

*1 – The artist at work in his Dublin studio
(photo: Reeves collection)*

The works of Oswald Reeves (1870-1967) artist and craftsman: an interim catalogue

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AS THE STORY OF THE ARTS AND CRAFTS MOVEMENT IN IRELAND OF THE LATE nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has unfolded in recent years, the importance of one of its central figures, Oswald Reeves (1870-1967) has become apparent.¹

Recognised in his own lifetime but largely forgotten until re-discovered in the 1980s,² his special place in the history of the movement as one of the really outstanding individual art-workers is secure. What has not yet been committed to print, however, is a comprehensive catalogue of his works. The task of recording his output is not yet complete, but an attempt at an interim list of works may be considered a useful step on the way, and may help to unearth further works as well as establish the whereabouts of some known only from archival sources. The materials are in some cases incomplete, but it is possible to construct a chronologically arranged list which covers most of Reeves's working years.³ As an introduction to it, it may be worthwhile recounting briefly something of the artist's life and career, and to take the opportunity to illustrate some lesser known examples of his work.

PERCY OSWALD REEVES

Percy Oswald Reeves was born in 1870 in Birmingham, the son of a schoolmaster. Starting at the age of fifteen, he attended evening classes at Birmingham School of Art where he obtained his Art Teacher's Certificate. He went on to teach for four years at Southport School of Art, from 1892 to 1895, before gaining a scholarship to the Royal College of Art in London. Little is known of his time at the RCA save that he won a book prize in 1897 and went on to be awarded his degree and Art Master's Certificate in 1900 for studies in architecture, painting, and craft work. Following that, he joined the London studio of Alexander Fisher (1864-1936) as an assistant.

Fisher was an accomplished artist – skilled as a jeweller, sculptor, silversmith, enameller and metalworker. He had taught enamelling at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London from 1896 and also wrote extensively on the subject in *The Studio* magazine. Through not only his teaching and his writing but also the exemplary quality of his own works, he had become the most influential figure in enamelling in Britain at the turn of the century. Reeves was to learn much from Fisher, artistically as well as technically, as something of Fisher's evocative and symbolist treatment of figures was to pervade his own designs for most of his career, and an element of Fisher's distinctive use of leafy ornament is also apparent in some of Reeves's work.

Details of Reeves's period with Fisher are scant, but he was officially credited by Fisher with assisting him on a jewel box which was shown at the English-based Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society in 1903. In the same exhibition the catalogue also listed a 'silver tankard, in repoussé silver with enamels ... executed by Alexander Fisher and assistants in his workshop'. Among Reeves's collection of his own designs and photographs of his own finished works is an illustration of just such a silver flagon, with an enamel inset depicting a dove, surrounded by interwoven vine tendrils in repoussé work. Its date and authorship are not recorded in his notes but it can be identified as a piece designed and made by Fisher.⁴ It could well be the tankard exhibited by him in 1903, and it may be supposed that Reeves's apparent personal interest in it suggests that he was involved in its manufacture.

In view of Reeves's eventual departure for Ireland it is interesting to reflect on Fisher's occasional use of Celtic interlaced and zoomorphic ornament apparent in some works from about 1896 onwards. Reeves himself was never to embrace the Celtic ornamentalist tradition wholly, but his possible encounters with its heritage of historic ornament in Fisher's studio may well have opened his mind to opportunities in Ireland. At any rate, by 1903, Reeves had left Fisher's studio, to take up a teaching appointment at the re-formed Metropolitan School of Art in Dublin.

With the success of the Central School of Arts and Crafts set up in London in 1896 and the revolutionising of the Royal College of Art in London in 1898, reorganised on 'arts and crafts' principles by Walter Crane, the crafts had become an integral part of British art educational thinking, and a clear direction had been given to the various schools in Ireland. The 1899 Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act had brought about a change in the control of the Metropolitan School of Art in Dublin, and it passed from the jurisdiction of the Science and Art Department in London to the control of the new Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland on 1 April 1900. The new department was committed to the design aspect of art, with crafts its firm priority, and a number of specialist classes were established as a result. One of the first classes was in enamelling allied

to art metalwork, set up in 1903 with Oswald Reeves appointed as instructor.

Reeves's classes proved very popular, and in the years that followed, under his expert direction, the work of the Dublin school in enamels was to gain an international reputation. Some of his pupils were successful in the national competition for schools of art in Britain and Ireland held annually at South Kensington, and their work was illustrated in such popular journals as *The Studio*. Their work was shown regularly at exhibitions in various cities in Europe, and on one occasion, at an exhibition in Vienna, the Austrian government reportedly bought the entire collection of Dublin enamels as models. They were also prominent in the *Exposition de l'Art Decoratif de la Grande Bretagne et d'Irlande* held at the Louvre in Paris in 1914, and by 1916, when the Metropolitan School was featured in a special number of *The Studio* and a number of pieces by Reeves's pupils were illustrated, the power of his influence was evident.

Reeves was to marry one of his former pupils, Dora Allen, in 1913. Dora Allen (1885-1981) was born in Monkstown, Co Dublin, to a Quaker family. She was one of Reeves's best pupils, winning a silver medal in the 1908 National Competition and having her work illustrated in *The Studio* that year and in the official record of the 1914 exhibition at the Louvre in Paris. She also contributed to the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland exhibitions of 1904, 1910 and 1917. They had two children, both daughters, born in 1918 and 1920.

By 1920 Reeves was appointed Second Master at the school of art, and he was to remain in post until his official retirement in 1936. In fact, due to difficulties in replacing him, he continued to teach at the school in a temporary capacity until his eventual retirement in 1937.

