

Questions re *The Making of Mollie*:-

1. *What gave you the idea for your book?*

I've always been interested in women's history, and I'd been thinking of writing non-fiction about the Irish suffrage movement. But I thought it would be more fun to tell the story of some teenage girls who want to get involved in the movement, even if the movement - or at least Mollie's suffragette big sister - doesn't particularly want them

2. *When writing *The Making of Mollie*, how did you transport yourself back to 1912?*

I went to my old school, Dominican College on Griffith Avenue in Dublin, and looked at their old year books. The school was founded in Eccles Street in 1883 (the famous suffragette leader Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington was a pupil there, and later worked there as a teacher) and started producing a yearbook in 1913, which was really, really useful and helped me imagine what the school was like back in those days. It also had lots of stories written by the girls themselves, which were very entertaining and inspirational. It was always a pretty progressive school - it was the first Irish institution that taught Catholic girls right up to university degree level, back in the days before girls were allowed attend universities.

3. *Put yourself in her shoes - do you think you would have been as brave as Mollie to get involved in the cause, or would you have been more hesitant, like Stella?*

I would definitely have supported the cause, and I think I'd definitely have gone on some protest marches and meetings - I went on a fair few marches for women's rights when I was a teenager. Would I have actually taken militant action? I'm not sure I'd have been brave enough to break windows, but I think I'd have done some chalking.

4. *What was the most rebellious thing you ever did at school?*

I got sent home for swearing once, which I wouldn't recommend. And I sometimes got into trouble for reading and talking and laughing in class. But I was actually pretty well behaved, as a rule. I had a pretty good time at Dominican College, and I'm still good friends with my best friends from school.

5. *What age were you when you became aware/interested in the suffragettes and women's rights?*

I can't remember how old I was when I first heard of the suffragettes, but my mother always did tell my sisters and me how important it was for us to vote, because women had died for that right. I was always interested in feminist issues but I really started identifying myself strongly as a feminist when I was about 16, in 1992.

6. *Who are your favourite writers?*

I have too many to count! My favourite writers for young people are Antonia Forest, Noel Streatfeild, Diana Wynne-Jones, Tove Jansson, E. Nesbit, Hilary McKay and Helen Cresswell.

7. *What was your favourite book when you were a child?*

A Little Princess by Frances Hodgson Burnett. I used to read it aloud to make myself cry. And I named my diary Sara after Sara Crewe.