



The Women's Orange Associations around the world have a shared history spanning more than 200 years. Brought together by common beliefs and principles, these women have campaigned for their identity, fought for their convictions, and supported those in need.

There are Women's Orange Lodges in nine jurisdictions across the globe. In Ireland, where the movement originated, there are currently 90 women's lodges. This is the history of those associations and of some of the women whose ideals forged them.

*The Mistress shall then take her by the right hand and say :—*

In the name of the Sisterhood I bid thee welcome, and pray that thou mayest long continue amongst them a worthy Orangewoman, namely, fearing God, honouring the Queen, and maintaining the law.

*Chaplain :—*The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all, evermore. Amen.

Part of the  
Association of Loyal  
Orangewomen's  
Ritual of  
Introduction, 1889.

19

## THE LADIES' ORANGE LODGES O!

Allegro Moderato. *mp*

Key D. *mf* *mp*

1. The Or-ange cause is boom-ing strong, Since la-dies joined the  
2. For love of coun-try and of creed They crowd round William's  
3. And thus throughout old Eng-land wide, In town-ships and in  
4. Each lodge a cen-tre is of light, Of loy-al-ty and

Or - der ban - ner cit - ies pro - gress, O! The num - bers all a - long From cen - tre to the bor - der O!  
ban - ner O! Fa - their sires he freed, To his im - mor - tal hon - our O!  
cit - ies O! T come to bide, And lilt their Or - ange dit - ties, O!  
pro - gress, O! T love the night, And hate the Brit - ish Em - pire, O!

Long—live the las - ses, O! Long—live the las - ses, O! Our Eng - lish girls shine  
Long—live the las - ses, O! Long—live the las - ses, O! The Or - ang move - ment's  
Long—live the las - ses, O! Long—live the las - ses, O! Nor Je - suits plot, nor  
Long—live the las - ses, O! Long—live the las - ses, O! So ev' - ry day let's

bright as pearls Ar - rayed in Blue and Or - ange O!  
doub - ly strong Up - held by Or - ange las - ses, O!  
Bi - shon's rage, Can stop the Or - ange las - ses, O!

*D.S.*

**MUSEUM OF ORANGE HERITAGE**

**WWW.ORANGEHERITAGE.CO.UK**





# FIRST LADIES ASSOCIATION 1800

*this 15<sup>th</sup> day of*

*April*

*1927*

The Orange Order formed in 1795 in Loughgall, and within a few years women had formed their own Association. The evidence for these early women's lodges is a Warrant in the collection of the Museum of Orange Heritage which was issued in May 1801 for a lodge to operate in Bray in County Wicklow. The Warrant was No 8, and was issued to Mrs Letitia Saunders by Ann Smith, Mistress of the Female Orange Lodge, which was at Cuffe Street in Dublin.

Interestingly, the Secretary of this Organisation was a man, Thomas Woodburn. This format seems to have continued into the English Women's Lodges, as the 1886 Grand Orange Lodge of England report book records that "for Female Lodges to be compelled to have two male officers was a cause of dissatisfaction." It was resolved that they should only have "a Male Conductor if thought desirable."

At the time of the Parliamentary Enquiry by the Select Committee on Orange Lodges, Associations or Societies in Ireland in 1835, there is no mention of female lodges in Ireland.

Women are recorded as taking part in parades with men's lodges, but there seems to be no further attempt in Ireland to maintain an organisation until 1887.

## ORANGE PEGGY

There is no doubt that, even without an Association to call their own, many Protestant women of Ireland were keen Orangewomen, and are often referred to as such in speeches and newspaper reports. The most famous of these was the woman known as 'Orange Peggy, Queen of Trasna'.

Margaret Elliott was born on the 11 July 1783 at Lough Erne and was reportedly "wrapped in the Orange flag and carried to the church to be baptised on the Twelfth." Widowed in 1839, she lived her life on Trasna, waving her orange flag to every boat passing the island. Throughout her life she was a staunch supporter of the Orange cause, wearing only orange clothing and attending every walk and demonstration in the county.

Peggy died on 10 August 1891 aged 108, and her funeral was attended by large numbers of mourners of all creeds and denominations and was even reported in Australia.



The Warrant issued to WLOL No. 8 in 1801.







# THE NEW ORDER 1887

*this 15<sup>th</sup> day of*

In 1887 a Ladies Orange Association was established in Ireland by Mrs Helena Saunderson, wife of Col. Edward Saunderson MP. She had been working towards this for some time, and the previous year had founded WLOL No. 12 under the jurisdiction of the Grand Orange Lodge of England.



The Hon. Helena E Saunderson, first Grand Mistress of Ireland, 1887.

The establishment of Salisbury WLOL No. 12 in London was crucial to the second emergence of the Women's Orange movement in Ireland. There had been female lodges operating successfully in England for some years and they were known to exert influence in social and political matters. It was felt advisable to extend the movement to Ireland, and WLOL No. 12 was established to initiate ladies from Ireland "of title and position."

At its December 1886 meeting the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland appointed a committee to report on the best course to be pursued, and Laws and Ordances to be adopted by a Women's Association in Ireland. In December 1887, they sanctioned the formation of a Women's Orange Association.

The first lodge was formed in Belturbet with Mrs Saunderson as Worshipful Mistress. The warrant was granted on 13 September 1888 and was signed by Helena E Saunderson, Grand Mistress. Also, at around this time, two other lodges were formed in County Cavan, No. 5 at Greenville under Mrs Clifford of Clifford House, and No. 8 at Bawnboy under Mrs Johnstone. It was also reported in 1887 that a Ladies lodge had been established at Newtownbutler.

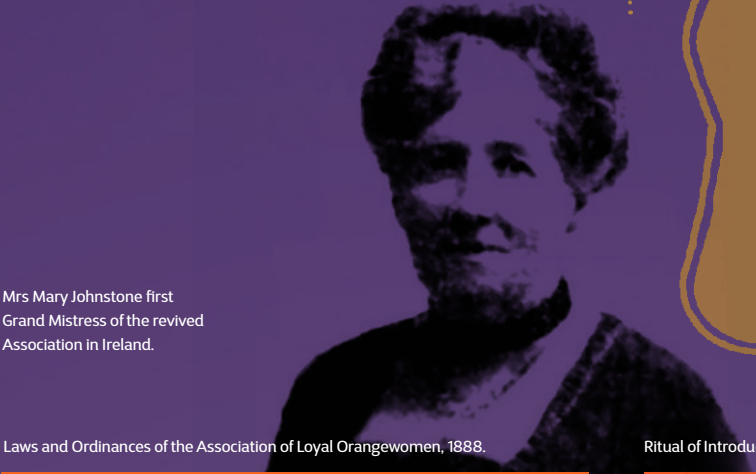
Although there are few records and little is known about the demise of this earlier Ladies Association, there is evidence that it was still in existence in the early 1900s; in 1905 the presence of the Bawnboy Ladies LOL No. 8 is recorded at the Twelfth demonstrations.