Throughout his career as a teacher, and also during the early years of his retirement, Reeves practised as an artist and craftsman in his own right. Many of his works were shown at the various exhibitions of the time, both in Ireland and further afield. His exhibited pieces attracted the attention of discriminating private collectors early on, as exemplified, for example, by the enamel plaque entitled *A Falling Star*, which was singled out for purchase by King Edward VII at the Irish International Exhibition in 1907, only for the King to be informed that it had previously been sold to Lady Dudley.⁵

Once Reeves's credentials as a craftsman had been established, he received a steady flow of commissions, the first important one after his arrival in Dublin being for a repoussé silver cover with enamel inset panels for a presentation album⁶ to Sir Horace Plunkett in 1908. In both its central panel of a female figure and the intertwining Art Nouveau borders, it showed its author's debt to Alexander Fisher. Unlike many of Reeves's early works whose present whereabouts are unknown, its eventual fate has been recorded: it perished in the malicious fire which destroyed

Plunkett's home at Foxrock, Dublin, in 1922.

Over the years, Reeves received many other commissions for a wide variety of works, including enamelled panels, jewellery, badges, medals and trophies, for both religious and secular patrons. One notable high point in his early career was when he was chosen to design and make a silver and enamel pendant as a gift from the British Section of the Fourth International Art Congress to the city of Dresden in 1913, as a memento of the hospitality extended by the city to the members of the congress the previous year.⁷

Much of Reeves's early work was of a figurative and symbolist type, frequently of 'faerie' subjects, as testified by the romantic and evocative titles given to many of the pieces, but in the 1920s and 1930s it generally became more stylised and geometrical than previously. It took on a more modernistic look, with a restrained use of Art Deco ornament. Indeed, the span of Reeves's career was sustained enough, and his abilities as a designer enduring enough, that he was responsible for some of the most memorable examples of Art Deco design in Ireland, as well as some of the best examples of Art Nouveau and Symbolism.

Not only as an influential teacher and as one of the outstanding individual craftworkers of his era was Reeves important. He was also a keen and indefatigable organiser in the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland, which was the main focus of the movement here from the 1890s to the 1920s. From 1907 he took a leading role in the society's affairs. First, as joint honorary secretary with James Brenan, he helped organise an impressive 'Arts and Crafts Sub-Section' on behalf of the society at the Irish International Exhibition of 1907, and then as sole honorary secretary he organised the society's own exhibitions of 1910 and 1917. He was also the founder and first master of the Guild of Irish Art Workers in 1909, a position he held until at least 1917. He went on to become a leading spokesman for the movement in Ireland, responsible for instance for a valuable review of its achievements published in *The Studio* in 1917.⁸ The advent of extra responsibilities at the school of art appears to have curtailed his work for the society to some extent in the 1920s when he stepped down as honorary secretary, but he remained on the council and executive committee and wrote the foreword to the catalogue of the seventh exhibition. After that seventh exhibition, held in 1925, the society went into a decline for a variety of reasons, but although both the society and the 'movement' may have been moribund during the 1930s and 1940s, Reeves himself was still busy producing an impressive array of works, mainly memorials and trophies, but also some more functional objects. The trophies in particular were of especial interest as they marked a break away from the conventional silver cups that were, and still are, commonplace for competitions in Ireland.

Despite his quiet retirement, Reeves was still a figure of some significance in

the 1950s, re-emerging to become the figurehead of the revived Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland. He was its president from at least 1955 to 1962, and although he was by then very elderly and no longer a practising craftworker, his special place in the history of the society was understood. As the chairman of its council, Brigid Ganly wrote in the catalogue of the fourteenth exhibition, held in 1962:

few can have had a longer or more devoted connection with the Society than our President, Mr Oswald Reeves, ARCA, whose name appears over and over again as an outstanding exponent of fine metal work and enamelling, besides his continued support and encouragement of the work of the Society through the difficult times associated with two World Wars and a Civil War.

That recognition in 1962, though belated, was timely however, as by the time of the next exhibition Reeves was dead. He died on 12 April 1967 at his home in Wentworth Place, Wicklow, aged 96. Along with him went the name of the society itself, changed by that year's exhibition to the Irish Society for Design and Craftwork, but the legacy of a lifetime devoted to arts and crafts ideals in Ireland still remains in his record of achievement and the impressive list of works undertaken over a period of almost half a century.

2 – *Oswald Reeves, panel designed for the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland and Guild of Irish Art Workers (1910)*



LIST OF WORKS BY OSWALD REEVES

The following list has been compiled from contemporary exhibition catalogues and from the artist's work account book, drawings, watercolour designs, photographs of completed works, undated press cuttings, and undated notes amongst the artist's papers. Works are generally undated and unsigned unless otherwise noted. Any measurements recorded are as expressed in Reeves's notes. Titles of works as recorded by Reeves are not necessarily inscribed on the actual pieces.

Abbreviations

ACSI – Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland

RA – Royal Academy

RHA – Royal Hibernian Academy

1904

The Opal Queen

Enamelled copper plaque. Exhibited St Louis World's Fair, 1904.

The Lady of the House

Painting. Exhibited RHA, Dublin, 1904.

Self lost; self found

Enamelled copper plaque; originally set in a wood frame in 1904; re-set in a silver-plated copper frame, with cast feet, standing upright, in 1906. [Job no. 1 in work book, where referred to as *Self found; self lost.*] Exhibited RHA, Dublin, 1904 (unfinished and in wood frame), priced at £40; Dublin Castle, per Lady Dudley, 1905 (in unfinished state); RA, London, 1906 (in finished state); Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, 1906; City Art Gallery, Leeds, 1907; Irish International Exhibition (Fine Art Section), Dublin, 1907; Finsbury Technical College, City and Guilds of London, per A. Fisher, 1907; ACSI, Dublin, 1910, priced at £45.

