and shall be to the end of time. I don't believe in publishers who wish to butter their bannocks on both sides while they'll hardly allow an author to smell treacle. I consider they are too grabby altogether and, like Methodists, they love to keep the Sabbath and everything else they can lay hands upon.* She was greatly admired by Mark Twain and Aldous Huxley, and there was an Amanda Ros fan club at St John's College, Cambridge. She also published collections of verse entitled *Poems of Puncture and Fumes of Fomentation*. At the age of sixty-two, after her first husband had died, she re-married a farmer. She also wrote music, songs, and, during the First World War, she wrote ballads under the pseudonym Monica Moyland, which were printed in broadsheets. She saw her own death, on 3 February 1939, as joining 'the boundless battalion of the breathless'.

**Patrick Devlin**

**Acknowledgement:** Kate Newman *Dictionary of Ulster Biography*