In England, lodges were more commonly the domain of the working class and genteel middle classes. In Ireland, in the late 1880s and 1890s, it was driven by women of influence in the upper classes and perhaps this is what doomed it to failure. The shadow of Home Rule in Ireland had channelled efforts into this organisation which, it was hoped, would be able to exert some influence and focus Protestant women in the fight against Home Rule.

At a presentation in 1929, Mr R H Johnston, husband of the late Mrs Mary Johnston, suggested that the failure of this fledgling organisation had been "owing to the concentration of political effort along other lines." With the failure of the first and second Home Rule Bills, some of the momentum was lost and it would take the looming threat of a third Home Rule Bill combined with outrage at the aftermath of the Ne Temere decree in 1908 to galvanise the women to reinvigorate their Orange Association.

Members initiated into WLOL No. 12 included:

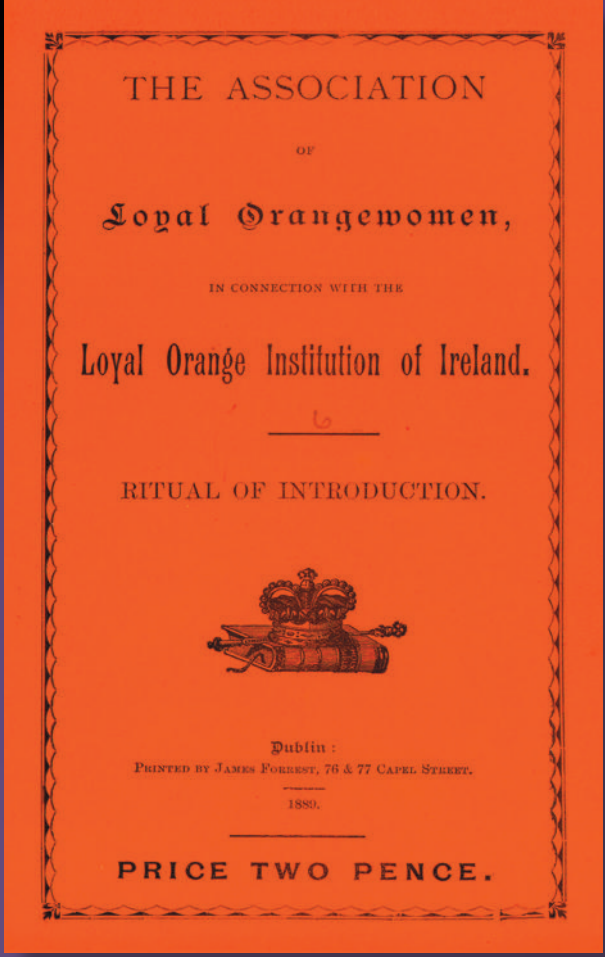
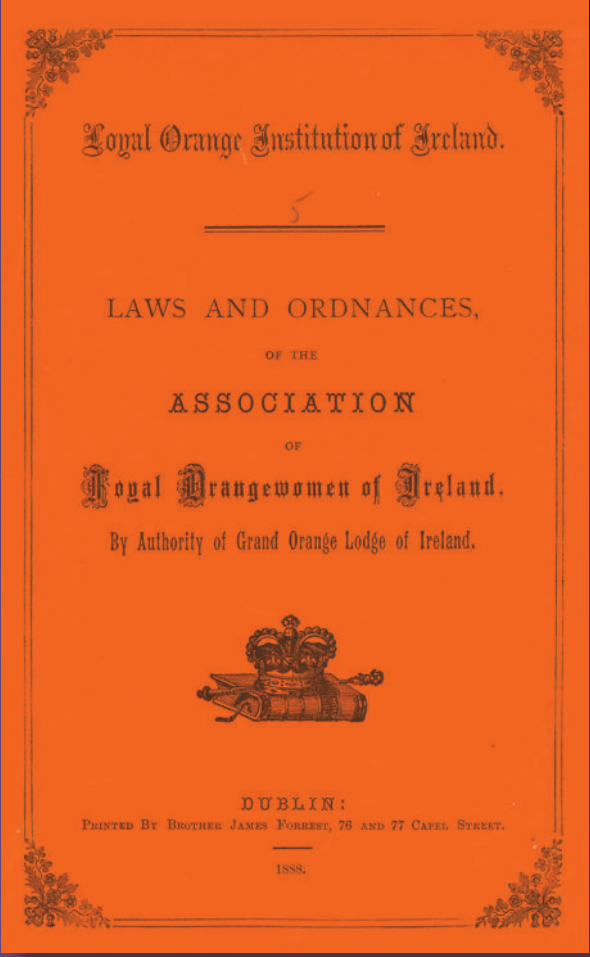
- COUNTESS OF CASTLESTUART, LADY MURIEL STUART
- LADY MARY STUART OF STEWARTSTOWN
- LADY CAROLINE MADDEN
- MISS MADDEN
- LADY FANNY FITZWYGRAM
- MISS SOMERS OF SLANE CASTLE
- THE MISSES DE LA CHEROIS-CROMMELIN
- MRS COLONEL WARING
- LADY ENNISKILLEN
- LADY LESLIE OF GLASLOUGH
- LADY RANDOLPH CHURCHILL



Mrs Mary Johnstone first Grand Mistress of the revived Association in Ireland.

Laws and Ordinances of the Association of Loyal Orangewomen, 1888.

Ritual of Introduction to the Association of Loyal Orangewomen, 1889.