A falling star

Enamelled copper plaque, 8" x 4¹/₈", depicting a female figure descending from the sky; originally set in a wood frame. Exhibited ACSI, Dublin, 1904, where bought by Countess of Dudley, £30. Framed in silver with crutch, in 1905, for 8 guineas; frame measuring 11³/₄" x 6¹/₂" x 16G, including feet ³/₄" high. [Job no. 2 in work book.] Exhibited Lady Dudley's Exhibition, Carlton Gardens, London, December 1906; Irish International Exhibition (Arts and Crafts Sub-Section), Dublin, 1907.

A Message

Large silver and enamel jewel for hair or front of dress. Four wings, champlévé, and jewel centre. [Job no. 3 in work book; price £8.] Exhibited ACSI, Dublin, 1904.

1906

Undine

Enamelled copper plaque, 11¹/₄" x 4³/₈" in silver-plated copper frame, with crutch, 14⁵/₈" x 5⁷/₈" x 16G, including feet, ⁷/₈". [Job no. 5 in work book.] £50. Exhibited at RA, London, 1906; Lady Dudley's Exhibition, Carlton Gardens, London, 1906, where

bought by Lord Brassey; lent to Irish International Exhibition (Fine Art Section), Dublin, 1907. *In collection of Cecil Higgins Art Gallery, Bedford, England.*

1907

The Hunter's Moon

Enamelled copper plaque, in silver plated copper frame, with crutch. [Job no. 6 in work book.] Given to the Countess of Dudley.

Silver box with enamel on copper, entitled *Plenty with Blessing*

and priced at £8. [Job no. 7 in work book, recorded at 1910.] Exhibited at Irish International Exhibition (Arts and Crafts Sub-Section), Dublin, 1907, priced at £10; ACSI, Dublin, 1910, priced at £8, where bought by the Countess of Aberdeen.

1908

The Plunkett Album

Album with illuminated address and copies of signatures, bound in silver, enriched with repoussé work and with one large centre enamel, six small enamels, four 'jewel' enamels in border, and champlévé enamels in the four corner bosses. Made to commission for the officers of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, Dublin, and presented by the officers and staff to Sir Horace Plunkett on his retiring from Vice-Presidentship of the Department. [Job no. 8 in work book] £70. Exhibited RA, London, 1908; ACSI, Dublin, 1910. Destroyed by fire in Plunkett's house in Foxrock, Dublin, in 1922.

1909

A double star

Slipcase in silver with *baisse-taille* enamel, with leather-bound book. Title page of book inscribed in ink 'Days to be Remembered'; final page inscribed in ink 'This book with silver and enamel case designed and executed by P. Oswald Reeves ARCA. Lond., Dublin 1909'. [Job no. 4 in work book.] Exhibited ACSI, Dublin, 1910, priced at £30. *Private collection, Dublin.*

Illuminated address

in painted wood frame, for presentation to Mrs Michael Gunn on retiring from Gaiety Theatre, in watercolour and gold on Whatman's paper. Done to commission from Mr Gill and committee, £7.10s. [Job no. 9 in work book.] Exhibited ACSI, Dublin, 1910, lent by Mrs M. Gunn.

1910

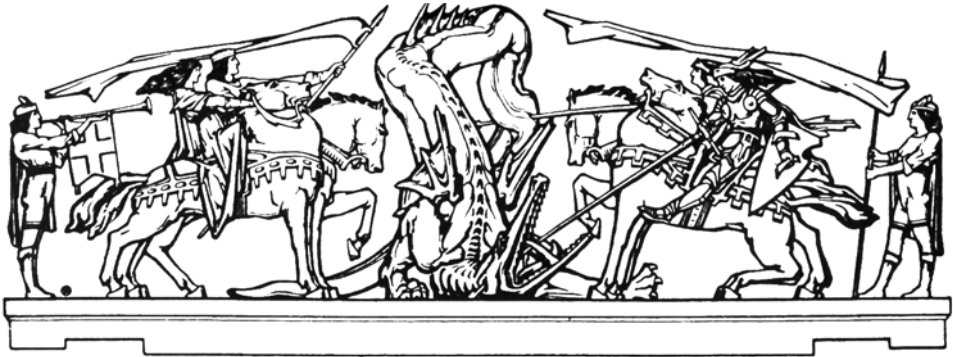
Presentation album

Illuminated address with one page figure design 'Good Wishes' on Whatman's paper, bound in leather, with enrichment on tooling, velum panel, and coloured; binding done by Miss Fitzpatrick, Dun Emer Guild, in 1911. Done to commission of committee, through Michael Drury, for presentation to Dr Walsh. [Job no. 10 in work book.]

Cover design for exhibition catalogue

for the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland and Guild of Irish Art Workers. The figurative panel design was also used as a headpiece device in *The Irish Architect and Craftsman*. (Plate 2)

