

# ANNE-MARIE FISHER

**Best known for:** Her roles in campaigning for social reform and women's rights from the mid 19th to the early 20th centuries. She was a major figure in the women's movement in Ireland.

**Born:** born in Youghal, County Cork, Ireland on 6th April, 1829. She was born the 16th of 17 children to Jane and Abraham Fisher.

**Family life:** The Fishers were a Quaker family with a milling business in Youghal. The Fishers were noted for their charitable works, especially during the Great Famine. A brother (Joseph) established the Munster Express Newspaper and played a key role in both land ownership reform and Poor Law reform. Growing up, Anna helped in soup kitchens and was involved in setting up cottage industries for local girls in lace-making, crocheting and knitting. She attended Quaker boarding schools, Newtown School in County Waterford and Castlegate School in York.

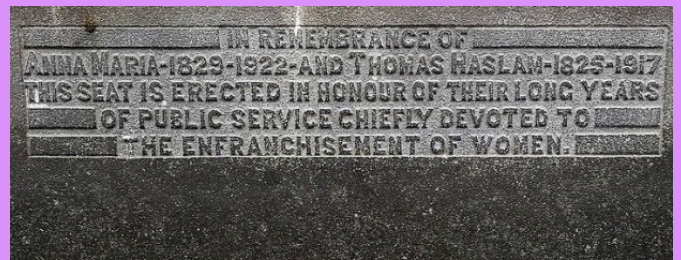
**Marriage:** Thomas Haslam taught in Ackworth School and was from Mountmellick, County Laois. They married, in Cork, in 1854. Thomas and Anna made a conscious decision not to have children and their marriage was mainly celibate. Thomas' health broke down in 1866 and for 40 years Anna was the breadwinner, running a shop in Rathmines, Dublin.

**Campaigns:** Anna and Thomas campaigned in four main areas including married women's control of their property, the repeal of the Contagious

## MEMORIAL SEAT



If you pass through the centre of St Stephen's Green, where local office workers and tourists gather on seats surrounding the fountain, you'll find a stately limestone bench. It remembers the work done Anna Marie and Thomas for the enfranchisement of women in Ireland



*Thomas and Anna Marie*

Diseases Acts and educational reform. However, she is best remembered today for her work for votes for women. In 1876 Anna and Thomas Haslam founded the Dublin Women's Suffrage Association (DWSA), the longest-lived Irish suffrage society. Anna was secretary of the DWSA from its inception until 1913 when she stood down and was elected life-president. 1898, the DWSA changed its name to the Irish Women's Suffrage and Local Government Association. In 1912, another suffrage group, the IWFL turned to militancy in the form of breaking windows in public buildings. While Anna Haslam publicly expressed the IWSLGA's disapproval of these actions as detrimental to the suffrage cause, her private view was more complex. She visited Hanna Sheehy Skeffington in Mountjoy jail, explaining: 'I am not here in my official capacity, of course ... but here's some loganberry jam - I made it myself.' In the 1918 election, Anna Haslam finally cast her vote after more than forty years of suffrage activism. Sadly, Thomas had died in 1917 and was not there to celebrate with her.

**Death:** Although both Anna and Thomas were expelled from the Society of Friends due to ideological differences which Thomas held, they both still maintained links with the community. Anna died on Nov 28th, 1922. Thomas Haslam died on 30 January 1917, in his ninety-second year. He and Anna were both buried together in the Quaker burial ground at Temple Hill, Dublin. Her name and picture (and those of 58 other women's suffrage supporters) are on the plinth of the statue of Millicent Fawcett, in Parliament Square in London, unveiled in 2018.