

The Presidents of Ireland

The President of Ireland is called An Uachtarán. Áras an Uachtaráin was built in 1754, is the official residence of the President, located in the Phoenix Park in Dublin. **The Phoenix Park** is the largest enclosed city park in Europe, located to the north west of Dublin City center. After the Norman conquest in the 12th century Hugh Tyrell, 1st Baron of Castleknock, granted a large tract of land, including what we now call Phoenix Park, to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. They established an abbey at Kilmainham. King Henry VIII confiscated the property in 1537.

The presidency is open to all citizens of the state who are at least 35. The President is elected by the people once every seven years. In the event of premature vacancy, an election must be held within sixty days. The President of Ireland is neither the nominal nor *de facto* chief officer of the state, this is vested in the Government. However the Government is obliged, to keep the President informed on matters of domestic and foreign policy.

List of Irish Presidents:

Douglas Hyde **June 1938 - 1945** Gaelic scholar, writer and first president of the Republic. He founded the Gaelic League in 1893.

Sean T. O'Kelly **June 1945 - 1959** one of the early leaders of the Irish nationalist Sinn Féin ("We Ourselves") Party.

Eamon de Valera **June 1959 - 1973** he formed the Fianna Fáil party

Erskine Childers **June 1973 - 1974** he supported Prime Minister Gladstone's 1911 Home Rule proposal. In the Spring of 1914 Padraic Pearse asked Childers to go to Germany and secure arms for use by the Irish Volunteers, which he did, in rough seas delivering them at Howth. The guns were not used until Easter Monday, 1916.

Cearbhal O'Dálaigh **June 1974 - 1976** He resigned on 22 October 1976, "to protect the dignity and independence of the presidency as an institution."

Patrick Hillery **June 1976 - 1990** He was Ireland's first European Commissioner in 1973 and became the 6th President of Ireland in 1976.

Mary Robinson **June 1990 - 1997** She resigned the presidency four months ahead of the end of her term of office to take up her post in the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Mary McAleese **June 1997** - Mary was born in Northern Ireland. She grew up Catholic in an area that was mostly Protestant.

Michael T. Higgins **June 2011** - Michael is from Co. Galway