

Irish 20thc Timeline: A chronology of key events:

1914 - Outbreak of World War I delays implementation of new home rule legislation which would have restored the Dublin parliament following centuries of unrest over British dominion in Ireland.

1916 - Nationalists stage Easter Rising, seizing the General Post Office in Dublin and proclaiming an independent Irish republic. The rising is crushed by the British who execute its leaders, including all seven signatories of the declaration of the republic. Irish public opinion is outraged.



Republicans protest in the streets of Dublin against the hanging of IRA volunteers by the British in 1921

1919 - Led by Eamonn De Valera, the nationalist movement Sinn Fein ('We Ourselves') sets up a Dublin assembly, the Dail Eireann, which again proclaims Irish independence. A guerrilla campaign by the Irish Republican Army, or IRA, against British forces begins with heavy casualties on both sides.

1920 - The British parliament passes the Government of Ireland Act establishing one parliament for the six counties of Northern Ireland,

and another for the rest of Ireland.

The Irish Free State

1921 - Anglo-Irish Treaty establishes the Free State, an independent dominion of the British crown with full internal self-government rights, partitioned from Northern Ireland which remains part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Eamon de Valera



'Long fellow' Eamon de Valera pressed for a republic

1922 - The Dublin parliament ratifies the treaty despite the opposition of De Valera and others. Civil war breaks out and hundreds are killed.

1923 - Irish Free State joins the League of Nations.

1927 - De Valera enters parliament at the head of the new Fianna Fail party.

1932 - De Valera becomes head of government after previous administration fails to deal with economic difficulties. De Valera introduces various measures to eliminate British influence in the Irish Free State.

From Eire to Republic of Ireland

1937 - New elections. The voters return De Valera and also approve a new constitution which abolishes the Irish Free State and proclaims

Eire (Gaelic for Ireland) as a sovereign, independent, democratic state.

1938 - Douglas Hyde becomes first president of Eire. De Valera is prime minister.

1939 - Outbreak of World War II. Eire remains neutral, but many Irish citizens join the Allied forces.

James Joyce



Literary pioneer James Joyce's works were revolutionary

1948 - De Valera loses the election amid economic difficulties. John Costello becomes prime minister at the head of a broad coalition of parties other than Fianna Fail. Parliament passes the Republic of Ireland bill.

1949 - On Easter Monday, the anniversary of the 1916 uprising, Eire becomes the Republic of Ireland and leaves the British Commonwealth.

1955 - Ireland joins the United Nations. It declines to join NATO because Northern Ireland is part of United Kingdom.

1959 - Sean Lemass succeeds De Valera as Fianna Fail leader and prime minister, and launches a programme of economic modernisation that sees Ireland move from a mainly agricultural base and eventually join the European Economic Community.

1969-1998 - Conflict in Northern Ireland known as the Troubles,

which occasionally spilled over into Ireland.

Becoming a modern society

1973 - Ireland joins the European Economic Community. Violence in Northern Ireland intensifies. Relations between Ireland and Britain are strained.

Early 1980s - Ireland faces severe economic problems, with rising debt and unemployment. Three elections are held in the space of less than two years as politicians grapple with the difficulties.

1985 - The Anglo-Irish Agreement is signed. It gives the Republic of Ireland a consultative role in the government of Northern Ireland.



Irish PM Bertie Ahern (l) and his British counterpart, Tony Blair (r), were closely involved in efforts to secure a Northern Ireland peace deal

1990 - Mary Robinson becomes first woman president of Ireland.

1991 - Ireland signs the Treaty on European Union at Maastricht and receives a guarantee that its strict anti-abortion law will not be affected.

1992 - Irish voters approve a loosening of the abortion law. Access to information is guaranteed, and travel abroad to have an abortion is permitted.

Peace process

1993 - The Downing Street Declaration by the Irish and British prime ministers offers talks on future peace in Northern Ireland to all parties if violence is renounced.

1997 - Divorce becomes legal in Ireland under certain circumstances. The law is opposed by the Roman Catholic Church.

1998 - The Good Friday Agreement on a political settlement for Northern Ireland is approved by voters in referendums in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland.

2001 June - Irish voters reject the Nice Treaty in a referendum. The treaty must be approved by all 15 EU member-states before the EU can expand to include a dozen applicant countries from eastern Europe.

2002 January - Euro replaces the punt as the national currency.

2002 March - Small majority of voters rejects government attempt to tighten already strict anti-abortion laws in constitutional referendum.