# THE REVIVAL 1911

*this 15<sup>th</sup> day of*

In the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland Report for December 1911, it was recorded that:

*The Women’s Orange Association, which was formed in December 1887, having been for some years dormant, and several applications for warrants having been received, permission was given to Mrs. R. H. Johnstone, Bawnboy House, Co. Cavan, to revive the Association and issue warrants.*



Mrs Annie Bridgett, founder member and first Worshipful Mistress of Ireland's First Ladies Lodge No. 1, Belfast.



This was followed up by a report in June the following year recording that “the Association of Loyal Orangewomen of Ireland had been revived and a number of Warrants issued in connection therewith, at a meeting held in the Grand Orange Hall, Dublin, on 13th February last.”

The first of these warrants were issued to:

- NO. 1** Ireland's First, Sandy Row, Belfast  
Mrs Annie Bridgett W.M. (1912)
- NO. 2** East Belfast, Ballymacarrett, Belfast  
Mrs Crossan W.M. (1912)
- NO. 3** Kingstown, Dublin  
Mrs Collins W.M. (1912)
- NO. 4** Hollywood  
Miss Leah Garrett W.M. (1912)
- NO. 5** Ahoghill  
Mrs Keith W.M. (1913)
- NO. 6** Ballynafeigh, Belfast  
Miss Bailie W.M. (1913)
- NO. 7** Miriam's Daughters Total Abstinence  
Carrickfergus, (1914)
- NO. 8** Unknown
- NO. 9** St. Matthew's, Belfast,
- NO. 10** Lily of Carntall, Mossley, Mrs Ogilby W.M.
- NO. 11** Kilrea, Mrs Moore W.M.
- NO. 12** Dublin, Mrs McDowell W.M.
- NO. 13** Clifton Street, Mrs Woodside W.M.
- NO. 14** Ballymena, Miss Mabel Harris W.M. (1915)
- NO. 15** Ligoneil, Miss Ruby Kirkwood W.M. (1917)
- NO. 16** West Belfast
- NO. 17** South Belfast, Mrs Margaret Drennan W.M. (1918)

Newspaper article about the Kingstown Women's LOL No. 3 parading in Belfast. *Belfast Weekly News*, 25 July 1912.

## THE POMEROY ANOMALY

Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland had been petitioned to grant charters for Ladies Lodges by early 1911, and it was originally anticipated that the outcome would be announced at the Grand Lodge meeting in June 1911. In anticipation of a positive outcome, a Ladies Orange Lodge was formed in Pomeroy on 27 January 1911. It was inaugurated by Miss A L Boyd of Victoria Ladies Lodge No 115, Philadelphia, and hopes were expressed that it would be issued with Warrant No. 1 when Grand Lodge approved the revival of the Ladies Association.

Grand Lodge did not announce their decision until December that year. When the Ladies Association first met on 13 February 1912 to issue Warrants, no Warrants were issued to Pomeroy.

There is no further record of the Ladies Orange Lodge in Pomeroy after June 1911.

The Officers and Committee of Ireland's Ladies' LOL No. 1, Larne Times, 24 February 1912.



## KINGSTOWN (COUNTY DUBLIN): THE R. J. FOWLER LADIES L.O.L.

Above lodge wish to thank the brethren and the public for the hearty welcome accorded them on their arrival in Belfast on the 12th July. The occasion was rather a unique one, as the had the honour of being the first ladies L.O.L. to take part on the procession on the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne. They feel rather disappointed at the non-appearance of their sisters in the loyal city of Belfast, and hope that another year they will join them in their effort to still keep the old flag flying. They also wish to thank a few kind and thoughtful friends for their hospitality, as otherwise it would have been very awkward for them to look out for themselves in a strange city in such unpleasant weather. Most of them came at great personal inconvenience, but they wished to stimulate their countrywomen to increased efforts at the present crisis in the history of the country for civil and religious liberty. They had rather an unpleasant experience on their return journey, owing to a breakdown on the railway. They did not arrive in Dublin till the small hours of the morning, and found themselves stranded there with no possible means of conveyance. They had to finish their journey to Kingstown on foot, a distance of eight miles, arriving there at 3-30 a.m. 'All's well that ends well.'





# REASONS BEHIND THE REVIVAL

*this 15<sup>th</sup> day of* *April* *1927*

The revival of the Association of Loyal Orangewomen of Ireland came at a time of significant political turmoil bringing changes which would directly affect the Protestant community, especially women. The campaign against Home Rule was a rallying point for those opposed to the proposition of Home Rule for Ireland. Women were making their voices heard through the Ulster Women’s Unionist Council, the Primrose League and, in 1912, with the inclusion of the Women’s Declaration in the Ulster Covenant.

Perhaps more significant was the introduction of the Ne Temere decree by Pope Pius X. Although this had come into effect in April 1908, it was a case in Belfast in 1910 which outraged public opinion. Known as the Belfast Marriage Case, this was the story of Agnes McCann, a Presbyterian woman, her husband, and their two children. Mr and Mrs McCann were married in a Presbyterian Church in County Antrim in May 1908 and by August 1910 had two children. Following the reported interference by a priest, Agnes was told that they had to be remarried in a Roman Catholic Church and the children brought up in that faith. When she refused, her husband left, taking the children. She never saw them again. A representative of the Roman Catholic Church at the time stated that “The marriage ceremony in the Presbyterian Church was wholly invalid. McCann was conscientiously bound to separate from the Presbyterian woman unless she consented to a revalidation of the marriage, and he is under the gravest obligation to see that his children are baptized and brought up Catholics.”

Mrs Allen of Lurgan (later Lady Allen), one of the founder members of the revived Women’s Orange Association, expressed the concerns of Protestant women in Ireland in the face of Home Rule when she said, “If under existing British laws an act could be committed such as had taken place recently in Belfast what hope

was there for the sanctity of their homes when Ireland would be under the heel of a foreign priest?”

Mary Johnstone of Bawnboy was keen to revive the Ladies Orange Association to discourage mixed marriages.