- c 1910 **Drawing of copper and enamel stall-plate**
depicting arms of the Earl of Arran. Exhibited ACSI, Dublin, 1910.
- 1911 **Two pendants**
Silver and enamel. Heart-shape enamel on copper; silver setting with chains to pendant. Made to commission of Mr Gill; copies of a pendant supplied by him. £2.5.0. [Job no. 13 in work book.]
- Cover design, headpieces and initial letters for
*The Irish Architect and Craftsman***
Cover depicts a figure holding a model of a church, flanked by a mason and a metal-worker; signed with monogram. The design used for the first volume was slightly modified for the second volume, and by January 1913 Reeves's design had been replaced. Headpieces varied from stylised leafy branch devices to an elaborate medievalist tableau depicting a dragon being slain by knights on horseback. (Plates 3, 4)
- 1912 **Silver and enamel box, entitled *Twilight fairy***
3½" x 2⅞" x 1⅝" box with round corners and enamel top depicting figure with moth's wings bringing stars. Bought from the artist in January 1913 by Mr Fayle. £6. [Job no. 14 in work book.]
- Copper and enamel box, entitled *Pansy faces***
3⅞" x 3" x 1⅞" box with square corners and enamel top. £4. Bought by Mr Mitchell of Blackrock. [Job no. 15 in work book.]
- Circular copper box, entitled *Pansy***
Circular copper box, 2½" diameter x 1⅞" deep unHINGED, with enamel top. £1.10.0. Bought by Mr Fayle. [Job no. 16 in work book.]
- Cushion design**
Watercolour drawing depicting 'Forget-me-not—Rose'. [Job no. 19 in work book.]
- The Spirit of the Willow***
Watercolour, 10½" x 3¼", in wood frame. [Job no. 20 in work book.] Exhibited ACSI, Dublin, Belfast, and Cork, 1917, priced at £8.8s.
- 1913 **Circular copper box, entitled *Plenty with love***
Circular copper box, 2⅞" diameter x 1½" deep unHINGED, with enamel top depicting a broken leaf with briar and rose blossoms. £1.15.0. Bought by Lady O'Neill on 13 December 1913. [Job no. 17 in work book.]
- Memorial tablet**
Copper plate, with inscription in repoussé with ornamental capital letter T. Fixed on stand of lantern at Friends' Meeting House, Eustace Street, Dublin. Done to commission. £3.10.0. [Job no. 18 in work book.]



Oswald Reeves

3 – Headpiece for The Irish Architect and Craftsman (1911)

4 – Figure panel drawn for cover of The Irish Architect and Craftsman (1911)



- 1913 **Ink pot**
Copper and enamel. Enrichment on sides, three fairy figures with stars (thoughts); on top, a winged flaming star. Wedding present for Mr Sheridan (solicitor) per G.P. Sheridan. £5. [Job no. 11 in work book.] Exhibited ACSI, Dublin, Belfast and Cork, 1917, lent by W.T. Sheridan.

The Dresden pendant

Silver, enriched with repoussé work and a circular enamel, suspended from a flaming crown. Inscribed on back 'From the British Section of the Fourth International Art Congress, Dresden, 1912', and signed with monogram superimposed on 'Dublin'. Made to commission of the British Section of the congress for £15, and presented to the city corporation of Dresden as a memento to hang on the silver 'tree' centre-piece in the Rathhaus. [Job no. 12 in work book.] *Private collection, Dublin.* (Plate 6)

Slipcase for wedding certificate

Silver with enamel enrichment, signed on cover with monogram. Made to contain the marriage certificate record and signatures of the guests on the occasion of the artist's marriage to Dora Allen on 7 August 1913. [Job no. 24 in work book, July 1913.] Exhibited ACSI, Dublin, Belfast and Cork, 1917. *In possession of the artist's heirs.*

- 1914 **Fairy fantasy**
Enamel plaque, framed in copper. £45. [Job no. 21 in work book.] Rejected at RA, London, 1914.

Instruction

Panel picture, pastel, 4' x 1'8", in wood frame. [Job no. 22 in work book.]

Badge for President of Architectural Association of Ireland

Enamel on copper and gold foil, 1½" diameter; silver setting and gold rings (9c) gilt; Irish poplin band with gold hook and eye; leather case. £5. To commission of Professor W.A. Scott ARIBA, 45 Mountjoy Square South, Dublin. [Job no. 23 in work book.] The badge depicts two draughtsmen seated either side of a tree, surrounded by a ribbon: based on a device designed for the association by R.C. Orpen in 1896. Exhibited ACSI, Dublin, Belfast and Cork, 1917. *In possession of Architectural Association of Ireland.*

- 1915 **Badge for President of Dublin Building Trades Employers' Association**

Enamel on copper and silver foil, 1⅜" diameter; gold setting and rings (22c), 2" diameter, with name of association around the enamel in repoussé and 'Presented by John Good 1915' on the back; St Patrick's blue ribbon, with gold hook and eye; leather case. £15.15.0. To commission of John Good. [Job no. 25 in work book.] The badge depicts tools and a wreath. Exhibited ACSI, Dublin, Belfast and Cork, 1917.



Oswald Reeves

5 – *The Bird of Truth (1915)*

6 – *Design for the Dresden
pendant (1913)*

7 – *Seal design for the National
Gallery of Ireland (1919)*



1915

Ring

Silver with carved cherub. For T.K. Moylan. £1.1.0. [Job no. 26 in work book.]

Circular nickel box

Box of nickel, with silver feet and mount for enamel, 2½” x 1½” deep, unhinged, velvet lined, with enamel top depicting ‘Badge of the Royal Irish Fusiliers’. £2.2.0. Sent to Irish Literary Society Exhibition, London. Given for the War Fund sale, November 1915 (Bennett’s); returned. Given for the War Funds to Blackrock Work Depot. [Job no. 27 in work book.]

Circular nickel box

Box as job no. 27, but with enamel top depicting ‘Pansy’ design as in job no. 16. [Job no. 28 in work book.] Given by Reeves as wedding present to Evans Perry.

The Response of the Rose: enamel plaque

[Job no. 29, November 1915.] Enamel on copper, with silver all over, and gold, 6¼” x 2⅝” framed in copper, plain with crutch. To commission of Mr N.A. Sumerling. £7. Exhibited ACSI, Dublin, Belfast and Cork, 1917, lent by N.A. Sumerling.

The Response of the Rose: watercolour drawing

[Recorded as part of job no. 29 in work book, November 1915.] Exhibited ACSI, Dublin, Belfast and Cork, 1917, priced at £4.4.0 and sold at Belfast to Mr R.S. Lepper of Elsinore, Crawfordsburn, Co Down.

Courtown Harbour

Oil painting in gilt frame. [Job no. 30 in work book.]

