## HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

## WATERFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## Elizabeth 'Lily' Mernin (1886-1957): Spy

Elizabeth Mernin was born in Dungarvan, County Waterford on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1886. A career as a typist would lead her to working in Dublin Castle for the garrison adjutants' office. Mernin was an ardent member of the Gaelic League, and would lead her to becoming acquainted with Michael Collins (introduced by her cousin Piaras Beaslai) in 1918, and working as a spy for him, gathering information on auxiliary police and British intelligence agents.

She would be referred to as 'Little Gentlemen', and undoubtedly her most notable intelligence work would be identifying the dwellings of the 'Cairo Gang', who would be assassinated by Collins' squad on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1920, known as 'Bloody Sunday'. Furthermore, her reconnaissance work would see her type reports for Collins.

After independence, she worked as a typist for the Irish army until 1952, mostly at Clancy Barracks. She would receive a military service pension as remuneration for her contribution to the War of Independence. On the 18<sup>th</sup> February 1957, she died in Dublin.

## **Cian Manning**