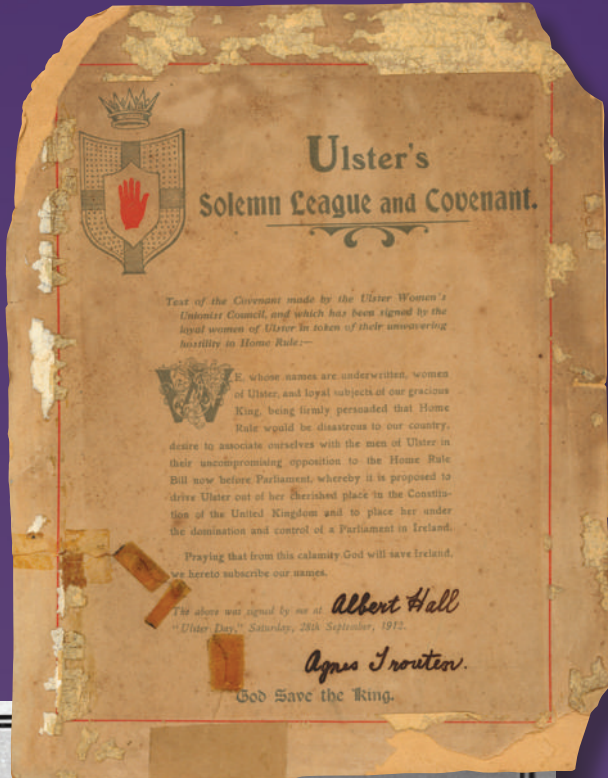
UVF Nursing badge awarded to Lisa McConnell.

Orangewomen supporting the anti-Home Rule Campaign. *The Bystander*, 31 December 1913.

## WHAT WAS NE TEMERE?

Coming into force on Easter Sunday 1908, this decree meant that the Roman Catholic Church would not recognise a marriage between a Protestant and a Roman Catholic unless it took place in a Roman Catholic Church. It also decreed children from the marriage must be brought up as Roman Catholics. This was in spite of the fact that such marriages were recognised under civil law, and objections were raised in legislatures around the world. This conflict between civil law and the church’s ordinances was raised in Parliament by the Earl of Donoughmore directly as a result of the Belfast Marriage Case.

Declaration certificate signed by Agnes Trouten, a member of WLOL No. 19.







# WOMEN AND POLITICS

*this 15<sup>th</sup> day of*

The late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries saw a wider political participation by women.

A number of female political and socio-political associations were formed during this period, such as the Ulster Women's Unionist Council, and the women's suffrage movement was gaining strength.



Margaret Waring from  
The Northern Whig, 3 May 1929.



Many titled and influential women had a foot in the political arena, through the work of their husbands and their organisational work on committees and charities. As a meritocracy, the Ladies Orange Association afforded working class women an opportunity to become involved in the political arena.

Other women took a more direct route into politics, and among the first three female MPs elected to the Northern Ireland Parliament were two Orangewomen.

## **JULIA MCMORDIE** **ULSTER UNIONIST MP** **FOR SOUTH BELFAST, 1921-1925**

Prior to her election to Stormont as MP for South Belfast in 1921, Mrs McMordie had experience in the world of local politics, having been the first female member of Belfast City Council in 1917, becoming an Alderman in 1920.

## **MARGARET WARING** **MP FOR IVEAGH, 1929-1933**

Margaret Alicia Waring, who became Stormont MP for Iveagh in 1929, had been, prior to her election, a JP, a member of the Regional Education Committee, and a member of the Northern Ireland War Pensions Committee. She was also Deputy Grand Mistress of Ireland and County Grand Mistress of Co. Down.

Orangewomen were also taking their place at Westminster.

## **PATRICIA FORD** **ULSTER UNIONIST MP** **FOR NORTH DOWN, 1953-1955**

Patricia Ford was the first woman from Northern Ireland elected to the Westminster Parliament. After the death of her father, Walter Dorling Smiles, on the MV Princess Victoria in 1953, she stood for his North Down seat and was returned unopposed.

## **PATRICIA MCLAUGHLIN** **MP FOR WEST BELFAST 1955-1964**

Patricia McLaughlin was elected to Westminster in 1955 and was the first Northern Irish woman elected to a contested seat, with a majority of 18,000 votes. Mrs McLaughlin was also a founder member of Westminster Women's Orange Lodge.

## **KATHLEEN O'BRIEN**

was considered for the North Antrim Unionist nomination for the Westminster seat in 1959. She was a member of the Larne Unionist Association and the Orange Order. Miss O'Brien was a member of the English Bar, practising in London and on the Midland Circuit. She lost the nomination to Henry Clark, who won the seat in 1959 with 95% of the votes.

Margaret McLaughlin MP.  
Courtesy of The National Portrait Gallery.



## **ULSTER WOMEN'S UNIONIST COUNCIL**

The council was formed in January 1911, and immediately garnered the support of the Ulster Unionist Council, who offered their "heartiest sympathy and co-operation." Within a year of its establishment it was the largest women's political organisation in Ireland with an estimated membership of over 115,000.







# WOMEN AND THE WAR

*this 15<sup>th</sup> day of*

Orangewomen made a significant contribution to the War effort, during both the First and Second World Wars. From the appeal by Margaret Ewart, in 1914, for Orangewomen to provide socks, shirts, mufflers, etc for the men fighting, to the women who nursed wounded soldiers at home and at the Front. Below are examples of the contribution made by Orangewomen in the service of their country.

## MISS RUBY KIRKWOOD

Worshipful Mistress of WLOL No. 15 in Belfast, nursed at the Grange Street Military Hospital, Manchester, and was one of many women who left to nurse the wounded.

## MISS FRANCES WHITAKER

Worshipful Mistress of WLOL No. 19, Belfast, was founder and Commandant of the West Belfast Nursing Corps, VAD during WWI. She was also Secretary of the Belfast Branch of the Ulster Women's Unionist Council, and head of the Soldiers and Sailors Help Society. Her services to the welfare of the soldiers were recognised with the conferral of an OBE.

## THE DUCHESS OF ABERCORN

Deputy Mistress of WLOL No. 133, as President of the St John's County Tyrone Association she helped to establish the 50 bed UVF hospital at Pau in France and was President of the Committee which oversaw it. In addition, she organised events to raise funds for war work.

## MRS JEANNIE FERGUSON

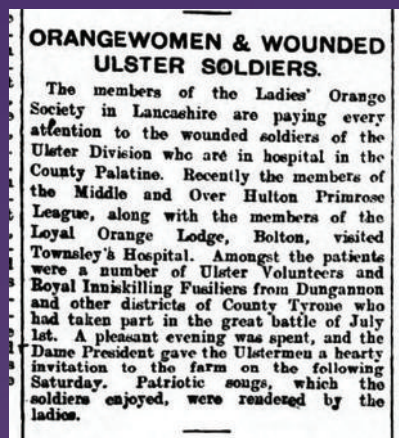
of Edenderry House, Banbridge was Worshipful Mistress of the first Women's Orange Lodge in Banbridge and President of the local Women's Unionist Association branch. She commanded a Nursing Company in the West Down UVF, and as Matron of the two UVF Hospitals in Gilford was awarded the Royal Red Cross Decoration "in recognition of her valuable services in connection with the war."