The Bird of Truth

Point engraving on copper plate. [Job no. 31 in work book, which records that it was ‘sent out for Xmas. 1 print sold per Miss K. Fox. 10s. 6d. April 1916’.] Exhibited ACSI, Dublin, Belfast and Cork, 1917; price £3.3s. *Private collection, Dublin.* (Plate 5)

1916

Gold watch chain

(incorporating old gold chain supplied). End pieces and clasps engraved with sun, sheaf, moon, daisy, lyre and poppy. For Rt. Hon. L.A. Waldron, P.C. of Dublin. £12. [Job no. 32 in work book.]

**Tabernacle door and panel
for Honan Collegiate Chapel, Cork**

Repoussé silver and enamels, gilt, with bronze surround (door panel re-enamelled after damage in gilding). Door panel depicting ‘The Adoration of the Lamb’; panel over door depicting ‘The Blessed Trinity’. To commission of Sir John Robert O’Connell. [Job no. 33 in work book, May 1916.] Door panel exhibited ACSI, Dublin, Belfast and Cork, 1917, lent by Sir J.R. O’Connell.

- c 1917 **Copper box with enamel top**
Exhibited at ACSI, Dublin, Belfast and Cork, 1917, priced at £4.4s.
- Design for headpiece**
Exhibited at ACSI, Dublin, Belfast and Cork, 1917.
- 1919 **Seal for National Gallery of Ireland**
Design made and submitted in competition; £21 offered; selected and awarded the prize. Wax model made also. [Job no. 34 in work book.] This is presumably the ‘Design for a Seal for Impression in Paper’ exhibited at ACSI, Dublin, 1921. (Plate 7)
- Enamelled copper arms of Archbishop Peacock**
Part of memorial in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin (per R.C. Orpen). Repoussé and champlevé enamel. £30. [Job no. 36 in work book, which records payment to K. Quigly for the work.] Design in watercolour by Reeves exhibited ACSI, Dublin, 1921.
- Design for scheme of war memorial
for St Andrew’s College, Dublin**
Watercolour drawing. [Job no. 39 in work book.]
- 1920 **Enamelled copper device**
for top of brass memorial plate, depicting cross, crown, wreath and rays, in repoussé and champlevé work (per George Atkinson). £5. [Job no. 35 in work book.]
- Design for memorial stone**
(inscription) for Earl of Mayo. Executed in grey Irish limestone by Sharp and Emery of Dublin. [Job no. 37 in work book.]
- Finial and inscription for banner pole**
for St John Ambulance Brigade Flag for Mrs Rowlette. Copper, silver plated. [Job no. 38 in work book.]
- Response of the Rose*
Enamel plaque in copper frame (replica of 1915 design, revised). To commission of Miss Isobel Knox. £23. [Job no. 41 in work book, November 1920.]
- Copper inscription plate for crucifix**
with Irish inscription, head and tail enrichments repoussé. For Major General Sir William Hickie. £12. [Job no. 42 in work book, October 1920.]
- Tabernacle panel for Newry Cathedral**
Painted enamel, depicting the ‘Sacred Heart’, together with blue background plate. For Ashlin and Coleman, architects, Dublin. £18. [Job no. 43 in work book, November 1920.]

1920

**Triptych war memorial
for All Saints' Church of Ireland church, Grangegorman, Dublin**

Design by Reeves submitted in competition; £5 offered; design selected and commissioned per R.F. Jones at £70. Executed in ebony, gold, silver, oxidised copper, and enamels. Woodwork by James Hicks; lettering of wing panels by George Atkinson; metal work by John F. Hunter and James Wallace; enamelling by Reeves. [Job no. 40 in work book.] Exhibited ACSI, Dublin, 1921. (The watercolour drawing for the enamelled panel is in a private collection in Dublin.) (Plate 8 and cover illustration)

8 – Oswald Reeves and others, Triptych War Memorial (1920)

All Saints' Church of Ireland church, Grangegorman, Dublin



- 1921 **Stall plate of Earl of Bessborough**
for St Patrick's Hall, Dublin. Repoussé copper, enamelled champlevé. Adapted design by Sir Neville Wilkinson. [Job no. 44 in work book, March 1921.]
- Stall plate of Viscount French**
for St Patrick's Hall, Dublin. Enamel champlevé, copper oxidised. Design by Sir Neville Wilkinson, adapted. [Job no. 45 in work book, April 1921.]
- Bel-broid lingerie shop sign***
Two butterflies in champlevé enamels on copper. [Job no. 46 in work book, March 1921.]
- 1922 **Design for postage stamp**
for Irish Free State; not adopted. For Hely's Ltd (Frank A. Lowe). £8. [Job no. 47 in work book, March 1922.]
- Designs for cover and doublures
for *Ireland's Memorial Records 1914-18***
for the committee of the Irish National War Memorial; binding and tooling carried out by William Pender; the records privately printed in eight volumes by Maunsel and Roberts Ltd, Dublin, 1923.
- c 1924 **Tabernacle door panel**
Repoussé silver gilt. Exhibited at *Aonach Tailteann Exhibition of Irish Art*, Dublin, 1924, priced at £95; won silver medal for gold and silversmith's work.
- Tabernacle door panel**
depicting 'Our Lord in Benediction'. Solid silver, parcel-gilded, chased and tooled. Exhibited at South Kensington, London, 1924; illustrated *Irish Builder and Engineer*, 14 June 1924. (Plate 9)
- Tabernacle door panel
for the Roman Catholic church, Maguiresbridge, Co Fermanagh**
Silver, gilded and enamelled. Depicts 'The Pelican feeding its young'.
- 1924 **Tabernacle door panel
for the Convent Chapel, Foxford, Co Mayo**
Silver, parcel-gilded and enamelled.
- c 1925 **Panel in coloured plaster**
Exhibited at ACSI, Dublin, Belfast and Cork, 1925, priced at £30, and replicas advertised also at £30.
- Design for a book plate**
Exhibited at ACSI, Dublin, Belfast and Cork, 1925.



