

Introduction to Robert Lynd  
Compiled by Rakhiparna Ghosh

Robert Lynd (1879–1949) was an Irishman who lived much of his life in England. Robert Lynd had an international reputation as an essayist. Robert Lynd remained an Irish nationalist all his life. Although born into an upper-middle-class Ulster Presbyterian family and sent to university, at a time when very few people could afford to give their children a university education, Lynd's early life in London was a hard struggle. When he first arrived in London Lynd earned some money writing for the Daily Despatch, and also for Today, the weekly magazine edited by Jerome K. Jerome, author of the celebrated Three men in a boat. In 1908 he got his first permanent job, as literary editor of the Daily News, which, he must have been pleased to remember, had once been edited by Charles Dickens. The Daily News later became the News Chronicle. In those times, before there was either radio or television to provide the light entertainment that is so popular today, the literary essay was probably more appreciated by the readers of newspapers and magazines than it would be nowadays. Robert Lynd became one of the most widely read of the essayists. For more than 40 years he continued to write on almost every conceivable topic for the Daily News, the News Chronicle, the New Statesman, and John O'London's Weekly. He became noted for his quiet, friendly and reflective style, earning his living, as one critic put it, 'by supplying what might be called a point of rest in the newspapers to which he contributed'.

He met his future wife, poet and novelist Sylvia Dryhurst, at a Gaelic League meeting; they married on 21 April 1909 and would have two daughters, whom they would give the Irish-Gaelic names Sigle and Maire. Their home in Hampstead became a meeting place for a wide literary circle

He joined the staff of the Daily News (subsequently called the News Chronicle) and from 1912 to 1947 was its literary editor. He was rejected for service in the military in the First World War. As well as contributing to the Nation he wrote a weekly essay under the pseudonym 'Y.Y.' for the New Statesman from 1913 to 1945. He was a Republican and a Gaelic Leaguer and taught Irish classes in London. He wrote for the Sinn Fein movement under the name of Riobard O Floinn, (although he later parted company with the party), and edited some of the works of James Connolly.

Among his books, which number over thirty, are *Home Life in Ireland*; *Ireland a Nation*; *The Art of Letters* and *Doctor Johnson and Company*.

Robert Lynd died in Hampstead on 6 October 1949 and is buried in Belfast City Cemetery.

Ref:

<https://www.historyireland.com/20th-century-contemporary-history/robert-lynd-essayist-and-irishman/>

<http://www.newulsterbiography.co.uk/index.php/home/viewPerson/882>