Frances Whittaker OBE.  
Photograph courtesy  
of the Imperial War  
Museum.



## JEAN VICTOR BATES

WLOL No. 70, WLOL No. 133, was involved in fundraising for causes from the early days of the war. Reports in the newspapers of 1914 and 1915 have her variously raising money for the Belgian Relief Fund; for the Ulster Women's Unionist Council to supply a Motor Ambulance to the 36th (Ulster) Division; to endow beds for the UVF Hospital; and in aid of the French Wounded Emergency Fund. She also drove an Ulster Motor Ambulance in Serbia and, in 1919, was presented with two awards for the work she had carried out during the war: the Prince Regent of Serbia presented her with the Order of St. Sava "in recognition of her work on behalf of the Serbian Nation"; and the King of Belgium conferred the Queen Elizabeth Medal on her "in order to recognise the devotedness of which she has given proof in war work."



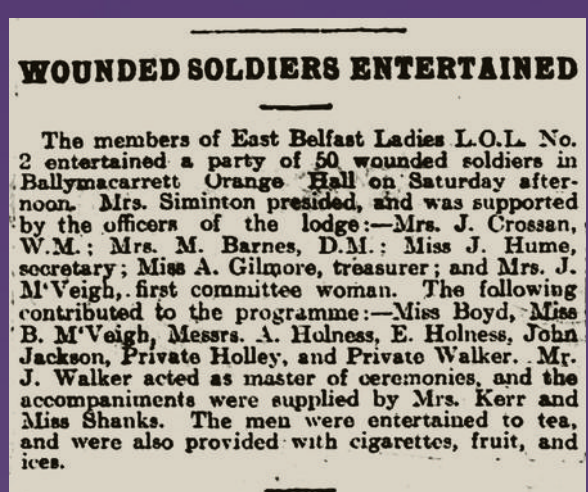
The Women's Association organised entertainment for wounded soldiers and, during the Second World War, they raised funds to provide an ambulance and canteen.

English Orangewomen visited wounded soldiers in hospital.  
*Northern Whig*, 15 August 1916.

The Duchess of Abercorn with UVF nurses at Baronscourt.



Ambulance purchased for the War Department with money raised by the Association of Loyal Orangewomen of Ireland in 1941.



Article about East Belfast WLOL No. 2 from *The Belfast News-Letter*, 23 April 1917.







# BENEVOLENCE

*this 15<sup>th</sup> day of*  
“And now abideth  
faith, hope, charity, these three;  
but the greatest of these is charity.”  
(1 Corinthians 13:13)

A Letter printed in  
The Northern Whig, 14 April 1916,  
thanking WLOL No. 13.

**THANKS TO LADIES' L.O.L.**  
The following is an extract from a letter received by an officer of the 13th L.O.L., North Belfast, from Sergeant W. Woodside, A Company, West Belfast Volunteers:—  
B.E.F., France.—It is with great pleasure I write to thank you and the ladies of your lodge for the splendid gift of cigarettes. It would be impossible to describe how fully they were appreciated. Your lodge could not have sent a more pleasing gift than this one. I had the honour of distributing them, and each man was told who the generous donors were. They one and all were more than pleased to know the gift came from a ladies' L.O.L., for most of us are Orangemen. I am very sorry the time at my disposal does not allow me to write you a longer letter. Again thanking you, and wishing your lodge every success.—I remain, yours fraternally, 13898  
Sergeant W. Woodside.

1927

The Women's Association has a strong charitable ethos. Private and district lodges support charities of their choice and there is an Orange Benevolent fund each year which the lodges contribute to and which is then divided between several chosen charities. The Women's Grand Lodge also make annual donations to the Sir George Clarke Bursary Fund, Lord Enniskillen Memorial Orange Society, and the Junior Orange Women's Association of Ireland.

Benevolence is an important function of the Women's Associations around the world, so much so that the Canadian Women's Association called themselves the Ladies' Orange Benevolent Association and saw this as their primary function. It was also one of the arguments used by women to convince the various male Grand Lodges to confer warrants on Ladies Lodges.

**MRS FANNY CORSCADEN OBE, MBE**  
of Richmond, Londonderry, was first Worshipful Mistress of the first ladies lodge in Londonderry. She was President of the Londonderry Women's Unionist Association and it was largely owing to her efforts that the Richmond Unionist Recreation Hall was built. She personally donated £4,291.00 for the erection and equipment of the Derry Cathedral Chapter House and it was through her generosity that a Sailors' Home in Londonderry was established. It was for her philanthropy that an MBE was conferred on her in 1920 and an OBE in 1921. After her death in 1922, WLOL No. 26 was named the Fanny Corscaden Memorial Lodge.

Sadie McVeigh of WLOL 126 collecting for Orange charities.  
Her charitable work started during WWII with the Red Cross Fund.

Bro Perry Reid, Co Tyrone Grand Master, receiving a cheque for £1,000 for the Australian Bushfire Disaster Fund from Sister Gillian McIntyre, Assistant Deputy Grand Secretary



Jordana from Cancer Fund for Children receiving a cheque for £500 from Sister May Dickson, DGMI, towards their work in Daisy Lodge.







# ACCOMPLISHED SISTERS

*this 15<sup>th</sup> day of*  
Orangewomen have made their mark on the world in many fields, below are some of those who have left a lasting legacy.



1927  
Nancy Riach, competitive swimmer.

**REBE MILLS (WLOL NO. 145)**  
was an English hymn writer, author and poet, having numerous poems, short stories, and children's stories published in newspapers and magazines. She also wrote books with Christian themes, such as *Esther's Victory*.

**JEAN VICTOR BATES (WLOL NO. 70, 133)**  
was a journalist and author. Her early published articles were on general interest topics, but later became more political in tone with articles including *Austria's Rebel Army*, *Modern Boadiceas – Englishwomen who help in France*, and *Ulster's Part in the War*. Miss Bates' travels in Romania and Bulgaria are documented in the book *Our Allies and Enemies in the Near East*, published in June 1918, and in 1921 she published a biography of Edward Carson.