Oswald Reeves
9 – *Tabernacle door panel depicting*
‘Our Lord in Benediction’ (c 1924)
(photo: Reeves collection)

opposite
10 – *The Nugent Memorial (1933)*
St Bride’s Church of Ireland church,
Mount Nugent, Co Cavan



- c 1930 **Candlestick in enamelled copper**
 Exhibited at *Exposition d'Art, Irlandais*, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Bruxelles, 1930. *Private collection, Dublin*. (Plate 11)
- 1931 **Cover design for *Popular Astrology***
 Black and white drawing, inscribed as for vol. 1, no. 1, October 1931; signed with monogram.
- 1933 **Nugent Memorial
 in St Bride's Church of Ireland church, Mount Nugent, Co Cavan**
 Low relief sculpture in plaster, coloured; 4' x 2'; depicting an emblematic figure with birds and a cup. Signed with monogram. (Plate 10)
- 1934 **Altar cross
 for St Vincent's Hospital Chapel, Dublin**
 Copper, with panels of beaten gold and enamel, champlevé enamelling and repoussé work. Height 4' 8". Signed with monogram. Adapted for use as a processional cross also, being able to be withdrawn together with its knob from the stand, to be attached to a staff. Presented by the members of the visiting staff of St Vincent's Hospital to the mother rectress and the community on the occasion of the first centenary of the foundation of the hospital. Later figure affixed to cross, not by Reeves. *In possession of St Vincent's Hospital, Dublin*.
- Mullingar Town Trophy**
 Oxidised copper with silver and gold details, enamel, and marble. Reeves assisted in work by James Wallace. Made for presentation by the traders of Mullingar to the Westmeath GAA to commemorate the golden jubilee year of the association in October 1934. Presented in 1935; replaced in 1953 when won outright.
- 1935 **Irish Army Challenge Trophy**
 Copper, brass, silver, gold, champlevé enamel, and marble. Signed with monogram. Made for presentation by the Irish Government to the National Horse Show Association of America.
- Military Tattoo Trophy**
 Copper, with silver and gold inlaid and chased in the form of a plaque on a stand. Made for presentation by the Military Tattoo Committee to the Royal Dublin Society. Depicts a harpist with a horse and butterflies. Signed with monogram. *In possession of the Royal Dublin Society*. (cover illustration)
- c 1935 **Drinking horn trophy**
 Silver, with gilt bands, with a stand of bronze and ebony. Design founded on the Kavanagh Horn, a model of which is in the library of Trinity College, Dublin. 23" in length. Presented by the Minister for Defence to the Royal Dublin Society, for military jumping competition. *In possession of the Royal Dublin Society*. (Plate 12)



Oswald Reeves

top left 11 – Candlestick in enamelled copper (c 1930)

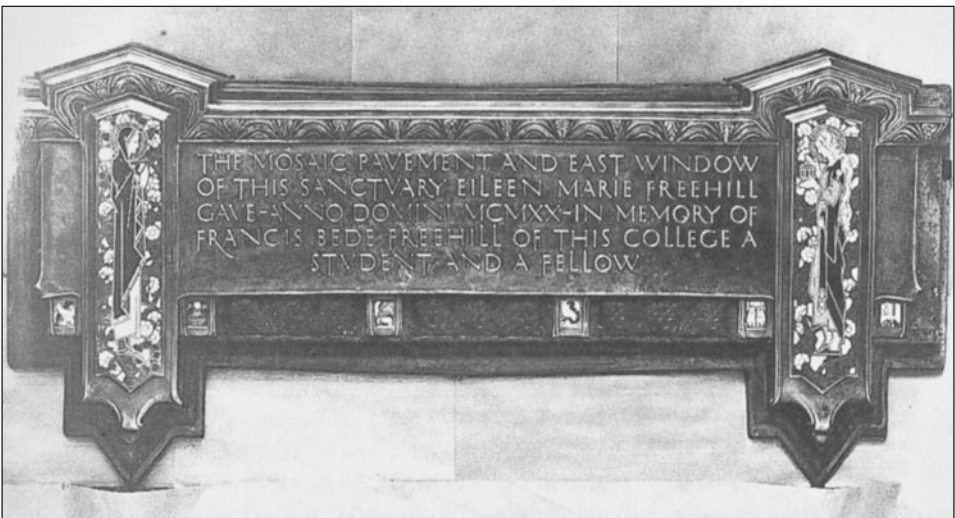
(photo: the author)