Ahern re-elected

2002 May - Voters re-elect Fianna Fail's Bertie Ahern as prime minister in a continuing coalition with the Progressive Democrats. Fine Gael, the main opposition party, loses over a third of its seats in parliament.

Return of the migrants



Many emigrants returned during the "Celtic Tiger" years

Millions left Irish shores in the wake of the 1840s famine

Population of Ireland bottomed out at 2.6m in 1961

Population reached 4m in 2003

2002 October - Irish voters endorse Nice Treaty by comfortable margin in second referendum.

2006 November - Parliamentary report says British security services colluded in attacks and killings in Ireland in the 1970s.

2006 December - Government launches a 20-year strategy to create a bilingual, Irish- and English-speaking society.

2007 May - Fianna Fail emerges as the largest party in parliamentary elections, but fails to win an overall majority.

2007 June - Bertie Ahern forms a coalition with the Progressive Democrats, several independents and the Greens, who enter government for the first time. Mr Ahern becomes the first taoiseach (prime minister) to win a third term in office since Eamon De Valera.

Ireland gets its first black mayor when Nigerian-born Rotimi Adebari is elected the mayor of Portlaoise.

Cowen becomes Taoiseach

2008 May - Bertie Ahern steps down as Taoiseach following a controversy over his financial affairs. He is succeeded by his deputy, Brian Cowen.

2008 June - Irish voters reject the EU's Lisbon Treaty in a referendum.

2008 September - As the global financial crisis gathers pace, the Irish government introduces a guarantee covering the debts of the country's banks. This move ultimately sinks the economy, as Ireland does not have sufficient reserves to cover its banks' debts.

2008 October - Ireland becomes first country in western Europe to officially fall into recession in wake of global financial crisis.

2009 February - Unemployment rate reaches 11% - the highest since 1996. Some 100,000 people take part in Dublin protest rally against government's handling of economic crisis.

Financial crisis hits

2009 March - Ireland loses its AAA debt rating as public finances deteriorate amid a deep recession.

2009 April - The government unveils its second budget in six months to deal with a rapidly contracting economy.



Austerity measures prompted protests

2009 October - Ireland votes in favour of the European Union's Lisbon Treaty in a new referendum, having rejected it in a vote a year earlier.

2009 November - A damning report criticises the Irish Catholic Church hierarchy for its handling of allegations of child abuse against 46 priests.

2010 September - The cost of bailing out Ireland's stricken banking system rises to 45bn euro (£39bn), pushing the country's budget deficit up to around a third of GDP.

EU bailout

2010 November - The government agrees an 85bn euro rescue package with the EU and the IMF, in a bid to tackle a huge hole in Ireland's public finance. As part of the package, the government drafts an austerity programme entailing four years of tax rises and spending cuts.

2011 January - Parliament approves finance bill required as condition of EU/IMF bailout.

2011 February - Taoiseach Brian Cowen dissolves parliament and calls early election. Opposition Fine Gael wins most seats but falls short of an overall majority and begins coalition talks.

2011 March - New government, headed by Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny, takes office. Mr Kenny pledges to renegotiate terms of EU/IMF bailout.

2011 May - Queen Elizabeth of the United Kingdom pays an official visit to Ireland, the first by a British monarch since independence. This symbolises the new relationship between the two countries after the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

2011 July - Ratings agency Moody's downgrades Ireland's debt rating to junk status.

Vatican recalls its ambassador to Ireland amid tension over the issue of child abuse by priests.

2011 October - Michael D Higgins of the Labour Party is elected president.

2011 December - Taoiseach Enda Kenny unveils budget touted as beginning begins the process of moving towards a deficit of no more than 3% of GDP by 2015.

2012 June - Irish voters approve European Union fiscal treaty by 60% at a referendum, thereby endorsing the government's commitment to an EU-backed austerity programme.

Bank deal

2013 February - The European Central Bank approves a deal to liquidate the former Anglo Irish Bank, which was nationalised in January 2009. The deal allows Ireland to defer by decades the bill for its most controversial bank bailout.

Taoiseach Enda Kenny formally apologises for the Irish state's role in the Magdalene laundries - harsh institutions in which "troubled women" were forcibly detained and made to work without pay

between 1922 to 1996.

2013 June - New government figures show Ireland is back in recession for the first time since 2009.

2013 July - Parliament passes legislation that for first time allows abortion in limited circumstances.

2013 December - Ireland officially exits EU/IMF bailout programme having fulfilled its conditions - the first bailed-out eurozone country to do so.

2014 March - Government investigates allegations of widespread secret recordings by police, with implications for past and current court cases.