**MAY CROMMELIN (1849-1930) (WLOL NO. 12)**  
was of Huguenot descent and was born and lived at Carrowdore Castle in Co. Down. She was a novelist and travel writer, having published her first novel, *Queenie*, at the age of 24. Miss Crommelin travelled extensively, incorporating many of the places she visited into her books. She published 42 novels as well as articles for newspapers and magazines. One of the novels, *Orange Lily*, was set in Ulster and was about the Lily Keag, the daughter of the Master of a local Orange Lodge.

**CAROLINE CROMMELIN (WLOL NO. 12)**  
and her sister Florence Goring-Thomas were interior designers, a new profession at the time, and were reported as being "among the first lady shopkeepers, and boldly started with their own names above the door of 'Art of Home'."

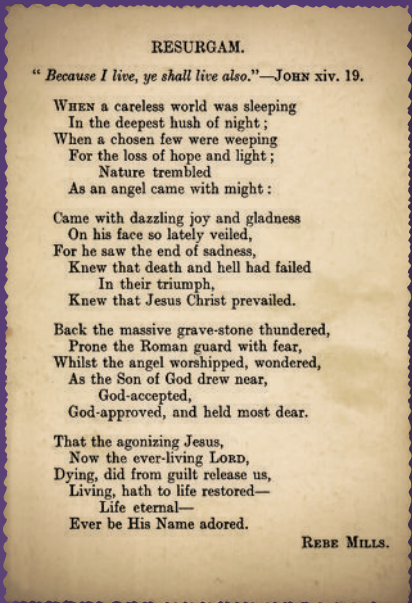
Dr Caroline Sophia Brown, one of the first female physicians in Toronto.



**DR CAROLINE BROWN (1863-1936) (LOBA QUEEN ALEXANDRA)**  
was one of the first woman physicians in Toronto. A teacher before graduating from Ontario Medical College for Women in 1900, she went on to carry out post-graduate work in Ireland and England. On staff at the Women's College Hospital, she served as a school trustee and was the first female chairman. She was also a founder and regent of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire and a member of the Council of Women.

**MARGARET MCIVER (WLOL NO. 66)**  
was a Scottish businesswoman and self-made millionaire. She was the founder of the famous Barras Market in Glasgow and the Barrowland Ballroom.

**NANCY RIACH**  
was a competitive swimmer from Motherwell in Scotland. She held 28 British and Scottish records in various swimming disciplines and was described, on her death at the age of 20 in 1947, as "undoubtedly the finest swimmer the British Empire has ever produced." The Women's section of the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland dedicated a cot in her memory at the Glasgow Royal Hospital for Sick Children on behalf of the Juvenile Orange Lodge, and Victoria WLOL No. 7 held a memorial service following her death. She was inducted into the Scottish Sports Hall of Fame in 2002, and the Scottish Swimming Hall of Fame in 2010.



*Resurgam*, by Rebe Mills, from *The Gospel Magazine*, March 1907.

May Crommelin, author.







# SISTERHOOD OF THE TRAVELLING CERTIFICATE

*this 15<sup>th</sup> day of*  
Women's Orange Institutions operate across the globe. They were founded independently in various jurisdictions by women determined to spread the Orange flame.

Purple satin embroidered bannerette from Daughters of Sandy Row Ladies' Lodge No. 2, Philadelphia.



## ENGLAND

There is no certainty about when the earliest female lodges came into existence in England. There were none recorded in the 1835 Parliamentary Select Committee Enquiry, but by 1850 there were 24 female lodges working under the auspices of the Grand Protestant Association of Loyal Orangemen (one of two Orange bodies in England, which merged in 1876 to become the Loyal Orange Institution of England). Numbers of female lodges in England increased through the 1880s, coinciding with the Home Rule debates.

Although women's lodges had been operating for over 100 years, it wasn't until 6 July 1960 that they formed their own separate Institution, The Loyal Institution of Orange Ladies of England.

## USA

The Loyal Orange Ladies' Institution was founded in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, by Margaret Thompson on 12 August 1876. Mrs Thompson organised a few of her friends, 11 women and four men, and The Daughters of Zion, Loyal Orange Ladies' Lodge No. 1 was instituted. Margaret Thompson became the Worthy Mistress and Supreme Grand Mistress at that meeting. In 1906, the Supreme Grand Lodge recognized the Loyal Orange Ladies' Institution as an auxiliary Order of the Loyal Orange Institution in the United States. There are suggestions of earlier female lodges having existed, with assistance being given to the Grand Orange Lodge of New York in 1872 by a lodge in Birkenhead, England.

## AUSTRALIA

Australia has six separate Grand Lodges, each operating in their respective State, which then met under the Federal Loyal Orange Grand Council of Australasia. Each of these State Grand Lodges chartered the operation of Female Lodges at different times.

The first of these was formed in the State of Queensland in August 1890 at a town called Gympie. The first Female Orange Lodge in New South Wales was inaugurated in December 1894 in Sydney, called Daughters of Derry No. 301. The States of Tasmania and South Australia did not open Female Lodges until 1901, followed in 1903 by Western Australia and Victoria.

However, a separate Orange organisation in Australia had pioneered Female Lodges. The Loyal Orange Benefit Society, a Friendly Society which was established before 1846, had established a Grand Lodge and provided for the formation of a number of Ladies Lodges by 1882. The rules of this Society required lodges to "walk in procession when required to do so and wear the usual regalia of the Lodge, namely sashes of orange and purple silk."



Signature tablecloth from USA, made in the 1930s. It is hand embroidered with the names of the members of the Ladies' Association from different states across the country. Each square represents an individual Ladies' lodge.



Margeret Thompson  
Founder of the  
Ladies' Loyal Orange Institution  
Born in County Londonderry, Ireland, 1810  
Died November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1898, age 57 years

Female lodge members, early 1900s.





# Association OF LOYAL ORANGE OF IRELAND. *Sisterhood* ORANGE ASSOCIATE.

## ACROSS THE SEAS...



Harriet Wilson, first Worshipful Mistress of Scotland's first Women's Lodge in 1909.

Canadian velvet women's collarettes from Canada. They are embroidered with maple leaves and the symbols of office. The sashes were manufactured by Dominion Regalia in Toronto.