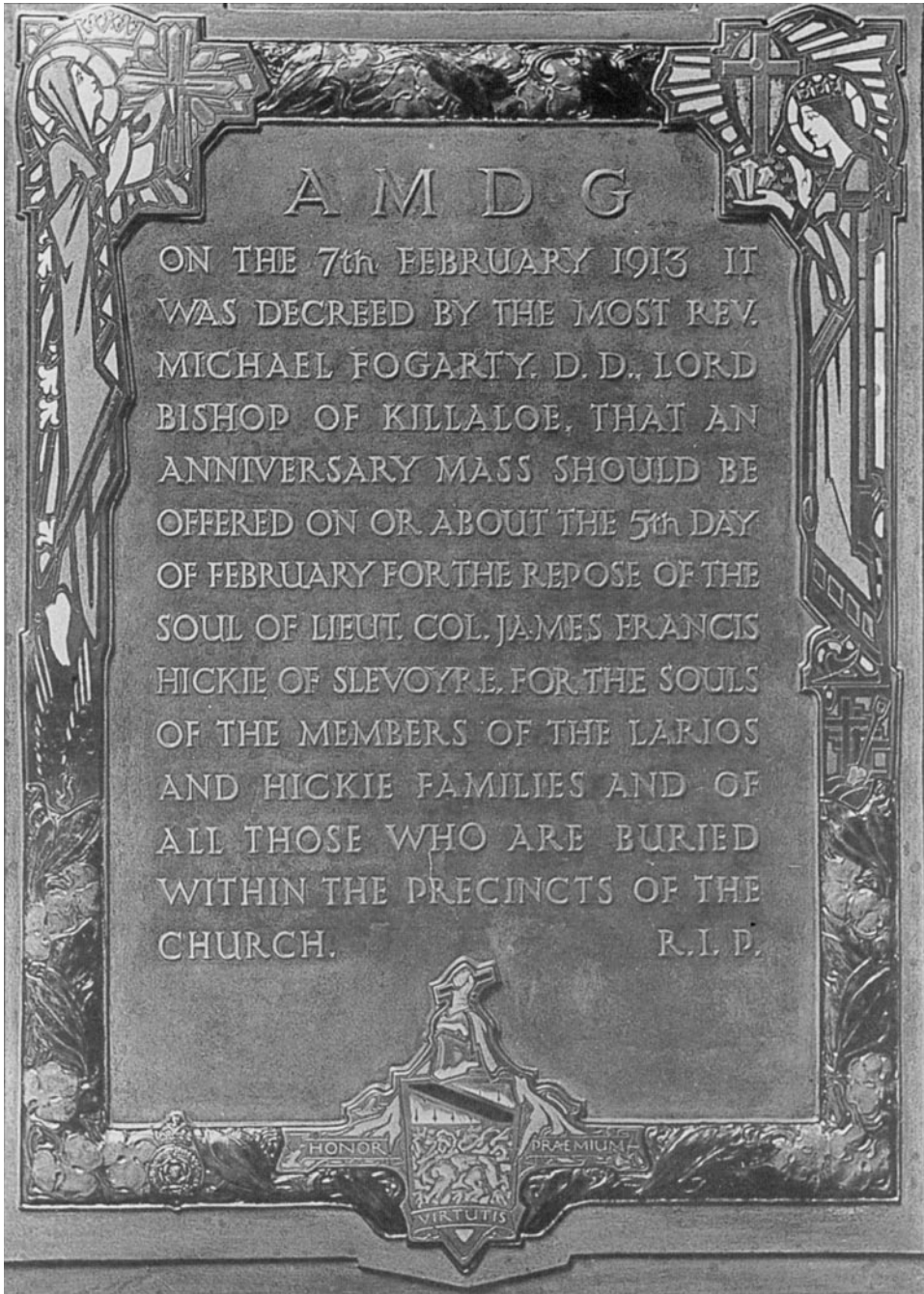
top right 12 – Drinking horn trophy (c 1935)

(photo: Reeves Collection)

13 – Plaque in St John's College Chapel, Sydney, Australia (c 1935)

(photo: Reeves collection)





14 – Oswald Reeves, one of two Hickie memorial tablets in Terryglass RC Church,
Co Tipperary (c 1935) (photo: Reeves collection)

c 1935

**Memorial tablet
in St John's College Chapel, Sydney, Australia**

Sculptured bronze, inlaid with copper, gold, silver, and enamel. Commission of Mrs F.B. Freehill. The design for the tablet was exhibited at the ACSI Tenth Exhibition, Dublin, 1955. (Plate 13)

**Hickie Memorial Tablets
in Terryglass RC Church, Co Tipperary**

Two memorial tablets for members of the Hickie family commissioned by Major-General Sir W.B. Hickie, K.C.B. of Slevoyre, Co Tipperary. Cast bronze in relief, inlaid with copper, silver, gold and enamels; one tablet bearing the arms of the Hickie family with figure subjects of the Assumption, and St Helena and the finding of the Holy Cross; the other bearing the arms of the Larios family, with figures of Mary and St Clare. Lettering on tablets by George Atkinson. Reeves assisted in execution of the work by James Wallace. (Plate 14)

President's Badge, Belvedere College Union

Gold and enamels.

Plaque for presentation to Senator W. Quirke

Copper inlaid with gold, silver, and enamels, chased and engraved, in copper frame and stand.

Large candlestick for dinner table centrepiece

Hammered copper with silver, brass, champlevé enamel enrichments.

1943

President's Trophy for the Irish Red Cross

Copper, silver, and brass with gold inlaid panels; in the form of a font with hinged enamelled lid; figurative panels depicting scenes of healing after the legendary battle of Clontarf. Signed with monogram. Exhibited at ACSI Tenth Exhibition, Dublin, 1955. *In possession of the Irish Red Cross Society.* (Plate 15)

c 1949

Design for medal

for Grand Master's Lodge Bicentenary 5749-5949. Carved plaster model for commemorative gold medal.