### NEW ZEALAND

Until 1928 the Orange Order in New Zealand worked under two Grand Lodges, The Grand Lodge of New Zealand (GOLNZ), and the Grand Lodge of the Middle Island (GLMI). Female Lodges were founded at different times under each of the Grand Lodges.

In 1887, Wellington District requested a warrant for a female lodge from Grand Orange Lodge of New Zealand. In September 1888 charters to open female lodges in Rocky Nook, Auckland, and in Wellington were granted. No. 1 Lodge The Orange Lily was formed in Wellington with Sister Mary Linnell as President, and No. 2 Lodge The Lily of the Valley in Auckland under Mrs Elizabeth Burrell.

In 1889, four female lodges are recorded in the GLMI Annual Report Book: No. 1, No Surrender, at Christchurch; No. 2, Purple Star, at Southbridge; No. 3, Victoria, at Sydenham; and No. 4, True Blue, at Hokitika.

Unusually, New Zealand also has mixed male and female lodges. The Female Lodges in New Zealand are not under a separate Association, and, in 2000, New Zealand elected the first female Grand Master.

### CANADA

The Loyal Orangewomen's Benevolent Association was Warranted in September 1890 and ratified in 1891 thanks to the perseverance of Mary Cullum, their first Grand Mistress. Being convinced of the necessity for a Women's Orange Association, Miss Cullum gathered the wives and daughters of Orangemen in Hamilton, Ontario, and formed The Ladies Protestant Association. Once this organisation was formed, they immediately petitioned the Grand Orange Lodge of British America for recognition, and for a Charter to allow them to work as the Ladies Orange Benevolent Association. This petition was presented at the meeting of Grand Lodge in late 1889 and promptly turned down. The following year she presented a stronger petition and Grand Lodge appointed a committee to determine whether the women should be recognised as a branch of the Orange Order. Miss Cullum obviously presented a compelling argument, as Grand Lodge acquiesced, and the Ladies Orange Benevolent Association was formed.

### SCOTLAND

The official formation of female lodges in Scotland was in 1909, however, there seem to have been Scottish lodges which operated under the English body prior to the 1870s. In a speech in 1908, the Grand Master of Scotland referred to the female lodges that had been in Scotland 30 years before, but again, there is no record of what caused their demise.

The reintroduction of female lodges to Scotland was particularly down to the determination of Mrs Dorothy Wilson and her daughter Harriet. They travelled to Newcastle, England, to be initiated into a lodge there, and came back to petition the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland to be allowed to establish female lodges. The Grand Lodge eventually relented, and Harriet Wilson became the first Worshipful Mistress of Scotland's First LOL No. 1.



Patricia Ellis, first female Grand Master of New Zealand.



Mary Cullum, founder and first Grand Mistress of the Ladies Orange Benevolent Association in Canada.

LOBA 1396 on their first parade, July 12th, 1972.





Association  
OF  
THE NAME OF THE  
GRAND ORANGE LODGE  
OF IRELAND. Sisterhood  
ORANGE ASSOCIATE.

...TO FAR  
FLUNG  
SHORES

*this 15<sup>th</sup> day of*  
“It may be truly said that  
the Orange Order is now  
so world-wide that on it  
the sun never sets”  
*Pro Virtute*



Ghanaian Orangewomen at a church service, 2006.



**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

Orange lodges and an Orange school operated in Trinidad and Tobago under the Grand Orange Lodge of England from 1918 onwards. At least one women's Orange Lodge, Ruth WLOL No. 122, existed in Trinidad in 1920, the Worthy Mistress being a Leonora Adams of Belmont, Trinidad.

**SOUTH AFRICA**

The first lodges in South Africa operated under warrants issued by the Grand Orange Lodge of England, but by 1905 a Grand Orange Lodge of South Africa had been established. Although there are booklets in the museum's collection listing lodges in South Africa in the early years, there are no Female Lodges listed. However, a brief mention in *The Belfast Newsletter* of 9 August 1933 notes that a marriage was taking place between a member of Boksburg LOL No. 5 and a member of Pretoria Diamond Ladies Orange Lodge.

**GHANA**

The first Orange Lodge in Ghana was formed at Keta in 1918. Following the transfer of members and other difficulties, lodges became inactive, but a resurgence in the late 1950s saw an increase in lodges and the formation of the first ladies' lodge. WLOL No. 160, The Wycliffe, was formed in 1959 with Sister Mrs Mary Adjorlolo as Worshipful Mistress.

**TOGO**

The first Orange Lodge in Togo was established at Lomé in 1915. As with Ghana, movement of people in Togo caused the lodges to become dormant in the 1920s, with members travelling to Ghana to meet. The resurgence of interest in the late 1950s saw the formation of a ladies' lodge in Lomé in 1962. The Morning Star of Lomé WLOL No. 161 was formed with Sister Ellen Ametewee as Worshipful Mistress.

**NIGERIA**

The first Orange Lodge in Nigeria was formed in 1907 and worked under the jurisdiction of the Grand Orange Lodge of England. Nigerian lodges continued to work under the Grand Lodge of England until their eventual collapse in the late 1960s. The last record of lodges in Nigeria was in 1968, at which time two of the six lodges were Female Lodges: WLOL No. 14 Independence, and WLOL No. 250, Star of Peace.

Women's Lodge ready for a parade, Lome, Togo, 1983.



Most Worshipful Sister Esther A. Dziku, Grand Mistress of the Ladies Council of Ghana, 1988.

Sisters accompanied by a band on parade, Lomé, 1983.







# THE MODERN ASSOCIATION

*this 15<sup>th</sup> day of*  
The Association of Loyal Orangewomen in Ireland promotes a Christian ethos, encouraging members to practice their religion and enrich their sense of the Reformed Faith and cultural heritage. The Association currently has 90 private lodges across Ireland. Lodge meetings are opportunities for friendship and fellowship.



Most Worshipful Grand Mistress of the Association of Loyal Orangewomen of Ireland, Mrs Joan Beggs.

Members join a private lodge, which meets monthly and has a strong social element. Private lodges are then represented by their officers at District, County and Grand Lodge level, meaning that it is very much a grassroots organisation.

## IMPERIAL COUNCIL OF THE WORLD

Women's lodges still work across all nine jurisdictions, and they are represented at the Imperial Council, which meets every three years.