undated

Hammered copper bowl

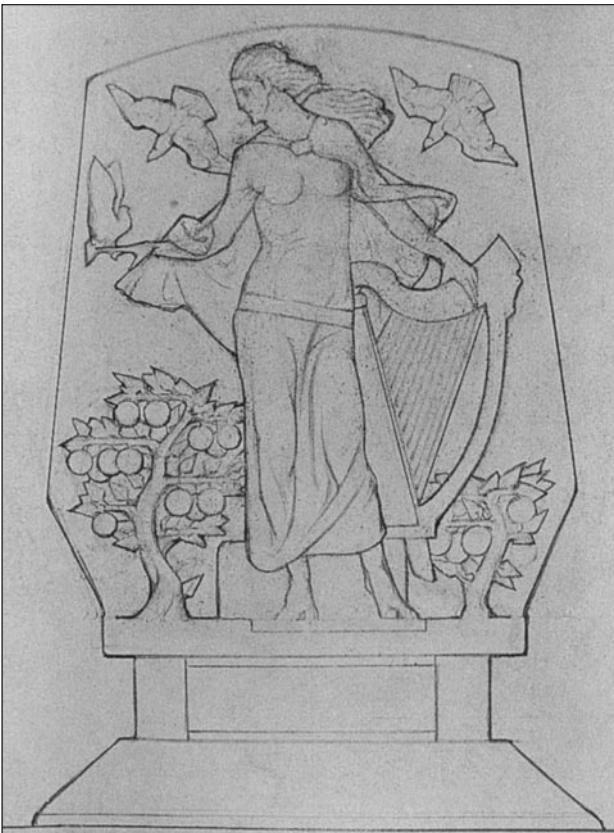
Exhibited ACSI Tenth Exhibition, Dublin, 1955.

Bookplate for Julia, wife of Edward W. Allen

Signed with monogram. [Print among Reeves's papers.]

Enamelled metal coat of arms

mounted on the marble memorial to Lt. Henry Grove Mansel-Pleydell, M.C. of Whatcombe and 1st Batt. Dorset Regiment, killed near Thiepval, France, 17 May



Oswald Reeves

*15 – Design for a panel
of the President's Trophy
for the Irish Red Cross
(c 1943)*

*16 – Design for enamel
plaque on stand (n.d.)
(not known if executed)*

1916. Location unknown. Presumably by Reeves. [Photograph among Reeves's papers.]

Circular metal box with enamels mounted on sides and lid

[Photograph among Reeves's papers.]

Enamelled metal plaque on stand

depicting a central female figure with arms upraised, flanked by attendant male figures bearing produce, with doves at their feet. [Photograph of poor quality among Reeves's papers.]

Tabernacle door panel

depicting 'The Pelican feeding its young'; design similar to that of Maguiresbridge R.C. church but with leafy branches framing the central panel. [Photograph among Reeves's papers.] (Plate 17)

Design for a tabernacle door panel, in coloured enamels

depicting 'Our Lord in Benediction'. [Coloured drawing among Reeves's papers.]

Design for an enamelled silver box

depicting winged horses and stars. [Coloured drawing among Reeves's papers, signed with monogram.]

Design for enamel panel

depicting a female figure with garland and doves. [Watercolour formerly in possession of Doreen Dickie, a pupil of Oswald Reeves in the 1920s; now in a private collection in Dublin.] (cover illustration)

Design for a plaque on stand

depicting a female figure with harp, doves, and fruit trees. [Drawing among Reeves's papers.] *Private collection, Dublin.* (Plate 16)

Reeves's notes, compiled sometime between *c* 1935 and *c* 1938, also list the following:

Pendant Cross, privately owned in New York, of silver.

Plaque, in collection of Duke of Bedford; painted enamel in silver frame.

Plaque, in collection of Earl of Dudley; painted enamel in copper frame.

Plaque, in private collection in Singapore; painted enamel in copper frame.

Plaque, in private collection in Canada; painted enamel in copper frame.

Plaque, presented to the German 'Flyers' when in Dublin; painted enamel in copper frame



17 – Oswald Reeves, tabernacle door panel depicting
'The Pelican feeding its young' (n.d.) (photo: Reeves collection)

DR PAUL LARMOUR is Reader in Architecture at Queen's University, Belfast. His publications include *Celtic Ornament* (Dublin 1981), *Belfast: An Illustrated Architectural Guide* (Belfast 1987), and *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Ireland* (Belfast 1992).

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ See Paul Larmour, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Ireland* (Belfast 1992); and Larmour, 'Arts and Crafts Movement', in B. de Breffny, ed., *Ireland: A Cultural Encyclopaedia* (London, 1983) 36. Biographical information on Reeves, compiled by the artist himself, and later by his widow, is contained in a small collection of papers, photographs, designs, undated news-cuttings, and his work book, formerly in the possession of his heirs, and now in a private collection in Dublin.
- ² In 1938 one of his works (the Grangegorman War Memorial) was illustrated in the section on enamelling in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. In 1980 his work was acknowledged by Jeanne Sheehy in her book *The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past: The Celtic Revival 1830-1930* (London), and in 1983 he was accorded a brief biographical entry by this author in *Ireland: A Cultural Encyclopaedia*. Since then he has been discussed more fully, and a number of his works illustrated, in Larmour, *Arts and Crafts Movement*. See also Theo Snoddy, *Dictionary of Irish Artists: 20th Century* (Dublin 1996).
- ³ Reeves's own work account book spans the years 1904 to 1922, but appears to have been compiled retrospectively as it is not in strict chronological order. It also contains some anomalies in dating.
- ⁴ The flagon was illustrated in *The Studio*, March 1902, 117.
- ⁵ The plaque entitled *A Falling Star* is illustrated in Larmour, *Arts and Crafts Movement*, 172. It should not be confused with the plaque entitled *Undine* in the collection of the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery in Bedford. The two plaques have been confused from time to time, as for example in the article 'Symbolism in Turn-of-the-century Irish Art', in *Irish Arts Review Yearbook 1989-90*, and again more recently in *The Arts and Crafts Movements in Dublin and Edinburgh* (Dublin 1998) 173, pl. xxi. *Undine* was previously illustrated in *Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Art: The Handley Read Collection* (Royal Academy of Arts, London 1972) 100 (cat. no. E109) but its title was not identified and it was wrongly attributed to Reeves's wife.
- ⁶ Illustrated in Larmour (1992) 174.
- ⁷ Illustrated in *ibid.*, 173.
- ⁸ 'Irish Arts and Crafts', *The Studio*, October 1917, 15-22.