## JUNIOR LODGES

The first warrants for the Junior Orange Women's Association of Ireland were issued in 1927, the first lodge being inaugurated in Ballynaveigh, South Belfast. The organisation is self-governing but reports to the Association of Loyal Orangewomen of Ireland. There are 10 lodges operating in Ireland.

The purpose of the Junior Orangewoman's Association is primarily to teach young girls a Christian way of life, the importance of prayer, and encourage regular attendance at their place of Worship and Sunday School. Girls between 7 and 16 years of age are eligible to become members.

Junior Women's LOL on parade in Tandragee, 2019.



Members of WLLOL No. 117 at their 60 year anniversary dinner, 2020.



Orangewomen continue to have an impact on society, through the charitable work that they do, their work in their communities, political office, and through the lives and legacies of their members.

## MICHELLE MCILVEEN (WLLOL 67)

was elected DUP MLA for Strangford in March 2007. She has served as Minister for the Department for Regional Development and the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in the Stormont Assembly.

## CHERYL JOHNSTON (WLLOL 206)

was elected Councillor for Carrickfergus Borough Council in 2014, and subsequently for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council in October 2019.

## OLIVE WHITTEN (PAST GRAND MISTRESS)

was Vice President of the Ulster Unionist Party, UUP Councillor for Armagh District Council, and in June 1995 was awarded an MBE for political and public service.

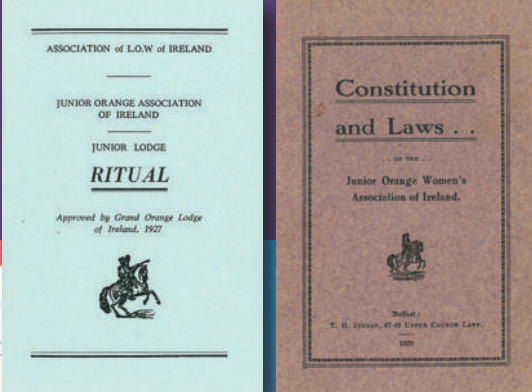
## ALICIA DICKSON-HAMILTON (WLLOL NO. 66)

Drum Major of Matt Boyd Memorial Pipe Band and World Champion Drum Major 2011. Alicia was the first winner of the Inspirational Orangewoman Award in 2018. "From I was any age I was fascinated by the Orange parades and was determined to become a member of the Women's Orange Order .... I am really proud to be an Orangewoman and look forward eagerly to the parades and lodge meetings."

## ARLENE FOSTER (LISNASKEA JWLOL)

Became DUP MLA for Fermanagh and South Tyrone in 2003 and First Minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2016 and 2020.

Junior Orangewomen's Association of Ireland Ritual of Introduction and Laws and Ordinances published shortly after the formation of the organisation.





Association  
OF  
LOYAL ORANGE WOMEN  
OF  
IRELAND. Sisterhood  
ORANGE ASSOCIATE.

# GRAND MISTRESSES

*this 15<sup>th</sup> day of*  
Over the years several charismatic individuals have been at the helm of the Association of the Loyal Orangewomen of Ireland.



Collarette of the Grand Mistress of Ireland.



**HON. HELENA E SAUNDERSON (1887-1912)**  
was the first Grand Mistress of the Association of Loyal Orangewomen in Ireland. Having founded WLOL No. 12 in London with the intention of extending the Women's Order to Ireland, she was instrumental in establishing the Association in Ireland in 1887. Mrs Saunderson was also Worshipful Mistress of Belturbet WLOL No. 1 in County Cavan. This Association lapsed in the early 1900s.



**MARY JOHNSTONE (1912-1923)**  
of Bawnboy, Co. Cavan, was Worshipful Mistress of WLOL No. 8 from 1887 until the Association lapsed in the early 1900s. The Belfast Marriage Case in 1910 made her determined to revive the Association in order to discourage mixed marriages. In 1912 Mrs Johnstone became Grand Mistress of the newly revived Association.



**LEAH GARRATT (1923-1934)**  
was born Caroline Louisa Garratt in Holywood, Co. Down and was a member of a strongly Orange family. Miss Garratt was a prominent golfer and Honorary Secretary of the Irish Ladies Golfing Union. She was also Worshipful Mistress of WLOL No. 4 in Holywood, and first Grand Secretary of the Association, before becoming Grand Mistress in 1923.



**MARGARET DRENNAN (1934-1968)**  
was a member of the Bridgett family, a prominent Orange family in Belfast. One of the original members of WLOL No. 1, she was also a founder member and Worshipful Mistress of WLOL No. 17, and later of WLOL No. 181. Mrs Drennan was the longest serving Grand Mistress. She died in 1987 at the age of 101.



**ELIZABETH MCCRUM (1968-1993)**  
was another member of the Bridgett family, and sister of Margaret Drennan. She was a member of Mountjoy WLOL No. 171 and became a Justice of the Peace in 1964. Mrs McCrum was Grand Secretary prior to her election as Grand Mistress.



**DOREEN WILLIAMSON (1993-1998)**  
was a member of Princess of Orange WLOL No. 172 and was elected Worshipful Mistress of the lodge in 1945. Prior to her election as Grand Mistress she had served as Belfast County Grand Mistress, Deputy Grand Mistress of Ireland, Grand Treasurer and Grand Secretary of Ireland. Sister Williamson remained a dedicated member until her death in 2007.



**OLIVE WHITTEN MBE (1998-2015)**  
was Vice President of the Ulster Unionist Party, UUP Councillor for Armagh District Council, and in June 1995 was awarded an MBE for political and public service. Mrs Whitten is a member of Loughgall First WLOL No. 135 and was Grand Treasurer before becoming Grand Mistress in 1998.



**JOAN BEGGS (2015-PRESENT)**  
is the current Grand Mistress of the Association of Loyal Orangewomen of Ireland. Formerly an auxiliary nurse from Newmills, Co. Tyrone, Joan is a member of Daughters of Ruth WLOL No. 106. Mrs Beggs was Grand Secretary before being elected Grand Mistress in December 2015.

Grand Mistresses from various jurisdictions at the Imperial Ladies Council 2015  
(L-R) Olive Whitten, ALOI; Jean Logan, Scotland; Lillian Hall, England; Janie Parks, Canada; Irene Huey, USA.

